

# Review: Letters to a Future Saint

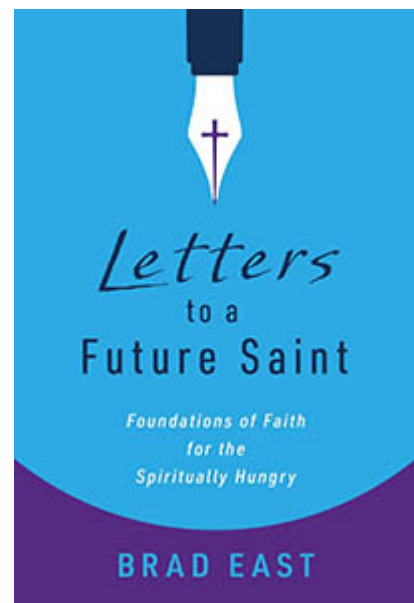
October 10, 2024

## *Letters to a Future Saint*

**By Brad East (Eerdmans)**

My third-born child was stubbornly receptive to the classic hymn “Jesus Loves Me.” He refused to let me stop at one verse following the first night I sang him more.

Like the additional verses to “Jesus Loves Me,” the depths of Christianity remain unknown to too many Christians. Brad East seeks to remedy this in *Letters to a Future Saint*.



In the third of 93 letters, East shares with the future saint that we seek to know Christ because he first loved us, and “to know Christ is to love him” (p. 8). East’s letters for the volume were inspired by writing letters to the future saints in his own life.

One of the beauties of East’s work is the depth he plumbs with simple

writing, even in the brevity offered in each letter. Most of the letters could be read in about the time one could sing “Jesus Loves Me” through once or twice.

Also to be expected in letters, but still delightfully refreshing from a theology professor, is the transparency into East’s own heart. In the 40th letter, East describes his own sin struggles, encouraging the future saint to do the same, allowing the church to act as AA but for sinners—“Sinners Anonymous” (p. 100).

The transparency doesn’t stop with his confession, either. East is unapologetic about raising his children to be Christians. Bluntly, East notes, “fine: we brainwash our kids to love Jesus” (p. 195). This line brought the greatest grin as I read, because it is probably the one I agreed with the most. The grin, however, was also because the line appears in the same letter (the 75th) in which East advocates for pedobaptism—the practice with which I most disagree.

There are other opportunities to disagree theologically with East. However, one should be careful to be as charitable in disagreement as East exemplifies in his own disagreement with Baptists on baptism and Young Earth Creationists on creation.

These virtues and enjoyments found in East’s work, along with consistent quotations from the saints, allow him to model the love one can practice in knowing Christ (and theology) more. Inspired by St. Augustine’s mother, Monica, East reflects, “I want to pray my children into heaven” (p. 214).

That should be a want for us all, and in knowing Christ more, we will want it more.

*Ben Faus, pastor*

*First Baptist Church, Crawford*