

# COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

PRICE ONE SHILLING

# The Cathedral Church of St. Michael COVENTRY



O veiled and secret Power,  
Whose path we search in vain,  
Be with us in our hour  
Of overthrow and pain ;  
That we—by which sure token  
We know Thy ways are true—  
In spite of being broken—  
*Because of being broken—  
May rise and build anew.  
Stand up and build anew!*

Rudyard Kipling

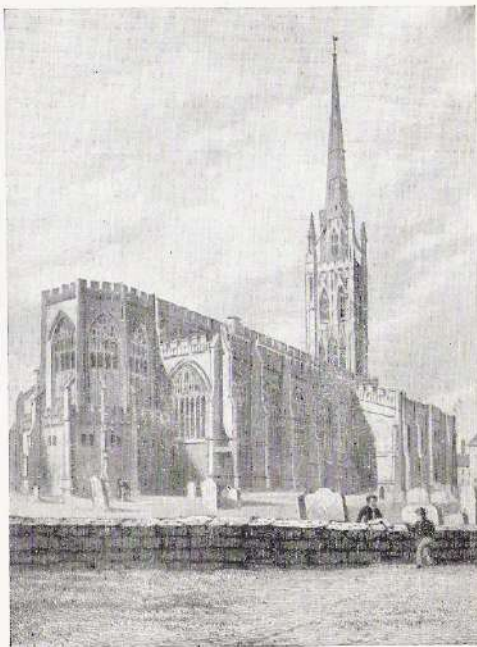


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*St. Michael's Church, 1821*

## LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CATHEDRAL

**1043.** Earl Leofric and Lady Godiva found a Benedictine monastery and build a Norman priory church on a site roughly where Priory Row now stands.

**c. 1100.** This church becomes the Cathedral of the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. The Bishop has his throne here and becomes the abbot of the monastery.

**c. 1135.** First mention of any church upon the site of the present St. Michael's. Ranulf, Earl of Chester, Lord of the Earl's Half (*i.e.* that part of Coventry corresponding to the parish of St. Michael) bestowed the "Chapel of St. Michael" upon the priory. This was a small Norman church.

**c. 1250.** The minster-cathedral is rebuilt in the Early English style with three tall towers; according to a tradition, each tower had a spire.

**c. 1250.** St. Michael's Chapel is enlarged in the Early English style.

**c. 1300.** A south porch (still existing) is added to St. Michael's.

**1373-1394.** The tower of the present St. Michael's Cathedral Church is built, the cost being defrayed by a wealthy family of wool merchants and clothiers named Bottoner. The choir and five-sided apse is also built during the same period.

**1400-1450.** The old church is removed, and its place taken by the recently-destroyed nave and inner aisles. The South porch of the old church is retained. The spire is built during this period.

**1433.** Completion of the spire.

**1451.** Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou visited Coventry, and the king went in solemn procession to hear High Mass in St. Michael's Church.

**1475.** Henry VII. on his return from his victory at Bosworth Field renders thanks to God in St. Michael's Church.

**c. 1500.** The Guild Chapels are added.

**1539.** The Benedictine monastery is dissolved, and the minster-cathedral is destroyed. Some scanty remains can be seen a little to the North of Holy Trinity Church. From this time onward until 1918 Coventry was without a cathedral. Lichfield becomes the Cathedral of the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield.

**1687.** James II. touched for the King's evil in St. Michael's Church.

**c. 1700.** The name of the Diocese becomes Lichfield and Coventry.

**1836.** The Bishopric of Coventry is merged into the Diocese of Worcester. Coventry ceases to be a diocese and becomes an arch-deaconry of Worcester.

**1885—1890.** Complete restoration of the whole church.

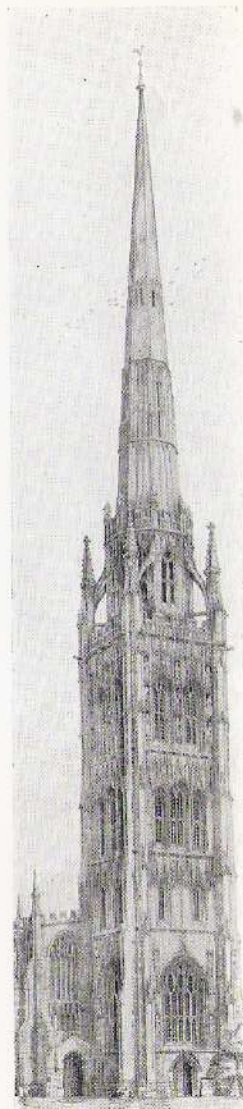
**1908.** St. Michael's becomes a Collegiate Church with a Constitution issued by the Bishop of Worcester.

