Catalog of The Parker Society Series on the English Reformation, 55 vols.

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The Parker Society was named for Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker (1504-1575) whose tenure extended from 1559 until his death during the reign of Elizabeth 1. It was quite an accomplishment to be a cleric during sixteenth-century Tudor Britain and live without receiving a regent's wrath in the form of exile, imprisonment, or execution. He and the Puritans did not get along regarding the issue of vestments and the clergy, nor did they care for his Church of England polity, but despite Precisionist antipathy towards him, Parker, as seen in his correspondence, interceded for them with the queen and made concessions. Parker is believed to have been attracted to Reformation ideas through Thomas Bilney (c.1495-1531) who died at the stake for his Reformation teaching. Parker and Martin Bucer became good friends during his time teaching in Cambridge.

The "Thirteenth and Final Report of the Council of the Parker Society" is transcribed below as published in the index volume.

"In closing the proceedings of the Parker Society, the Council desire to express their thankfulness to God that a very important object has been attained, that the works of the leading English Reformers have been made for all future time easily accessible to the theological student, and a fuller light thereby thrown upon the principles of the Church of England Heretofore the writings of the divines of the Reformation age were so rare, that it was difficult for any but those who had ready access to the large libraries of the country to obtain an extended acquaintance with them. It is true that some few pieces, such as the Apology of Bishop Jewel and the Sermons of Bishop Latimer, were popularly known: the selections also published by the late Rev. Legh Richmond were in many hands. But these and other volumes of the kind were little more than specimens, and served mainly to indicate that the mine was rich, if it only could be worked out. The design, therefore, of the Parker Society (originated by a friend and colleague, whose memory the Council affectionately cherish, the late George Stokes, Esq.) was new. It was not merely to cull out two or three celebrated productions; it was not to give the writings of a single author, or to select portions from a number; it had a wider range; it proposed to re-publish the entire mass of the printed works of the leading divines of our reformed church, who flourished in the age when the Roman yoke, which pressed so grievously upon our forefathers, was broken, and to add the pieces from their pens, if any such could be found, that were still lying in manuscript unpublished.

"If the Society has not accomplished all that it designed, if it has left untouched the works of some valuable authors, if it has in one or two cases been unable to comprehend in its volumes the whole of the writings of divines it undertook to re-print, the Council, though it may feel some regret, cannot express surprise. Such publications could not be of a popular character. Those who were acquainted with the authors of that date knew that their language was frequently uncouth, their learning ponderous and of a scholastic cast, their matter for the most part controversial, and that, in short, they lacked much, from the very fact of their belonging to another age, of that which give a currency to modern literature, even modern theological literature. It was no matter of surprise, therefore, that some of the subscribers expressed a degree of disappointment when the Parker Society volumes began to appear, that men accustomed to the current style of the present day could not bring themselves to grapple with the solid, perhaps heavy, productions of

the elder divines. The very cheapness, too, of the Society's publications, multiplying them so rapidly upon subscribers' shelves, was not without its influence.

"It is needless to advert further to reasons why some part—it is comparatively a small part—of the original plan has not been completed; the Council would rather turn with thankfulness to what has been accomplished. They reverently acknowledge God's blessing on their proceedings, evidenced in the harmony in which they have worked together, the public support which has been afforded, the satisfactory results of their labours. Fifty-four volumes, the list of which has repeatedly been printed in the Reports, several of them of large size, have been issued, and are within every one's reach. They have been distributed through the United Kingdom, the colonies, and many foreign countries. They are a library in themselves. They comprise the complete works of the most eminent prelates, and others, who suffered imprisonment, exile, or death, in the sixteenth century, for the gospel's sake; and those of their immediate successors when religion was re-established under Queen Elizabeth. They contain proved weapons for the whole encounter with popery and maintain the doctrine and order of the Church of England against those who afterwards rose up from her own bosom to assault her. They have shed light upon contemporary history. They are documents, which have already been frequently applied to in the Ecclesiastical Courts, and which will ever remain as evidences of Reformation truth. It is a curious fact, that the Parker Society publications alarmed the Roman Catholics of this country, and induced them—so it was stated in a prospectus—to establish a counter-society for re-printing the works of Romish writers against whom the Reformers had contended. A few volumes were issued; but the plan met with little support, and it is believed was soon given up.

