

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF THEODORE
PARKER: CONTAINING HIS THEOLOGICAL,
POLEMICAL, AND CRITICAL WRITINGS,
SERMONS, SPEECHES, AND ADDRESSES,
AND LITERARY MISCELLANIES. VOL. XII.
HISTORIC AMERICANS; PP. 1-234**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649551781

The Collected Works of Theodore Parker: Containing His Theological, Polemical, and Critical Writings, Sermons, Speeches, and Addresses, and Literary Miscellanies. Vol. XII. Historic Americans; pp. 1-234 by Theodore Parker

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

THEODORE PARKER

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF THEODORE
PARKER: CONTAINING HIS THEOLOGICAL,
POLEMICAL, AND CRITICAL WRITINGS,
SERMONS, SPEECHES, AND ADDRESSES,
AND LITERARY MISCELLANIES. VOL. XII.
HISTORIC AMERICANS; PP. 1-234**

HISTORIC AMERICANS.

THE
COLLECTED WORKS
OF
THEODORE PARKER,

MINISTER OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL
SOCIETY AT BOSTON, U.S.

CONTAINING HIS
THEOLOGICAL, POLEMICAL, AND CRITICAL WRITINGS,
SERMONS, SPEECHES, AND ADDRESSES,
AND LITERARY MISCELLANIES.

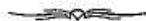
VOL. XIII.
HISTORIC AMERICANS.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1871.

HISTORIC AMERICANS.

BY

THEODORE PARKER.



LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW
1871.

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

BUHR/GRAD
42081531
Hart
10/20/06

PREFACE.

THESE lectures were prepared in 1858, for the Fraternity Course, which had been instituted that year. They were carefully elaborated, being written out in full, and partly rewritten with a view to publication. The lecture on Franklin was written over twice,*—three times, in fact, though the last reproduction was rendered necessary by the loss of the original manuscript. But three of them, however, were delivered in Tremont Temple; and these were more than should have been attempted, for Mr Parker was already so weak in this last autumn of his public service, that he made his way to the hall with difficulty, and barely sustained himself through the effort he was making.

The lectures are printed from faithful copies of his manuscript, with no more correction than was actually required by occasional omissions that had to be made good, by very infrequent defects that were easily repaired, or by misplaced references, which, it is needless to say, were here, as elsewhere in Mr Parker's writings, exceedingly few.

The lectures were prepared at a time when the anti-slavery agitation was at its height; when, in Mr Parker's judgment, it distinctly menaced war. The subject naturally occupies a large space in the biographies; indeed it furnished, probably, one of the motives for preparing them. That issue is dead. The war,

* Weiss's Life of Parker, i. p. 432.

to which the evil succumbed, broke out almost immediately after his decease, and accomplished by force what he hoped might be accomplished peacefully. A few passages, containing allusions to the ethics and politics of that by-gone epoch, would not be penned to-day; but none will be sorry to read them who can weigh their importance as contributions to history, or can estimate their value as illustrations of character.

Mr Parker's religious opinions were too vital to him to be excluded from any kind of discourse, and the reader of this volume may occasionally come across a phrase, or possibly a sentence, that will seem intrusive and objectionable. But such sentences and phrases are singularly rare, scarcely more frequent than the subject demanded, no more frequent than was demanded by his favourite method of treatment.

That method is simple, clear, and exhaustive. Mr Parker never wrote without a direct purpose, and the purpose was always serious enough to engage the earnest exercise of his ability. When he selected the characters of *Historic Americans* as themes for the Lyceum, his object was not, as with most lecturers it is, to amuse an audience for an hour; it was not to convey biographical information in a popular form; it was not to 'do good' in a general sense; much less was it, in a specific sense, to do evil by affronting the reverence of his contemporaries, or diminishing the reputation of eminent men whom people far and near had lifted to a pedestal of honour. His design was to trace back to their sources, in the creative minds of the nation, the principles that have exerted a controlling influence in the nation's history, and are still active in the institutions and the politics of the hour. He would discuss great issues in a concrete form, showing how they were associated with character for better or worse.

A further intention he doubtless had,—such an intention as

Mr Everett had in the delivery of his oration on Washington,—to bring the power of great historic names to bear on the minds of his contemporaries, to clear their conceptions, confirm their belief, or tone up their courage. Grand examples are more convincing than ordinary precepts, and Mr Parker was intensely persuaded that our grandest examples were on the side that most needed strengthening.

But no side views of this sort tempted him to swerve a hair's breadth from the sternest loyalty to the truth. He made the truth serve his purpose when he could; but it was not his way to manufacture truth to suit his purpose, nor was it his way to judge truth by its utility for his private or public ends. The truth he would have at any rate, whether it would serve him or no. It would serve itself, which was better. He went always to original sources; but not content with that, he made effort to purge his own mental vision, in order that no discolouring or distorting feelings might make the truth seem to him other than it actually was. In all biographical studies his conscientiousness was a wonder. He laid on himself prodigious labour to satisfy it. Both hate and love were warned away from the canvas on which he was painting a character.

These four portraits are as faithful as he, by any labour of his, could make them. Those who question his truthfulness must first revise their own. If in some respects the portraits look unlike the 'counterfeit presentments' that are shown in the print shops, it must not be hastily concluded that he has intentionally disfigured them. He may possibly have restored features and lines which careless or too flattering copyists have misdrawn.

It will not be out of place here to correct the impression that Mr Parker was a self-constituted image-breaker, who made iconoclasm a business, and delighted in shattering great reputations, as Cromwell's troopers did in mutilating statues of the saints. Of all