Definition: **Bright, John** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

British parliamentary reformer. A Quaker and mill owner, he and his fellow radical, Richard Cobden, were leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League (founded 1839). First elected to Parliament in 1843, he subsequently represented Manchester, the home of free trade. He lost his seat in 1857 after opposing the Crimean War but was re-elected for Birmingham. After the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), Bright worked tirelessly in the cause of parliamentary reform.

Summary Article: **Bright, John**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1811–89, British statesman and orator. He was the son of a Quaker cotton manufacturer in Lancashire. A founder (1839) of the Anti-Corn Law League, he rose to prominence on the strength of his formidable oratory against the corn laws. A staunch laissez-faire capitalist, and, with Richard Cobden, a bastion of the Manchester school of economics, he resented the protection given to landholders by these laws at the expense of manufacturing interests. After the repeal (1846) of the corn laws, Bright’s principal concern was parliamentary reform, which he pursued relentlessly until passage of the third Reform Bill in 1884. A member of Parliament for Manchester (1847–57), he lost his seat because of his opposition to British involvement in the Crimean War, which he considered un-Christian and against Britain's economic interests. He represented Birmingham (1858–89) and served in William Gladstone’s cabinets as president of the Board of Trade (1868–70) and chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster (1873–74, 1880–82). He supported Gladstone on the issues of disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869) and Irish land reforms, but he opposed Home Rule for Ireland. His laissez-faire views also made him oppose direct government intervention to improve the conditions of the poor. He resigned (1882) in protest against intervention in Egypt for the same reasons that had led him to oppose the Crimean War.

See his speeches (ed. by J. E. T. Rogers, 1868) and public addresses (also ed. by Rogers, J. E. T., 1879);
Read, D., Cobden and Bright (1967);

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