

## Reviews

ANDREW J. GOODLIFF. *“TO SUCH AS THESE:” THE CHILD IN BAPTIST THOUGHT*. CENTRE FOR BAPTIST HISTORY AND HERITAGE STUDIES. VOL. 4. OXFORD: REGENT’S PARK COLLEGE, 2012. (XII + 91PP.) [ISBN: 978-1-907600-03-6].

MYK HABETS

CAREY BAPTIST COLLEGE

What started out as an MTh thesis at Regent’s Park College, Oxford, has been expanded into a concise and lucid account of the theology of the child in Baptist thought. This helpful little work draws upon historical, theological, and liturgical resources from the Baptist heritage, predominantly from the UK, and seeks to resource future discussion over how to think of children in Baptist ecclesial contexts, how to minister to and with them in a range of settings, and further, how to simply think about children in the midst of the other competing issues a modern pastor or eldership has to steward. Rather than critique, the stated aim of the book is to “begin to articulate a theological understanding of infant blessing and to *positively* affirm something of the status of children, rather than merely opposing the practice of infant baptism” (p. 1). Clearly, the Baptist position on believer’s baptism is the immediate context within which the significance and place of children is raised, and infant blessing or presentation is the setting which structures the work. With this focus the book critically engages with how Baptists read Scripture, asks who the child is, outlines a theology of the child, of sin and salvation, and canvasses issues of the child’s relationship with the Church. The final argument is that a Baptist theology of the child must be rooted in a service of infant presentation.

Observing the centrality of Mark 10:13–16 in most theological literature on children, Goodliff spends chapter two arguing for three things: first, the kingdom of God belongs to children; second, the child is a model of discipleship; and third, the blessing from Jesus is an adoptive embrace in which children become heirs of the kingdom which is theirs unless they exclude themselves. While lacking detailed exegetical support, Goodliff examines eight Baptist service books, in addition to a representative sample of works on a theology of the child to make his points, which are not without critique. Goodliff stops short of concluding children are automatically saved but does want to present a more positive and constructive theology of the child than those normally adopted; one which is initiated by the presenting of the child as an infant and a dedication of the parents and the community to their godly upbringing.

Seeking to construct an ontology of the child, Goodliff notices how many treatments of the topic see children in an instrumentalist way, as objects on the way to becoming something important or proper. To counter such views Goodliff focusses on three areas; the child as gift, the *imago Dei*, and the child as active agent. Goodliff begins to construct a paedology, suggesting children are a gift of God’s grace and are thus not the parent’s possession. Turning to Barth’s notion of relations as the constitutive category for

understanding the *imago Dei* (but ignoring his Christology at this point), Goodliff suggests children are image bearers of God and are fully personal, despite their lack of maturation.

Turning next to theological concerns, Goodliff addresses the issue of sin and salvation in regards to children. By once again examining the eight Baptist service books, four general positions on such issues are evident. First, the age of accountability argument is put forward: children are innocent until an age of moral accountability (perhaps 12 or 13 years old). Second, children are both “in Adam” and “in Christ” and as such children may be reckoned to stand within the saving work of Christ unless they willingly opt out at some point. Third, what in my terms is called the sentimental view, that is, an appeal is made to mystery, grace, and the love of God. Finally, a particularly conservative view suggests children are born with original guilt and are thus sinners in need of saving faith. Eschewing each of these views in their current forms, Goodliff rightly turns to a doctrine of election to address the issue of sin and salvation in relation to the child. Here Goodliff does adopt Barth’s christologically conditioned doctrine of election in a sophisticated version of option two mentioned above. According to Goodliff’s construal, children are not born Christians, but they are born under the election of Christ and thus can, if rightly nurtured, grow into the faith by means of the Holy Spirit. As such, “The child who grows up in the worshipping community of the church is opened to, and shares in, the faith of that congregation and the work of the Holy Spirit” (p. 35).

