

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-40164-7 - Robert South (1634-1716): An Introduction to His Life  
and Sermons

Gerard Reedy

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Robert South (1634–1716) was one of the great Anglican writers and preachers of his age. A contemporary of Dryden and Locke, he faced the profound political and philosophical changes taking place at the beginning of the Enlightenment in England. With the interdependence of church and state forcing a conjunction of religious and political issues, South's life and work as a preacher show him reacting to changes in civil and ecclesiastical polity over the course of his active public life. Gerard Reedy's book, the first major study of South, makes a strong case for the importance of his sermons, their complexity, beauty and wit, and their place in the history of post-Restoration English literature. Discussing sermons of South which deal with his theory of politics, language, the sacrament and mystery, Reedy reintroduces us to a lively and seminal master of prose, politics, and theology in the late Stuart era.

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ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THOUGHT 12

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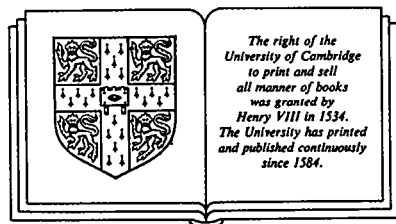
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## *Robert South (1634–1716)*

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*For*  
*Paul J. Korshin*

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The Vein of Preaching which has run so pure since the happy Restoration, that compacted Strength of Reason, that just and natural Method, that Harmony of Words and thoughts, that Devotion without Rapture, that Affection without Violence, that Easiness which is not mean, that Authority which is not Assuming, may contend, in the Praise of sacred Eloquence, with all Rivals of all Countries and Times. Nor will he be charged with Injury to the fathers of the primitive Church, or Flattery to those of our own, who shall affirm that we have seen at one Time more than one Patriarch, who in the Pulpit was not less than a Chrysostome.

Basil Kennet, preface to  
*The Whole Critical Works of Monsieur Rapin*  
(London, 1731)

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## Illustrations

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*Between pages 88 and 89*

- 1 Robert South (unknown artist). (Permission of the Governing Body, Christ Church)
- 2 Robert South (unknown artist). (Permission of the Fellows of Oriel College)
- 3 Robert South (Vertue). (Permission of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster)
- 4 Richard Busby and a pupil (unknown artist). (Permission of the Governing Body, Christ Church)
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## Acknowledgments

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Since my days in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 1970s, I have been encouraged in my study of late seventeenth-century Anglican theology and English literature by a generous mentor and friend, to whom I dedicate this study of Robert South.

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## Abbreviations

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- Ecclesiastes* John Wilkins. *Ecclesiastes, or a Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching*. 6th edn. London 1679
- FS* Edward Stillingfleet. *Fifty Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions*. London, 1707
- Simon Irène Simon. *Three Restoration Divines: Barrow, South, Tillotson*. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 2 vols., 1967, 1976
- Webster G. M. Webster. "The Life and Opinions of Robert South, D.D." B.D. thesis, Exeter College, Oxford, 1957

### *Note on the text*

For quotations from the works of Robert South, I have used throughout *Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions*, in seven volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1823). Volume and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.