**1918.** The modern Bishopric and Diocese of Coventry is constituted, and St. Michael's Church is raised to the status of a cathedral, still retaining its rank as a parish church.

**1937.** On June 19th, the Constitution and Statutes of the Cathedral are inaugurated.

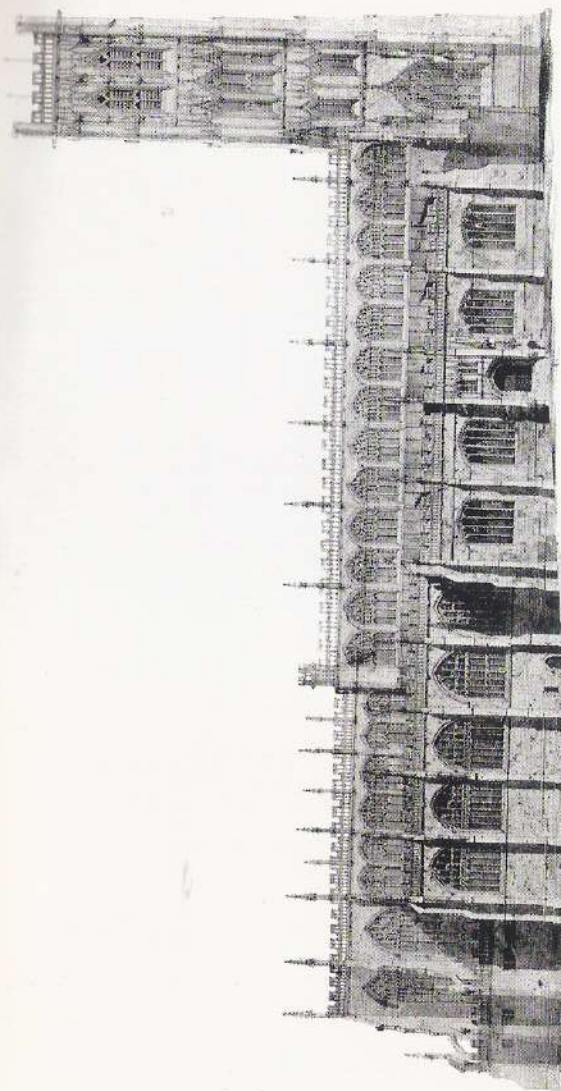
**1940.** November 14th. Destruction by enemy action of the nave, chancel, sanctuary, side aisles and chapels.

**1940.** November 16th. George VI. visited Coventry, and stood within the ruins of the Cathedral.



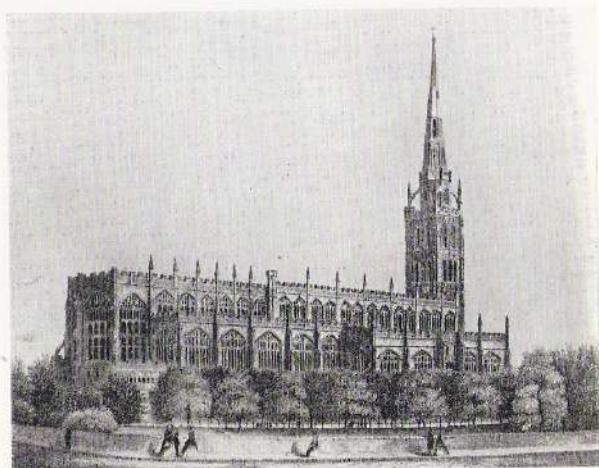
*The Spire*

*From an etching by G. R. Webster  
1880*



*Wyatt's Plan of North Elevation, 1853  
Measured and drawn by J. Drayton  
under the direction of Geo. Gilbert Scott, Esq.*



