

**THE CENTENARY OF THE KING'S CHAPEL
LITURGY: DISCOURSE BY REV. HENRY
WILDER FOOT AND ADDRESS
JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, D.D., GIVEN
IN KING'S CHAPEL, SUNDAY, APRIL 12,
1885, PP. 1-33 (NOT COMPLETE)**

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The Centenary of the King's Chapel Liturgy: Discourse by Rev. Henry Wilder Foot and address James Freeman Clarke, D.D., given in king's Chapel, Sunday, April 12, 1885, pp. 1-33 (not complete) by James Freeman Clarke & Henry Wilder Foote

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JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE & HENRY WILDER FOOTE

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(Boston, King's Chapel.)

The Centenary of the King's Chapel Liturgy.

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DISCOURSE BY REV. HENRY WILDER FOOTE

AND

ADDRESS BY REV. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, D.D.,

GIVEN IN

King's Chapel, Sunday, April 12, 1885.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE WARDENS AND VESTRY.

BOSTON:
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1885.

The usual order of Morning Prayer was followed, the service being read by the pastor of the church, assisted by Rev. Andrew P. Peabody, D.D. Dr. Peabody also offered a special prayer:—

God of our fathers and our God, we thank Thee for the blessed memories of this hour and of this holy place. We recall with gratitude those who once worshipped here and who now adore Thee in Thy more intimate presence, in the company of Thy redeemed. We would bear in loving remembrance the venerable and saintly men who have here taught Thy truth, and whose lives, in their beauty of holiness, bore witness to its divine power. May all that was worthy of enduring honor in the fathers be reproduced in those who have entered into their heritage. May we be followers of them who leave the record of their loyalty to their Lord and Master; and may their felt sympathy and communion bring us ever nearer to Him in whom, though dead, they live. May they who now worship here cherish and transmit with pious care the trust bequeathed to them by those who have passed into the heavenly sanctuary, and be it their constant aim and endeavor to adorn the gospel of their Saviour by the consecration of their lives to the service of God and man. We offer our prayer in the name of Him who hath led us unto Thee, through whom to Thee be our gratitude and our praise, now and forevermore. Amen.

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SERMON.*

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."—II. TIM. I, 13.

"The ancient landmark which thy fathers have set."—PROV. XXII, 28.

I HAVE to speak to you to-day of a subject which ought to be of peculiar interest to every one who is interested in this ancient church; and I wish, if I can, so to speak of it that it may not seem to be merely a subject of antiquarian curiosity, but may suggest thoughts really helpful to the religious life of the church to-day. It is a hundred years since, at Easter, 1785, the liturgy, which has ever since been in use here, was given to King's Chapel by those who had been intrusted with the care of revising the Book of the Church of England, to which until the Revolution we had belonged. This, therefore, seems the best time to celebrate so marked an event in our history, although the formal adoption of the book was delayed till after discussion and temporary use of it experimentally, and yet further by delays in printing. Here, then, we pause, to-day, by this "land-mark which our fathers have set," and ask what lessons it has to teach us. One thing is certain: unless we respect and value it ourselves, we can hardly expect others to respect and value it.

* A few paragraphs are repeated from a discourse given elsewhere on another occasion.

Another thing is also certain: to inherit a treasure is to inherit a trust.

You will recall that, two years ago, we commemorated here the beginning of the ministry of Rev. James Freeman, who in the two years following led his people to the changes in religious opinion of which the Revised Prayer-book was a result. Although he is ineffaceably associated with every step of these changes, I shall therefore not dwell to-day on his life and character; and I omit to do so with the less reluctance, because his grandson, Dr. James Freeman Clarke, will come to us presently from his own church service, and will say a few words to you about that good and true man. I will only remind you, as we pass, that the inscription on this memorial bust of him records that "Dr. Freeman was the first Unitarian preacher in this city; and he adorned the doctrine he professed by his Christian simplicity, purity and faithfulness, by the benevolence of his heart and the benignity of his manners. Respect for his talents and for the courageous honesty and firmness with which he maintained his opinions was mingled with love for his mildness and affectionate sympathy. In theological attainments there were few, and in the qualities which endear a minister to his people there were none, to surpass him."

The subject which we have to consider to-day suggests thoughts concerning

1. The historical affinities and affiliations of the King's Chapel;
2. Concerning the value and service of a liturgical form of worship; and
3. Concerning the special place which such a church is called to fill in the community.

I can of course touch only briefly on the large subjects which open out before us under each of these heads.

The position of King's Chapel, historically and ecclesiastically, is peculiar to itself in some important respects. It has a double and blended inheritance, while the other churches about us have but a single one. It mingles a special strain from each of two sources,—from the Church of England, whence it originally sprang, and from the Church of New England, whose air it breathed, and by whose influence, a century ago, it was profoundly modified.

We touch, peculiarly, a great historical past. In our noble liturgy, whose strains seek to perpetuate the hallowed tones of a reverend past in such a form as "no Christian, it is supposed, can take offence at, or find his conscience wounded in repeating";* in the very atmosphere of this house of prayer, which no stranger ever enters without feeling those associations which gather where men have worshipped God and brought their deepest feelings and their holiest thoughts for five generations,—may I not say, also, in the religious habits which this church has fostered, sober and quiet, yet sincere, devout, and strong in those who have been its most characteristic fruit and ornament?—in all these, I say, the method and the temper of the Established Church of the mother country, to which until the Revolution we wholly belonged, have been transmitted to us, disincumbered of much which was derived from ecclesiastical tradition, and not from the New Testament.

On the other hand, the polity of King's Chapel became Congregational two years after the adoption of

* Preface to the edition of 1785.