

# Westminster Abbey



5.00 p.m. Evensong

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6.00 p.m. Unveiling and Dedication  
of a Memorial to Thomas Clarkson  
(1760–1846)

on the 150th Anniversary of his death  
on 26 September 1846



Thursday 26 September 1996

## HISTORICAL NOTE

Thomas Clarkson was born at Wisbech on 28 March 1760, the year George III was crowned. He died at Playford Hall near Ipswich on 26 September 1846, in Queen Victoria's reign. Of the changes which swept society in Clarkson's 86 years, arguably none were more morally profound than Britain's abandonment in 1807 of its centuries-old lucrative slave trade, and in 1833 of slavery itself. Both events are monuments to Clarkson.

He was the elder son of John Clarkson, clergyman and headmaster of Wisbech Grammar School, and Anne Ward of a prominent Huguenot family. His Yorkshire-born father, whose piety and service were legendary, died when Thomas was six. But under his mother's guidance, Thomas set out to follow his father's path. He attended St Paul's School and St John's College, Cambridge, recognised at both as a brilliant scholar. He was ordained deacon after receiving his bachelor degree in 1783. While reading for his Master's, he made the fateful decision to enter the Vice-Chancellor's essay competition on the question *Is it lawful to make slaves of others against their will?* Clarkson knew nothing of slavery — like most of his fellow citizens — but he pursued his research with his usual diligence and was overwhelmed by what he found. 'I sometimes never closed my eye-lids for grief', he remembered. His essay won.

Obsessed now by the evils of human bondage, Clarkson realised that 'some person should see these calamities to the end', and he became that person. With the help of Quakers, long opposed to the slave trade, Clarkson published his expanded essay in 1786, the first widely read indictment of that commerce. A promising church career was thrown aside and, until his death, Clarkson had but one cause. He became the architect of a national campaign to abolish the slave trade. To rouse the country, he travelled thousands of lonely miles on horseback. He risked his life seeking evidence and witnesses at the slaving ports of Bristol and Liverpool. He founded local committees to raise petitions and funds. He wrote tirelessly of the baneful effects of the trade. Crucially, he enlisted the charismatic William Wilberforce to wage the campaign in Parliament. Their partnership lasted nearly half a century.

It was twenty years before Parliament outlawed the slave trade but long before then the British people had become convinced through this unprecedented movement that it was a crime.

With a new generation of Abolitionists, Clarkson then helped to found the anti-slavery movement which culminated in the emancipation of slaves in British colonies in 1833. In old age Clarkson was revered as the father of antislavery throughout the world.

Clarkson was married for fifty years to Catherine Buck of Bury St Edmunds, his companion in heart and mind. Among his admiring friends were the Romantic poets who found his heroic service, purity of motive, and complete simplicity impressive, even awesome. Said Coleridge, 'He, if ever human being did it, listened exclusively to his conscience, and obeyed its voice.'

We welcome you to this service. Worship has been offered to God daily on this site for over a thousand years. Today, you are a member of a congregation which comes from all over the British Isles and from all over the world. Though we may not know each other, we are fellow members of the world-wide Church.

Evensong is the distinctive service of Evening Prayer used by churches of the Anglican Communion, and is held daily in the Abbey. It includes elements from the medieval Latin offices of Vespers and Compline, and has been largely unchanged since the first English Prayer Book of 1549.

As is customary in churches with a great choral tradition, much of the service is sung by the Choir alone, and the congregation makes its offering of praise by responding to the beauty of the Choir's music.

Users of hearing aids are invited to ask the Vergers to direct them to the North Lantern area, where a Hearing Aid Loop is installed. The hearing aid should be adjusted to the setting T.

**It is our custom to keep a period of silence and reflection to prepare ourselves for the service.**

*The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, conducted by Martin Neary, Organist and Master of the Choristers.*

*The organ is played by Martin Baker, Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey.*

*Music before the service:*

Chorale variations on  
*Sei gegrüßet Jesu gütig*, BWV768

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

*The Lord Mayor of Westminster is received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, and is conducted to his stall in the Quire.*

# The Order of Evensong

*A Procession of Visiting Clergy moves to places in the Quire.*

*All remain seated. The Choir sings THE INTROIT in the Nave:*

O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blest is the man that trusteth in him.