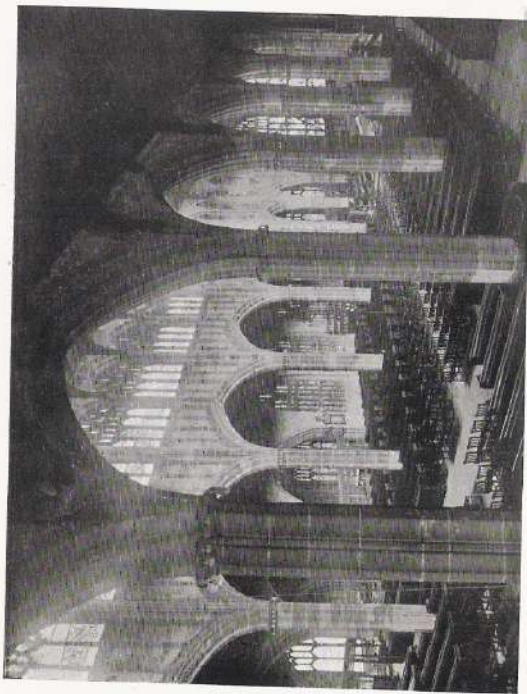


*St. Michael's Church, 1867*



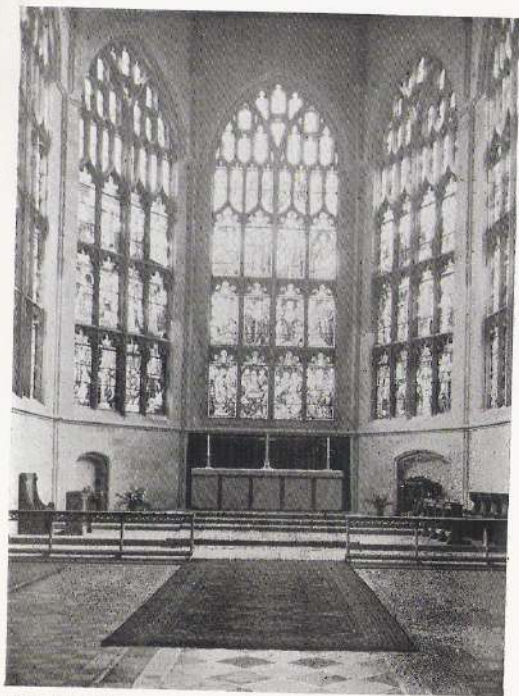
*Capri  
Nave and Apse*

*Photo—C. Bickel, Capri*



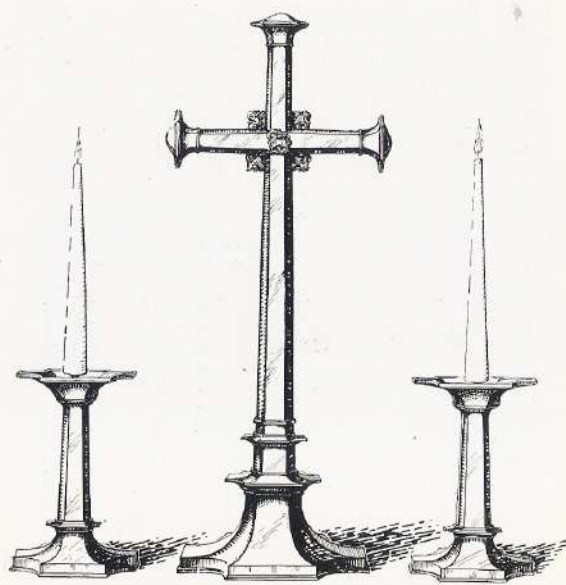
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View from the South-west, showing the Nave arcade, Children's Chapel, Lady Chapel and Apse.

