



# **John Owen and English Puritanism: Experiences of Defeat (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology)**

*Crawford Gribben*

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John Owen was a leading theologian in seventeenth-century England. Closely associated with the regicide and revolution, he befriended Oliver Cromwell, was appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, and became the premier religious statesman of the Interregnum. The restoration of the monarchy pushed Owen into dissent, criminalizing his religious practice and inspiring his writings in defense of high Calvinism and religious toleration. Owen transcended his many experiences of defeat, and his claims to quietism were frequently undermined by rumors of his involvement in anti-government conspiracies.

Crawford Gribben's biography documents Owen's importance as a controversial and adaptable theologian deeply involved with his social, political and religious environments. Fiercely intellectual, and extraordinarily learned, Owen wrote millions of words in works of theology and exegesis. Far from personifying the Reformed tradition, however, Owen helped to undermine it, offering an individualist account of Christian faith that downplayed the significance of the church and means of grace. In doing so, Owen's work contributed to the formation of the new religious movement known as evangelicalism, where his influence still can be seen today.

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