"The fifty-four Parker books are now augmented by a General Index, the value and importance of which every reader will be prepared to appreciate.

"The Council have only to add that the final statement of accounts will be completed as speedily as possible and will then be made public.

33, Southampton Street, Strand, December 1855."

If you would like to read more about The Parker Society, see the informative article by Peter Toon, "The Parker Society," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, vol. 46, no. 3, 1977, pp. 323–332.

The list that follows was compiled from examination of physical copies from two theological seminaries and one university over the course of several years. Looking back on the process, I should have added some comments providing details about the volumes. The editor hopes the catalog will be of assistance because one of the purposes of the *Presbyterians of the Past* site is to provide resources for study of Presbyterian and Reformed history. Note that the content of Parker Society volumes are transcriptions of primary sources. Any of the volumes cataloged below could be used for a student class paper, a source for a master's thesis, or combined with manuscripts from dusty digging in archives to yield a dissertation. The advantage of the catalog is subjects can be scanned for items of interest. Undoubtedly, there are some reprints that have been missed by the editor, and he apologizes for their omission out of ignorance, but anything found on library shelves was included as well as a few reprints known to the editor.

The Catalog

The date alone after the volume title is for the first edition published at Cambridge by the University Press. Other editions include the place, publisher, and date of issue. In some cases, additional material such as a biography, Parker Society Annual Report, or other item is noted.

Volumes

Index: Gough, Henry. A General Index to the Publications of the Parker Society. Compiled for the Parker Society by Henry Gough. 1855. viii, 806 p. 13th and Final Report of the Parker Society at the beginning of the book. Index of the principal Scripture texts explained. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.

- Bale, John. Select Works of John Bale, D.D., Bishop of Ossory, Containing the Examination of Lord Cobham, William Thorpe, and Anne Askew, and the Image of Both Churches. Edited by Henry Christmas, xii, 647 pages, 1849. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
- Becon, Thomas. *The Early Works of Thomas Becon, S.T.P., Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, Prebendery of Canterbury, &c. Being the Treatises Published by him in the Reign of Henry VIII.* Edited by John Ayre, xix, 500 pages, 1843. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968
- Becon, Thomas. *The Catechism of Thomas Becon, S.T.P., Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, Prebendery of Canterbury, &c. With Other Pieces Written by him in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth.* 670 pages, 1844. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
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- 9 Bullinger, Heinrich. *The Decades of Henry Bullinger, Minister of the Church of Zurich. The Third Decade.* Edited by Thomas Harding. Translated by H. I. viii, 432 pages,1850. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968. 6 x 9.
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 Biography and an index to Bullinger's 4 vols. 11th Annual Report of the Parker Society, 8 pages. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
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- 41 Pilkington, James. *The Works of James Pilkington, B.D., Lord Bishop of Durham.* Edited by James Scholefield. xvi, 703 pages, 1842. Biography. Index. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
- 42 Ridley, Nicholas. *The Works of Nicholas Ridley, D.D., Sometime Lord Bishop of London, Martyr, 1555.* Edited by Henry Christmas. xvi, 543 pages, 1843. A supplement fills pages 529-543. Index. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
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- 50 Whitgift, John. The Works of John Whitgift. D.D., Master of Trinity College, Dean of Lincoln, &c. Afterward Successively Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury. The First Portion, Containing the Defense of the Answer to the Admonition, Against the Reply of Thomas Cartwright: Tractates VII-X. Edited by John Ayre. 595 pages, 1852. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
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