



Statesman and Saint: The Principled Politics of William Wilberforce (Leaders in Action)

David J Vaughan

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"God has set before me two great objects: the abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of manners." These immortal words penned by William Wilberforce in 1787 were the beginning of his lifelong crusade as a Christian statesman and philanthropist. He became a member of the British Parliament for his hometown of Hull in 1780 and represented Yorkshire in 1784, a seat he retained until 1812. This moving biography of Wilberforce tells the story of his religious conversion in 1784 and his rise to leadership of the Clapham Sect—a group of evangelicals active in political, philanthropic, and religious causes. Under his leadership, the "Saints," as they were called, championed parliamentary and prison reforms, missionary endeavors, Bible distribution, and a host of other charitable efforts and organizations. These causes included the Church Missionary Society (established in 1799) and the British and foreign Bible Society (founded in 1804). Statesman and Saint also describes Wilberforce's unrelenting forty-year crusade against slavery, in spite of many defeats in Parliament. He labored for eighteen years to secure the abolition of the slave trade, enduring personal criticism, deep-seated prejudice, and threats on his life for another twenty-six years before he saw the Emancipation Bill finally passed in July 1833. His influential book, *A Practical View*, laid the foundation for the moral elevation of the Victorian Era that followed his death only three days after the Emancipation Bill was passed in Parliament.

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