

Thoughts on Life and Faith

December 2018

I don't know about you, but the seasons of my year are marked by ritual, and none more so than Christmas. I've been retired for six years, but the cake still gets made at the end of October, because half term, when I was teaching, was the only space I had to make it. November brings the putting together of the present list. Last year we spent seven months having an extension built; the builders finished on 22nd December, and the whole family were arriving the day after. I've never flung up a Christmas tree so fast in my life! My husband suggested we do without. What? It's my ritual. It's what we do! And the backdrop to present wrapping and mince pie making (depending on how organised/last minute I am) is either Carols from Kings on the radio on Christmas Eve, or Handel's Messiah from the CD player. (Yes, the strains of less stately Christmas music can also occasionally be heard coming from *Maison* Thompson; there's always room for sleighs and reindeer and snow...). But there is something about "The Messiah" which does it for me. It is a love story from God to his people. From the first words sung: "Comfort ye... comfort ye my people", we are made aware that this is God enfolding us in his arms, and that his plan to reach us unfolds in the birth of his Son, is carried through his death and made triumphant in his resurrection. "For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given..."

Let's love our Christmas rituals, whatever they may be. But, in the midst of the turkey and the tinsel and the trappings, let us remember that love story, and, in some quiet corner, remember to give a halleluiah chorus of our own!

Every Christmas blessing to you all.

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