

THE WILBERFORCE COLLECTION

A rare, nineteenth-century collection of pamphlets (192 volumes), amassed by Samuel Wilberforce, the Anglican Bishop of Oxford (1847-69), third son of William Wilberforce, the evangelical politician best known for his efforts to abolish the British slave trade. The whole collection includes thousands of pamphlets as the individual volumes have as many as eighty separate pamphlets. A private library in London, England, which recently offered them for sale to Regent College, acquired the works.

Many of the pamphlets deal with sermons and other religious topics, but a number also deal with cultural and political topics of the day. "The collection provides an insight into the reading tastes of a distinguished theologian, of an active and vigorous mind, well able to engage in the thinking, even the controversies, of his time." (Edmund King, head of the British Library's Colindale Library, who assessed the collection for Regent College.)

Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), Bishop of Oxford and Winchester

Samuel Wilberforce encouraged the building of churches and the formation of Anglican sisterhoods, as well as founded Cuddesdon Theological College (1854) now known as Ripon. His effective methods of pastoral administration were widely imitated. He promoted legislation to provide synodical structures for the colonial Church and to enable the appointment of missionary bishops. At Winchester he initiated the revision of the King James Version of the English Bible. He became well known for his persuasive oratory, which caused hostile critics to call him "Soapy Sam," an unfair nickname for one whose diaries show him to have had a deeply spiritual life. His preaching and pastoral administration came to the notice of Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, who in 1840 appointed him one of his chaplains. Samuel Wilberforce gave new vitality to the Church of England. He held key positions during the crisis created by the conversion of John Henry Newman to the Roman Catholic Church. Wilberforce stood outside the Tractarian (Oxford) Movement but advocated strengthening the Church of England ritual and tradition. He was in great demand as a speaker.

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