

## **ABSTRACT**

THE ANCHOR OF A BELIEVER'S HOPE: JOHN FLAVEL'S (ca. 1627–1691)

THEOLOGY OF DEATH, DYING, AND ETERNAL DESTINY

The fundamentals of every faith are exposed in their conceptualization of death. Recent studies have caricatured Post-Reformation Calvinist theology of death as cold and fatalistic. Such misrepresentations have continued to surface in recent scholarship, a trend evident in Peter Marshall, Ann Thompson, and Susan Karant-Nunn's Reformation and Post-Reformation studies. This dissertation examines the Reformed English Puritan John Flavel's (ca. 1627–1691) theology of death through close analysis of his writings on mortality, dying, and eternal destiny.

Flavel's application of his theology to the spiritual needs of those facing death and dying is analyzed. The spine of his doctrine was covenant theology, or how he understood the terms and applications of divine covenants, though this aspect of his theology has been largely neglected.

Inquiry into Flavel's treatment of death demonstrates how the Puritan minister emphasized union to Christ as Mediator as the only grounds for a believer's hope. This dissertation reveals that Flavel's theology offered salvation and hope for believers rather than a fatalistic view of death as hopeless. The mentality that Flavel offered his audience was not agnostic about the world to come, nor was his providentialism coldly fatalist. In his ministry of Reformed theology, Flavel labored to stir up greater faith, greater comfort, and greater life in the souls of believers.