

HAYKIN, MICHAEL A. G. *AMIDST US OUR BELOVED STANDS: RECOVERING SACRAMENT IN THE BAPTIST TRADITION.* BELLINGHAM, WA: LEXHAM PRESS, 2022. 160 PP. \$19.99.

In *Amidst Us Our Belovèd Stands*, Michael Haykin, professor of church history and biblical spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and director of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, has set out to show the centrality of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the spirituality of Baptist forebears. While sacramentalism has a storied history in church history and the Baptist tradition, Haykin argues that it is good and right to recover a robust understanding of the spiritual significance of both ordinances (or sacraments as Haykin prefers) in local, Baptist churches.

Amidst Us Our Belovèd Stands draws its name from a hymn written by none other than Baptist giant C. H. Spurgeon (1834–1892). The hymn, a communion piece titled “Jesu's Presence Delightful,” illustrates an enduring understanding of the Supper as more than mere remembrance, or bare memorial amongst Baptists (xiii–xiv). Throughout *Amidst Us Our Belovèd Stands*, Haykin contends that Baptists today would do well to recover the sacramental theology of the English Puritan tradition, and more specifically, of Particular Baptists of that era. Rather than seeing baptism and communion as occasional additions to the church's gathered worship, Haykin invites readers to see them as central to the identity of the church (120–21).

To prove the significance of the ordinances in Baptist thinking, Haykin begins with a discussion of the spiritual significance of baptism in the Particular Baptist movement in chapter 1, followed by an exploration of the historic Baptist conception of the Lord's Supper in chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a glimpse into some of the controversy that arose over who might rightly participate in the Supper as well as who was to preside over the Table. Chapter 4 is an examination of three key texts on eucharistic piety, including two examples of hymnody by Joseph Stennett I and Thomas Steevens and a treatise by Anne Dutton (91). The works of Stennett and Steevens underscore Haykin's contention that, “after the Scriptures, hymn-writers and their hymns have arguably been at the forefront of shaping Christian thought and piety for the past three hundred years” (25–26). Having examined the works of Stennett, Dutton, and others, Haykin concludes that “the regular celebration of the Lord's Table must have

been one of the great highlights of their Christian lives” (117). In the final chapter, Haykin laments that while pastors often speak of the coronavirus pandemic’s impact on singing and preaching, they rarely mention the loss of the Table during the same period. In hopes of restoring a sense of the significance of the sacraments to Baptist life and worship, Haykin provides six theses that summarize the key themes of his book, urging pastors to recover a proper perspective on these vital, spiritual practices (120).

One of the great strengths of Haykin’s writing is the breadth of sources on which he leans for insight into the prevailing perspectives of a given period. From well-known, historical figures to lesser known and often underrepresented populations, including Baptist women, Haykin’s mastery of a broad range of sources provides a vivid picture of the life and worship of the church as well as clear insights into the significance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper to historic, Baptist spirituality. In this work, Haykin has provided his readers a resource that is at once accessible and informative, a worthy study for pastors and parishioners alike.

While the sacramental thought explored in this work and the language of sacrament more broadly may perturb some Baptist readers, they can be comforted by the book’s attempt to recover historic Baptist perspectives on practices that are central to the identity and practice of the church. For instance, in response to the sometimes-unwitting bare memorial view of the Lord’s Supper that penetrates contemporary Baptist thought, this book provides a compelling counterpoint.

This brief volume, seeking to recover historic Baptist views on the nature and spiritual significance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, is well worth the time it takes to read. A mere 160 pages, the contents of this work are worthy of careful contemplation, especially for those tasked with planning and leading worship in the Baptist tradition. The worship of the church is rooted in a profound history. In *Amidst Us Our Belovèd Stands*, Haykin invites readers to take up and read this history with an eye toward deeper and richer experiences of the presence of the Savior in the practices given by God to his church.

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