rather odd, but the damage is minor in nature since the comparative perspective and the similar trends and themes give an interesting picture of the consequences of modernity either way. It thus seems impossible to avoid the perspective of modernity, even if it is not explicitly pronounced. It will come as no surprise that the emerging modernity very much affected the development of Christian spirituality. Which effects modernity has had on the role of Christian religion in the societies of Northern Europe in the long run is, however, a different story.

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In recent years there has been a significant increase in academic studies of English Puritanism, particularly of John Owen’s theology.¹ This can be attributed to the fact that Owen was one of the premier English theologians, but also that he was one of the most prominent Puritans. In Owen, we have the ultimate expression of Puritan theology and spirituality. Therefore, the publication of this study is important in terms of advancing further research of the Puritan movement.

Whereas several Puritan distinctives are evident in Owen’s spirituality, a few articles illustrate that his theology forms an integral part of the international movement of Reformed orthodoxy. W.J. van Asselt analyses Owen’s doctrine of the covenant within the context of his comprehensive theology, and signals similarities with “his” Dutch theologian Johannes Cocceius. As Gert van den Brink asserts in his article on the relationship between impetration and application in Owen’s theology, this prominent Puritan defended the Reformed orthodox view of the atonement and justification against Arminians and Richard Baxter on the one hand, and Antinomians on the other. In regard to the Arminians, he emphasized the integral relationship between the

¹ A Dutch version of this review has been published in *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 36 (2012), 190-2.
impetration and the application of salvation in light of the effectivity of Christ’s death, addressing the crucial importance of human responsibility as it pertains to faith and conversion over against the Antinomians.

Some have suggested that Reformed orthodox theology uses the Bible as a collection of proof-texts, but the fine contribution of John W. Tweeddale asserts that Owen was committed to listening carefully to Scripture. His voluminous exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews, initiated in 1668 and just completed before his death, is the most significant illustration of his spirituality, because here he gives a thorough analysis of the priesthood of Christ, a subject which penetrates the whole epistle. Especially in the area of Christology and Pneumatology, Owen has made a significant contribution to the development of Reformed theology, as the following articles illustrate: Robert Letham (‘John Owen’s Doctrine of the Trinity in its Catholic Context’); Edwin Tay (‘Christ’s Priestly Oblation and Intercession: Their Development and Significance in John Owen’) and Alan Spence, (‘The Significance of John Owen for Modern Christology’). Spence’s article provides a contemporary application by positing that Owen’s treatment of Christ’s divinity and His humanity is of central importance for contemporary Christology. The same holds true for Owen’s description of the priesthood of Christ, in which he addresses not only Christ’s death on the cross, but also his intercession.

Owen’s Puritan Identity becomes most apparent in his Pneumatology. In 1674, he wrote a voluminous work about the Holy Spirit, thereby achieving the fullest expression of the pneumatological emphasis of Puritanism. One could even argue that Owen’s most unique theological contribution has been the placing of all theology within a pneumatological context. Therefore, Kelly M. Kapic’s article, ‘Explorations in John Owen’s Pneumatology’ cannot be ignored. In 1684, Owen wrote a separate work about the Holy Spirit and prayer, which is highlighted in the article of Daniel R. Hyde, ‘The Fire that Kindleth All Our Sacrifices to God’: Owen and the Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer’. His detailed analysis of the work of God’s Spirit proves that the application of salvation via the ordo salutis with its central elements of regeneration, justification, and sanctification, was a matter of great importance for the Puritan Owen, and it is within this context that the multi-facetted relationship between God and man receives ample attention.

In a book on Owen’s theology, it is impossible to overlook his spirituality. Therefore, in the second section of this study, specifically
devoted to Owen’s theology, George Hunsinger analyses the relationship between justification and the mystical union with Christ and concludes that for Owen union with Christ is foundational for justification. Owen’s spirituality also comes to the fore in the third section of this Research Companion, devoted to the practical part of Owen’s theology. It contains the above mentioned contribution about his view of the work of the Holy Spirit in prayer.

The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen’s Theology gives a good overview of Owen’s Reformed theology and states that Owen must be viewed as being in the mainstream of this international movement. However, one matter is not addressed in this study, for it implicitly also highlights the impossibility of analyzing Owen’s theology independently, because the integral relation with his spirituality is mentioned frequently. Therefore, a balanced view of Owen must include his spirituality, such as his doctrine of the Trinity. Owen not only provides us with a theological treatment of this doctrine, but he has also written about communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thereby giving ample attention to spiritual experience, which he regularly articulates in mystical language. Owen’s emphasis on personal communion with God, as well as on the Christian life, has also made him known in the Netherlands, for several of Owen’s practical writings have been published in Dutch during the 18th century. In any case, this study affirms that Owen’s spirituality was firmly rooted in his Reformed theology.

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The main title of this dissertation has been aptly chosen.¹ It offers precisely what is promised. The book is about “soul recreation”, and that

¹ A Dutch version of this review has been published in Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie, 36 (2012), 87-90.