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## The Slave Trade Debate: Contemporary Writings For and Against

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More than fifty years before the question of slavery launched the United States into the bloody turmoil of the

American Civil War, Britain wrestled passionately with the same issues. A flood of pamphlets published by both abolitionists and slavery proponents fueled the debate, and they are now collected here in this fascinating volume in commemoration of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, 1807. Written during the 1780s and 1790s, the pamphlets confront the issues surrounding slavery, such as the Rights of Man, the economic health of the British colonies, poverty in England, and, most prominently, the economic and moral condition of the African slaves. The authors on both sides of the debate including such prominent figures as the eventual King William IV, Sir John Gladstone (father of the future Prime Minister William Gladstone), and the leading abolitionist William Wilberforce draw upon biblical scriptures to justify their positions, providing illuminating insights into the theological debates of the time as well. Also included in the volume are an excerpt of abolitionist James Ramsay's journal and an informative introduction that places the writings in their historical and social contexts. The Slave Trade Debate is an essential resource for scholars of transatlantic slavery and British history.

"On the 200th anniversary of the act of the British Parliament abolishing the slave trade, Oxford University's Bodleian Library has reprinted 14 pamphlets from its collection of abolition materials. . . . Of particular interest are the two pamphlets taking contradictory positions based on biblical evidence. . . . Recommended."