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Last's "The Christmas virtues" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Last, J. V. (Ed.). (2015). *The Christmas virtues*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press. 203 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 9781599475165

The Christmas Virtues is a thoughtful, humorous collection of essays reflecting on “the trials and tribulations of the holiday season” (back cover). Some of the topics addressed include the commercialization of Christmas, dealing with family (extended or closer to home), sending Christmas cards, Father Christmas, the wonder of Christmas morning, Christmas songs, and Christmas movies. This is a book to read because you love Christmas and want to reflect on all of its glory, wonder, and craziness. There were portions of the book that made me laugh and portions that made me marvel at the story of my dear Savior’s birth in new and deeper ways. On the subject of gifts:

But in the end, all of our gifts are messy replicas – a mere reflection of the awe-inspiring, incomprehensible love behind Christmas. It’s a love that sent the perfect gift, so mindboggling it’s almost absurd: A baby in the manger, God incarnate, just for us (p. 107).

On the subject of the incarnation:

One of the unfathomable mysteries of Christmas is that the infant Jesus was born a sacrifice. His story had already been written: After a short ministry, Jesus would be unjustly accused, betrayed, humiliated, tortured, abandoned, and crucified. All for our sake (p. 187).

Joseph “and Mary joined in their obedience to welcome into the world the Light of all mankind. Christmas is a day to remember all of this; to ponder the mystery and the wonder of a birth like no other” (p. 188).

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. The contributors include authors, columnists, editors, a film critic, a radio talk-show host, a news contributor, producers, and an actor. *The Christmas Virtues* reminded me that I still have much to discover regarding all that God accomplished and set in motion at the incarnation. It also reminded me that there is much secular absurdity surrounding Christmas that we can examine and then chose to discard or enjoy as God directs.

Reviewer

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