The discussion so far (a mere 36 pages!) naturally leads into chapter five entitled “Ecclesiological Conundrums,” where Goodliff acknowledges “the largest challenge for Baptists regarding a theology of children is the child’s relationship to the church” (p. 37). If a child is not baptised, is it a member of the church? How young or old must one be to receive baptism? Can children participate in Holy Communion before being baptised? These questions dominate this chapter. While fast paced, Goodliff makes a series of observations and then settles on certain practices which, he argues, are essential in Baptist churches if children are to be seen as genuine members of the community; respected and disciplined into a mature faith. While largely absent from most Baptist churches, Goodliff advocates introducing a catechumenate as a means of preparation for baptism. He has no problems with baptising children at an early age, upon profession of faith, given this accompanies catechesis. Such catechesis begins through the rite of infant presentation and continues through Communion, which should be open, according to Goodliff’s arguments.

Chapter six details five key elements central to a service of infant presentation: welcome, thanksgiving, naming, promises, and blessing. As a means of grace, Goodliff sees such activity as sacramental, even if not *a* sacrament, given the fact that God is acting through the church to welcome and impart himself through the Spirit. The remaining chapter extends the discussion by looking at all—age worship services (family services), before concluding with a series of three appendices which provide texts for inclusion in an infant presentation, a liturgy of infant presentation from a recent Baptist service book, and a note on catechesis.

A theology of children has been a discipline largely conspicuous by its absence from scholarly focus. Recent years have seen a number of significant works on this topic come to light as Trinitarian, relational, and communal theologies work their way into all areas of churchly and missional life. The brevity of

Goodliff's book belies the importance of the topic. Goodliff's study certainly does not exhaust the issues, resources, or possibilities the topic has to offer, but it is a welcome place to begin.

TONY COSTA, *WORSHIP AND THE RISEN JESUS IN THE PAULINE LETTERS*. STUDIES IN BIBLICAL LITERATURE 157. NEW YORK: PETER LANG, 2013. (XV + 501PP.) [ISBN 978-1-4331-2290-3; ebook 978-1-4539-1154-9].

SARAH HARRIS

CAREY BAPTIST COLLEGE

Any reader of Paul knows how central matters pertaining to worship are in Pauline letters, and so it was surprising to note that Costa's book on this topic is breaking new ground. The heart of his book though is not simply "worship" but an engagement with the historical debate around how the risen Jesus was worshipped in the Pauline communities. The challenges and rigor required within this field of historical Jesus research is met with Costa's tome which boasts an equal quantity of endnotes to main text.

After a review of the work of Cullmann, Moule, Delling, Martin, F. Hahn, and Aune around the topic of worship, Costa engages with three contemporary scholars, Hutrado, Neyrey, and Bauckham. Their work in the field of the earliest Christian worship and the way this writer explores further evidence for worship of the risen Jesus from the Pauline letters is what makes this book a valuable addition to the ongoing research field.

One of Costa's critiques of earlier scholarship on worship is the lack of a definition with criteria that can be used for assessment, and so he provides a fully worked definition before he turns to analyse any text. He rightly identifies that this goes beyond certain Greek words into personal relationship and action and so considering expressions and acts which describe worship opens up further breadth (and I would add satisfaction) to his study. There is attention paid to the object of worship and notes that this context must be religious and so it goes beyond the Graeco—Roman honour culture where rank and status determine one's level of submission. Worship is only rendered to a deity and for a Christian it is to God to whom nothing can be added as he is complete. Similarly, Costa addresses the subject of worship, the worshipper who stands in total dependence upon God in a relationship such as a servant—master or child—parent. One is inferior and the other superior and it is total submission which makes it stand apart from other relationships where submission is partial and relative.

There is a full description of Pauline vocabulary of worship in a delightfully solid exegetical chapter where the range of words for what may be translated "worship" in English are explored. All occurrences and necessary cognates of *latreuō*, *sebazomai*, *proskuneō*, *douleuō* and *thrēskeia* as these pertain to a religious context are worked through systematically. My only question regarding his methodology in this section is his use at times of Thayer's lexicon which seems somewhat out—dated today, and for me, detracts from an otherwise well—resourced and argued chapter. There is further exegetical attention given to the