Photo—C. Birkett, Coventry

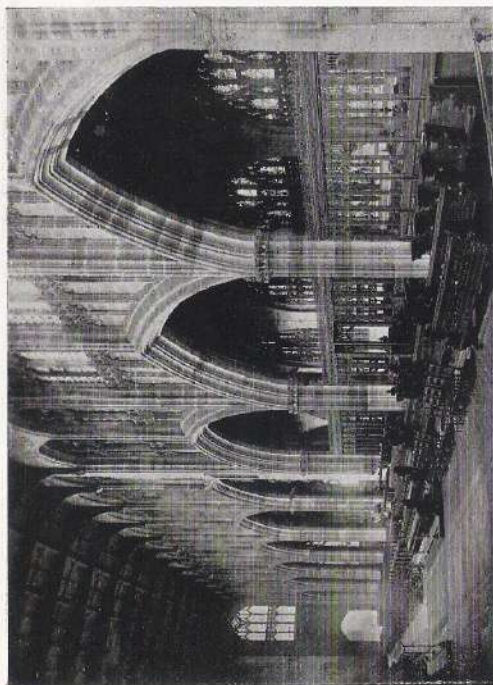


Photo—The Times

The Sanctuary



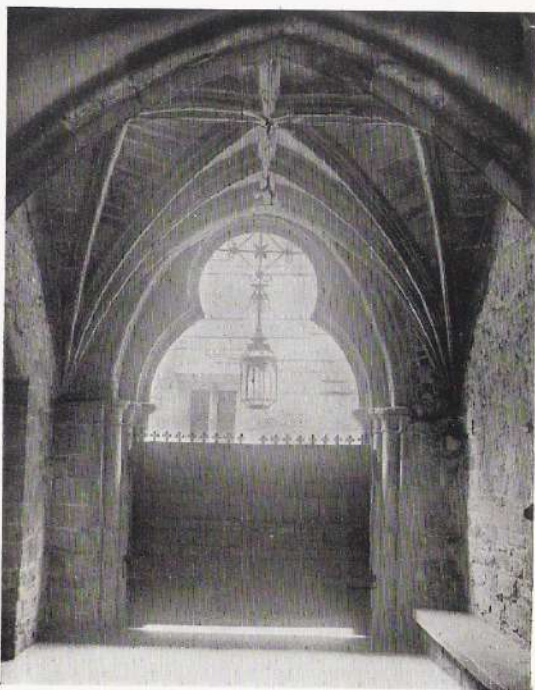
*The Silver Cross and Candlesticks  
(Preserved)*



*The Choir and Nave, looking West*

*Photo—C. Birkett, Coventry*

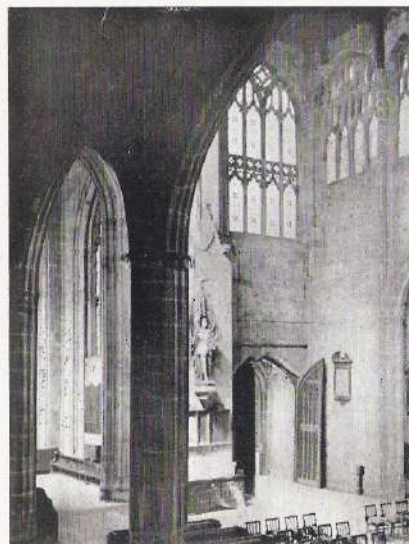




Photo—C. Strehl, Coventry

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*The South Porch*

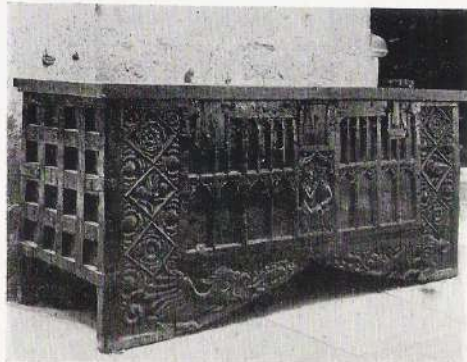
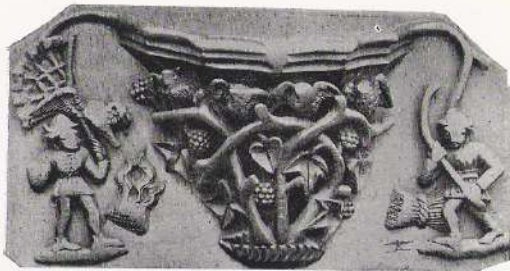


Photo—H. W. Whistler

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*Tower Arch and St. Michael*





Photos—C. Birkett, Coventry

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(Top)  
*A Misericord*  
*Occupations of Autumn :  
Batfowling and Threshing*

(Bottom)  
*The Muniment Chest*



Photo—D. T. Bonford

*Thirteenth Century Crypt Chapel*

A MESSAGE FROM THE RUINS BROADCAST  
TO THE EMPIRE ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1940

I am speaking from the ruins of Coventry Cathedral, close to where His Majesty the King stood watching the desolation afterwards, with a royal sympathy which did so much to raise the spirits of his people in this stricken city.

Last Christmas we had our wonderful Carol Services in the glorious building of pink sandstone which then stood above our heads; and what a beautiful Cathedral it was, with its tall, slender pillars, its wide arches and spacious windows — every stone of it loved and treasured by twenty generations of Coventry people!

Six weeks ago the enemy came, and hurled down fire and destruction upon our city from the sky, all through the long night. So many lives were lost, so many homes destroyed, and our Cathedral Nave and Chancel utterly burnt and brought to the ground. It was ruthless, futile, wicked.