*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

*Psalm 34: 8*

*All stand as the Procession of the Collegiate Body enters the Quire.*

*The Minister and Choir sing THE VERSICLES AND RESPONSES by William Smith (1603-45):*

O Lord, open thou our lips; And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us; O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord. The Lord's name be praised.

*All sit. The Choir sings PSALM 119: 1-16:*

Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way: and walk in the law of the Lord.

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies: and seek him with their whole heart.

For they who do no wickedness: walk in his ways.

Thou hast charged: that we shall diligently keep thy commandments.

O that my ways were made so direct: that I might keep thy statutes!

So shall I not be confounded: while I have respect unto all thy commandments.

I will thank thee with an unfeigned heart: when I shall have learned the judgements of thy righteousness.

I will keep thy ceremonies: O forsake me not utterly.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way: even by ruling himself after thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not go wrong out of thy commandments.

Thy words have I hid within my heart: that I should not sin against thee.

Blessed art thou, O Lord: O teach me thy statutes.

With my lips have I been telling: of all the judgements of thy mouth.

I have had as great delight in the way of thy testimonies: as in all manner of riches.

I will talk of thy commandments: and have respect unto thy ways.

My delight shall be in thy statutes: and I will not forget thy word.

*All stand.*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

*All sit. The Reverend Dr Anthony Harvey, Canon in Residence, reads* THE FIRST LESSON: Exodus 3: 1-15

*All stand. The Choir sings* MAGNIFICAT *to the setting in C by Bryan Kelly (b 1934):*

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his hand-maiden.  
For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.  
And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.  
He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.  
He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.  
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

*All sit. The Very Reverend Michael Mayne, Dean of Westminster, reads* THE SECOND LESSON: Romans 8: 18-25

*All stand. The Choir sings* NUNC DIMITTIS *to the setting in C by Bryan Kelly:*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word.  
For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation;  
Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

*All face the High Altar and say together* THE APOSTLES' CREED:

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Lord be with you; And with thy spirit.

*All kneel or sit.*

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us;  
And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen;  
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;  
And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people;  
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord;  
Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us;  
And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

THE COLLECTS

THE PRAYERS FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY AND FOR THE ORDER OF THE BATH.

*All sit. The Choir sings THE ANTHEM:*

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos tormentum malitiae.  
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori: illi autem sunt in pace.

*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: but they are in peace.*

*Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)*

*Wisdom 3: 1-3*

*All kneel or sit for THE INTERCESSIONS.*

*At the end of the Intercessions, all say together:*

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**

*All stand as the Procession of the Collegiate Body leaves the Quire.*

**Members of the Congregation who do not wish to attend the Dedication of the memorial may leave at this point as directed by the Honorary Stewards. Those who do wish to attend the Dedication are requested to move at the direction of the Honorary Stewards and occupy seats in the Lantern.**

*Between the end of the service and the Dedication, the Sub-Organist plays:*

*Fantasia in G minor, BWV542*

*Johann Sebastian Bach*

# The Order of the Dedication

*All stand as the Procession of the Collegiate Body, together with the participants in the Dedication, enters the Lantern, and then sit.*

*The Dean welcomes the Congregation.*

*All stand to sing THE HYMN:*

In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no south or north,  
but one great fellowship of love  
throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere  
their high communion find;  
his service is the golden cord,  
close binding all mankind.

Join hands, then, all the human race,  
whate'er your nation be;  
all who my Father's image bear  
are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
in him meet south and north;  
all Christlike souls are one in him,  
throughout the whole wide earth.

*St Stephen 29 AMNS  
W Jones (1726-1800)*

*John Oxenham (1852-1941)*

*All sit. Michael Bouët, a descendant of the Clarkson family, reads*

## TO THOMAS CLARKSON

Clarkson! it was an obstinate hill to climb:  
How toilsome — nay, how dire — it was, by thee  
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly:  
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,  
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,  
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,  
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,  
First roused thee. — O true yoke-fellow of Time,  
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm  
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!  
The blood-stained Writing is forever torn:  
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,  
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find  
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind!

