
In addition to Puritanism as a whole having been intensively investigated over the past few decades, numerous studies of Puritan preaching have also come out. Nevertheless, none of these studies have investigated the Puritan view of the effectual call as it relates to the manner and matter of their preaching. Boone has remedied this deficiency, researching the works of the late seventeenth-century Puritan John Flavel (c. 1628–1691) to address this question. Boone rightly characterizes Flavel as an evangelistic preacher. We can say that all Puritans had this emphasis, but it was especially prominent in Flavel.

Flavel held a prominent place among the Puritan preachers of his days. The American theologian Jonathan Edwards was highly influenced by him, quoting him frequently. A century later, Archibald Alexander, the first professor of Princeton Theological Seminary, felt a great debt to Flavel. He once wrote: “To John Flavel I certainly owe more than to any uninspired author.”

The importance Puritans paid to the affections in the process of a person’s moving from an unconverted to a converted state is echoed in the writings of Flavel. Boone shows that the often-criticized distinction between intellect (conscience included), will and affections was used by the Puritans in a very practical way. For them, this was a means in seeking to understand how God would have them preach.

In effectual calling, the intellect is illuminated. Hence, the preaching must be informative; however, the imparting of information is not an aim in itself. The second step of effectual calling is conviction of sin: men must realize their sinfulness in the light of the holy majesty of God. No one arrives at saving faith without having first been convinced of his sin and misery. Faith takes place once the will is renewed, according to Flavel. The renewing of the will is the final step of effectual calling. Although the will is the primary seat of faith, this does not exclude a role for the mind and the affections.

Flavel did wish to inform the head, or intellect, in his sermons. In informing his hearers of the holiness of God and the vileness of sin, he sought to stir their emotions or affections to compunction of their sins and that they would desire Christ as their Savior. This appeal to the affections was made in the context of the aim of renewing the will. The ultimate aim was that the hearer would consent to accepting Christ as his only Savior. It is important to note that neither Flavel nor the other Puritans saw the appeal to the sinner as inconsistent with their predestinarian theology. I consider this study of Boone’s a highly valuable contribution. It highlights how the Puritan interest in theology
was very practical in nature. Their great aim was to win souls and edify saints. Boone’s study pays most attention to the former aspect, and this is precisely because he focusses on the effectual call.

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Surprisingly, there have been few historical commentaries on the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Standards are contemporary documents because churches still subscribe to them, but they also developed in a historical context. It is important to grasp this context in order to understand and evaluate the theology of these Standards. While Fesko’s *Theology of the Westminster Standards* does not cover the entire Westminster Confession, it treats most of its major subjects with a heavy emphasis on citations from contemporary authors. This book provides a gripping historical companion that both pastors and scholars will not want to be without. However, there are some shortcomings in Fesko’s analysis of various issues that require further research.

Fesko’s historical introduction is a concise and clear treatment of the English Reformation with special emphasis on the seventeenth century development of politics, British society, and Reformed theology. In this reviewer’s estimation, his chapters on sanctification and on the law of God are some of his clearest and most profound work. In particular, his treatment of the habits and acts of sanctification helps navigate a vital issue that is foreign to contemporary readers. Fesko gives the added benefit of comparing and contrasting this historic formulation with more recent constructions of sanctification, such as what are now called definitive and progressive sanctification. The chapter on the law of God is valuable as it sets the topic in the context of a developing Reformed covenant theology, as includes an able discussion of the different uses of the law. Additionally, explanation of the *ordo salutis* as grounded in union with Christ is very helpful both for historical and contemporary discussions (252-253).

The book includes a number of sections that require further refinement and nuance. For instance, under the “sufficiency” of Scripture, Fesko treats hermeneutical principles, such as the perspicuity of Scripture and the analogy of Scripture (81-86). This is a serious deficiency because Scripture sufficiency