

**MEMOIR OF  
WILLIAM  
WILBERFORCE**

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Memoir of William Wilberforce by Thomas Price

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**THOMAS PRICE**

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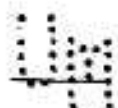
MEMOIR  
OF  
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

BY THOMAS PRICE.

Second American Edition.

WITH AN

APPENDIX.



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## PREFACE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

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THE following Memoir of one of the most interesting personages who have lived during the current century, first published a few months since in London, is presented by the Publishers to the American community. Eminently conspicuous among this class, for half a century, stood the subject of Mr. Price's Biography—a man, whose memory will be sufficiently distinguished in all coming time, by the extraordinary combination of intellectual and moral power which he directed, and caused to be directed—and that with both a spirit and a success unsurpassed, on the whole, in the world's annals—to the promotion "*of the greatest act of national benefit which God ever put in the power of man to confer on his fellow creatures.*" Such was the language used by Sir Samuel Romilly, in the British Parliament, on occasion of the final passage, by that body, of the Bill for abolishing the African slave-trade throughout the British dominions; and whoever will attentively weigh the vast interest and importance of the great events, now alluded

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to, in which Mr. Wilberforce acted a part which has rendered his name immortal, cannot for a moment hesitate to admit that the eloquence of this noble eulogy is but adequate to its truth.

It is proper for the Publishers to state that they have omitted, in the republication of this excellent tribute to the worth of the departed philanthropist, those portions of the Memoir that, while they contributed to swell the volume beyond the size best adapted to the design of popular circulation, were likely, also, by their sectarian and controversial character, to prove of considerably less value, than the more strictly biographical department of the work. It may be read, in its present form, as the Publishers confidently believe—though they would not be understood to assert their own precise accordance with every particular sentiment expressed by the Biographer—with equal pleasure and profit, by persons of every sect, party, and condition.



## MEMOIR

or

## WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

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THE doctrine of Divine Providence is strikingly illustrated in the history of our world. Amidst the apparent confusion of its affairs, the controlling agency of infinite wisdom and goodness may be traced. There has been an evident subordination in the course of events to some great issue. Complicated and intricate movements, which at first perplexed the most-sagacious observers, have ultimately been seen to lend their influence to the advancement of human happiness. The temporary triumph of infidelity has thus been checked, and the faith and hope of the believer have been increasingly justified. Hence much of the value which attaches to the records of the past. History would lose its importance, were it to be regarded as a chronicle

merely of events. Its details might exercise the memory, and afford pleasure to the curious, but a mind intent on the acquisition of moral truth would cease to regard its pages with interest, or to derive from them the materials of its most ennobling speculations.

The superintendence of the Deity, has been evinced in the preparation of agents for the execution of his purposes. At different periods in the history of mankind, he has raised up, and qualified with all appropriate endowments, the ministers of his pleasure. They have been brought forward at the precise moment when their services were needed, and a stage has been prepared on which they might efficiently act their part. Outward circumstances have been so adapted to their mental constitution, as to assist them in extending a salutary influence over the men of their day. God has worked with them, confirming their word with signs following.

There is no important era in the history of mankind which does not afford illustrations of this fact. Luther was formed by divine Providence for the work which he accomplished. Whitfield and Wesley were eminently endowed by the Head of the church, for the revival of

religion in their native land; and many of those who, in more recent times, have gone to the land of heathenism, proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, have manifested an adaptation to their work, in which the devout observer cannot fail to recognize the hand of God. A similar observation may be made respecting the subject of this brief memoir. There was a great work, involving the interests of humanity and religion, to be accomplished; and in the person of Mr. Wilberforce, God furnished an agent eminently fitted for its execution. His integrity commanded the respect of all parties; his talents engaged their attention, and his inflexible determination of purpose won the triumph of his cause. Had not Mr. Wilberforce been a member of the British parliament when the philanthropic Clarkson was endeavoring to stimulate the national conscience, it is not, perhaps, too much to say, that the wrongs of Africa would have been undressed to this day. Other senators may have raised their voice, but the heart of the nation would not have responded as it did to the appeal of the patriarch of the cause. "To the talent, the sagacity, the discretion, the unwearied perseverance, the mild and conciliatory, though determined tone, the unexceptionable spirit, and the