*William Wordsworth (1770-1850)*

If, then, we wish to avert the heavy national judgement which is hanging over our heads (for must we not believe that our crimes towards the innocent Africans lie recorded against us in heaven) let us endeavour to assert their cause. Let us nobly withstand the torrent of the evil, however inveterately it may be fixed among the customs of the times; not, however, using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness against those, who perhaps without due consideration, have the misfortune to be concerned in it, but upon proper motives, and in a proper spirit, as the servants of God; so that if the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the very heaven should fall upon us, we may fall in the general convulsion without dismay, conscious that we have done our duty in endeavouring to succour the distressed, and that the stain of the blood of Africa is not upon us.

*Thomas Clarkson: The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade (1808), vol.i, pp.424-5*

*All remain seated. The Collegiate Body, together with the participants, move to the North Quire Aisle, while The New Testament Church of God Singers, Mile End, sing:*

When Israel was in Egypt's land, let my people go!  
Oppressed so hard they could not stand, let my people go!  
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,  
tell ole Pharoah, let my people go!  
Thus let my people go!

When saith the Lord, bold Moses saith, let my people go!  
If not I'll smite your first-born dead, let my people go!  
Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land,  
tell ole Pharoah, let my people go!  
Thus let my people go!

*All stand. The Dean invites Professor Peter Goddard, FRS, Master, St John's College, University of Cambridge, to unveil the Memorial.*

*Professor Goddard says:*

Mr Dean, I ask you to receive into the safe custody of the Dean and Chapter, and to dedicate here in the North Quire Aisle, this memorial honouring the anti-slavery campaigner Thomas Clarkson.

*The Dean says:*

To the greater glory of God and in thankful memory of Thomas Clarkson we dedicate this memorial: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

*Flowers are placed at the foot of the memorial by Margaret Cave, Chairman, 150th Anniversary Committee.*

*All remain standing. The procession returns to the Lantern.*



*All sit for*

THE ADDRESS

The Right Reverend Stephen Sykes  
*Bishop of Ely*

*All stand for*

THE PRAYERS

*The Reverend Barry Fenton, Precentor of Westminster Abbey, says:*

As we thank God for the life, work, and witness of his servant Thomas Clarkson, so we pray for those who in our own day strive for justice: for the captive, especially for any who labour under oppressive or tyrannical regimes; for the dispossessed, the marginalised, the discouraged, those bound fast by misery or affliction; commending them and all for whom we pray to God's unfailing love and mercy:

O God our Creator, grant us such maturity of faith that we may see you as we journey toward one another. Grant us the gift of insight that we may overcome prejudice and ignorance, and that we may be bound together with a common vision for the sake of the world: may we humbly recognise the great spiritual force of love which is found in all and which gives us our common humanity; and grant us the love which shall unite the world in freedom, justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Right Reverend Wilfred Wood, Bishop of Croydon, continues:*

Almighty God, may we live above the world, its low concerns and unsatisfying vanities, and may we be still endeavouring to please thee, to root out every remainder of our natural corruption, and to increase in every Christian grace. May we indeed bear about us the likeness of our heavenly Father, and be doing good in our generation according to the will of God, until at length thou shalt receive us to thyself, and make us partakers of those pleasures which are at thy right hand for evermore. **Amen.**

*from William Wilberforce's family prayers*

O Lord of life, as our allotted span grows shorter hour by hour, may we daily be making some progress in the way that leads to heaven. May each of us seriously examine himself both in heart and life, and may we ask ourselves the decisive question, whether we have entered into that blessed path, which will at length conduct us to glory. And enlarge our souls, we beseech thee, to the full measure of that glorious portion, which thou offerest to our acceptance. Raise our low desires; warm our cold affections; working out our own salvation, while we look to thee to work in us, to will and to do of thy good pleasure. **Amen.**

*from William Wilberforce's family prayers*

*The Precentor continues:*

As we look for the coming of the kingdom among us, Lord teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*All remain standing.*

*The Dean says THE BLESSING, to which all respond: Amen.*

*The procession moves to the west end of the church.*

*Music after the Dedication:*

Final, Symphonie no.1

*Louis Vierne (1870–1937)*

**Members of the Congregation are invited to view the Memorial as directed by the Honorary Stewards.**