

**THE LIFE AND
WRITINGS OF
THEODORE PARKER**

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The Life and Writings of Theodore Parker by Albert Réville

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ALBERT RÉVILLE

**THE LIFE AND
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THEODORE PARKER**

Milton - July 11

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LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
THEODORE PARKER.

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THEODORE PARKER.

BY
ALBERT RÉVILLE, D.D.

(AUTHORISED TRANSLATION, REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.)

A theologian, from the school
Of Cambridge on the Charles, was there:
Skillful alike with tongue and pen,
He preach'd to all men everywhere
The gospel of the golden rule,
The new commandment given to men,
Thinking the dead, and not the creed,
Would help us in our utmost need,
With reverent feet the earth he trod,
Nor banish'd nature from his plan,
But studied still with deep research
To build the universal church,
Lofty as in the love of God,
And ample as the wants of man.

LONGFELLOW.

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.
1865.

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APRIL 25, 1939

"Nobody is surprised to find the books of Parker in every thoughtful man's library, or to hear multitudes of strong men impute their conversion to him; for he believed in God and man so completely that his fragmentary denials were but the floating drift upon the deep, swift current of his mighty faith."

REV. A. D. MAYO.

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

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THEODORE PARKER,

HIS LIFE AND WORKS.

I HAVE always considered it one of the happy circumstances of my life as an author that, thanks to the incomparable organ of public opinion, *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (Number of the 1st Oct., 1861), I was able to draw the attention of the general public to the eminent preacher of Boston, in the United States, namely, Theodore Parker. Doubtless his name was already known in several religious circles; but beyond the limits of America the knowledge of him was far from being proportionate to his merits. Since the publication of that article numerous indications, rising in some sort at the four corners of the horizon, bear witness to the growing interest which connects itself with the ideas and the character of that truly admirable man; one of the superior souls of the 19th century, which the sun of the future has lighted up with its early rays. It is, then, with all the earnestness which multiplied occupations permitted me to apply to the task, that I yielded to the desire expressed by some of his old friends, to the effect that I would produce a Memoir of him with more details and explanations than the limits of a review-article authorized in my former labour. Moreover, in composing that Essay I had at my disposal only certain newspaper-

articles, funereal notices, and communications from friends, and since then the sources to be consulted in order to trace the attractive history of his life, have greatly increased. Among others we owe to one of his friends, Mr J. Weiss, the inappreciable advantage of acquaintance with his voluminous correspondence, at least in all of it that is likely to interest the public.* Some inconveniences proceeding from an ill arrangement of the numerous letters printed by the author, cannot lessen our gratitude for the great service he has rendered. We are also obliged to him for having scattered over his narrative notes taken from the private journal that Parker was accustomed to keep, extracts from which, more than narrated facts and even than friendly letters, enable us to penetrate to the core of his noble heart.

This study, resumed with new sources of information, has led me to rectify my first production on more points than one, at least for what concerns the external framework of the biography. For, as to the picture itself, I have only had to persist in the judgment which I at the first pronounced touching the American reformer. The gigantic events of which his country has been the theatre, that colossal crisis which, at the moment when these lines are written, is proceeding toward an issue corresponding to his hopes after having realized all the fears of his enlightened patriotism, this is the most eloquent commentary on that life of his suddenly put to an end. I hope then that this book will in some measure contribute to a movement replete with promises, which carries the human race onwards in the way of religious, moral, and social progress. I do not believe that our age is, as some declare, more irreligious, more immoral, and, in general, worse, than others. I even think that without much

* *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker*, by J. Weiss. London, 1868.