I am looking now at the heaped-up ruins and the long line of outer walls, scarred and windowless. Yet even now the ruined Cathedral keeps much of its former majesty and beauty, unconquered by destruction.

So is the Spirit of Christ unconquerable, whose Birth we celebrate to-day. He, the King of all the World, came in lowly majesty to visit this earth and stay with us for ever. He suffers alongside of us, just as this Cathedral suffered the same fate as the city. He lost everything he had, and won the world. Nothing can destroy Him, any more than, in the words of our ancient Coventry Carol,

Herod the King  
in his raging  
could slay the Christ Child.

That is why early this Christmas morning, here under these ruins, in the lovely little stone chapel built 600 years ago, we began the day with our Christmas Communion, worshipping the Christ, believe me, as joyfully as ever before. The Church of Christ is very much alive in Coventry to-day. And all over the city we've had, or are going to have our family gatherings and Christmas dinners, with often a billeted person as a welcome guest. We, Coventry people, do here and now wish all absent friends and relations, especially those in the Forces, a Very Happy Christmas.

What we want to tell the world is this: that with Christ born again in our hearts to-day, we are trying, hard as it may be, to banish all thoughts of revenge; we are bracing ourselves to finish this tremendous job of saving the world from tyranny and cruelty; we are going to try to make a kinder, simpler — a more Christ-Child-like sort of world in the days beyond this strife.

We are in brave spirits and can wish the Empire a Courageous Christmas.

Here around me in the ruins are the few we could muster of the Cathedral Choir, and they are going to sing our ancient Coventry Carol.

*LULLY, lulla, thou little tiny child,  
By by, lully, lullay.*

O sisters too,	Herod, the king,
How may we do	In his raging,
For to preserve this day	Charged he hath this day
This poor youngling,	His men of might,
For whom we do sing,	In his own sight,
By by, lully, lullay?	All young children to slay.

That woe is me,  
Poor child for thee!  
And ever morn and day,  
For thy parting  
Neither say nor sing  
By by, lully, lullay!





*The Ruins, facing East*

Photo—Leamington Spa Courier



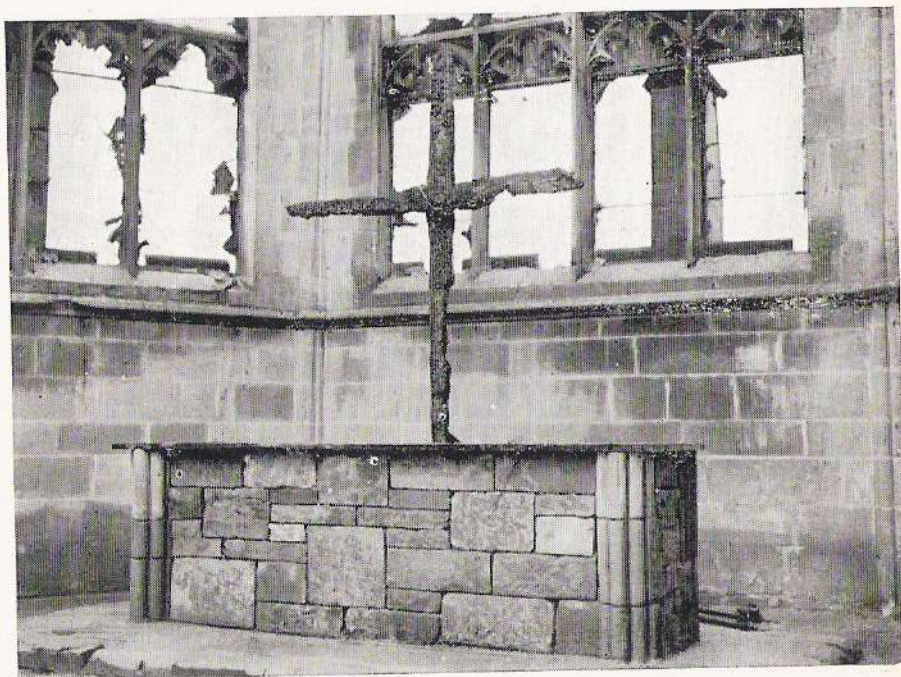
Photo—Leamington Spa Courier

*The Ruins, facing West*  
Page Nineteen



*Head of Christ  
from  
Fifteenth Century  
Window  
(preserved)*

*Photo—E. P. Eves*



*Photo—Midland Daily Telegraph*

*Altar built on the site of the High Altar  
from stones taken from the Ruins.  
Cross of charred beams from the roof.*



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