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Rev. James Ellis



An **Address** in Recognition of
Six **Tablets** erected to do Honor to

Governor HENRY VANE

Mistress ANNE HUTCHINSON

Governor JOHN LEVERETT

Governor SIMON BRADSTREET

Mistress ANNE BRADSTREET

Governor JOHN ENDECOTT

Given in The First Church in Boston on
Forefathers' Day, December Twenty-first
Nineteen Hundred and Four

[ELLIS, JAMES]

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Rev. James Ellis

Mar. 15. 1905

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NOTICE TO



IN the year 1669 there was printed “New England’s Memorial,” by Nathaniel Morton, Secretary to the Colony of New Plymouth. From that ancient book I quote the following :—

“In the year 1630 it pleased God of his rich grace to Transport into the Bay of the Massachusetts divers honorable Personages, and many worthy Christians, whereby the Lord began in a manifest manner and way to make known the great thoughts which he had of Planting the Gospel in this remote and barbarous Wilderness, and honoring his own Way of Institutional Worship, causing such and so many to adhere thereto, and fall upon the practice thereof. Amongst the rest,

a chief one amongst them was that Patern of Piety and Justice, Mr. John Winthrop, the first Governour of that Jurisdiction, accompanied with divers other precious Sons of Zion, which might be compared to the most fine gold. Amongst whom I might also name that Reverend and Worthy man, Mr. John Wilson, eminent for Love and Zeal; he likewise came over this year, and bare a great share of the difficulties of these new beginnings with great cheerfulness and alacrity of spirit. . . . But it pleased God to exercise them with much sickness, and being destitute of housing and shelter and lying up and down in Booths, some of them languished and died; yea, it pleased God to take away amongst the rest, that blessed Servant of Christ, Mr. Isaac Johnson with his Lady, soon after their arrival, with sundry other Precious Saints. This sickness being heavy upon them, caused the principal of them to propose to the rest to set apart a day to seek the Lord for

the aswauging of his displeasure therein, as also for direction and guidance in the solemn enterprise of entering into Church-fellowship; which solemn day was observed by all. . . . The first that began the work of the Lord above mentioned, were their honored Governour, Mr. John Winthrop, Mr. Johnson afore-named; that much-honored gentleman Mr. Thomas Dudley, and Mr. John Wilson, aforesaid. These four were the first that began the honorable Church of Boston, unto whom were joined many others.”

These four men first signed the Covenant under which this church was gathered on July 30, 1630. The Covenant is inscribed upon yonder window, and is as follows:—

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy will and divine ordinance,—

“We, whose names are hereunder written, being by His most wise and good providence

brought together into this part of America, in the Bay of Massachusetts; and desirous to unite ourselves into one Congregation or church under the Lord Jesus Christ, our head, in such sort as becometh all those whom he hath redeemed and sacrificed to himself,—do hereby solemnly and religiously (as in his most holy presence) promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace.”

Underneath it are four tablets erected to the memory of these “Founders of this Church,” the first of which reads: —

JOHN WINTHROP

FOR MANY YEARS GOVERNOR
OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY
THE CHARTER OF WHICH HE BROUGHT OVER
IN 1630

A PURITAN LEADER
MODERATE AND MAGNANIMOUS
WHO MADE RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION
THE SPIRIT OF HIS DAILY LIFE
AND SPENT HIS STRENGTH AND SUBSTANCE
IN THE CAUSE OF NEW ENGLAND
BORN 1587 DIED 1649

THOMAS DUDLEY
FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS
GOVERNOR OR DEPUTY GOVERNOR
OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY
AS GOVERNOR HE SIGNED
THE CHARTER OF HARVARD COLLEGE
BORN IN ENGLAND 1576
DIED IN ROXBURY 1653

“ A MAN OF APPROVED WISDOM
AND OF MUCH GOOD SERVICE
TO THE STATE.”

ISAAC JOHNSON

A MAN OF FIDELITY AND PROMISE

WHOSE EARLY DEATH IN 1630

FOLLOWING HARD UPON THAT OF HIS WIFE

THE LADY ARBELLA

SISTER TO

THE EARL OF LINCOLN

CAST DEEP GLOOM UPON THE COLONY

“ THIS GENTLEMAN WAS A PRIME MAN
AMONGST US, HAVING THE BEST ESTATE
OF ANY, ZEALOUS FOR RELIGION, AND THE
GREATEST FURTHERER OF THIS PLANTATION.”

JOHN WILSON

BORN 1588 DIED 1667

THE FIRST PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH

HE FULFILLED

A MINISTRY OF THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS

A MAN OF MODEST MIEN

OF STERN CONVICTIONS

A DEVOTED FRIEND

WHOSE SIMPLE PIETY AND AMIABLE SPIRIT

GREATLY ENDEARED HIM TO

THE PEOPLE OF HIS PARISH.

“A SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE.”

It is good for the community that the names of these honored and sturdy citizens should be set forth in enduring fashion. It is good for us of this church to worship ever in their august and silent presence,—

“Lest we forget, lest we forget.”

On either side of these four are ranged three other tablets, and in every instance these memorials have been erected through the generosity and filial interest of descendants from those whose names appear.

The first tablet bears this inscription:—

SIR HENRY VANE

THE YOUNGER

K^NT OF RABY CASTLE

IN THE COUNTY OF DURHAM ENGLAND

SOMETIME MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH

BORN 1613

BEHEADED ON TOWER HILL JUNE 14 1662

HE CAME TO THIS COLONY

AND WAS CHOSEN GOVERNOR IN 1636

UPON HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND IN 1637

HE BECAME CONSPICUOUS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

A MEMBER OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT

ASSOCIATED WITH CROMWELL, PYM, HAMPDEN

HE WAS A FOE TO EVERY TYRANNY

A LIFELONG CHAMPION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

“ YOUNG IN YEARS, BUT IN SAGE COUNSEL OLD.”

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED IN HIS HONOUR BY

THE RT.-HON. HENRY DE VERE VANE

LORD BARNARD OF RABY CASTLE 1904

When Henry Vane reached this colony, he was but twenty-four years of age. His coming was greeted with enthusiasm. At once he entered heart and soul into the affairs of the commonwealth, and at the first election after his arrival he was chosen governor. His administration was a stormy one, for it was mainly occupied with the controversy over Mistress Anne Hutchinson's heresies. His mystic temperament and liking for theology urged him deep into that strife, and allied his sympathies with the unfortunate lady who soon after was to be banished from the colony. His greater work and longer life were spent in England; and Fiske writes of him, "It is pleasant to remember that the man who did so much to overthrow the tyranny of Strafford, who brought the military strength of Scotland to the aid of the hard-pressed Parliament, who administered the navy with which Blake won his astonishing victories,

who dared even withstand Cromwell at the height of his power when his measures became too violent,—it is pleasant to remember that this admirable man was once the chief magistrate of an American Commonwealth.” His career in the home land was the enlarging of his efforts here,—the establishing of an imperishable freedom, dear alike to English and American hearts. It is surely fitting and significant that this tablet should be set here by Lord Barnard, who inherits the castle to which Henry Vane was assigned when he was made a knight of the English realm. It is in line with that growing expression of kinship and sympathy between England and America, which is the most natural and beautiful and fateful of all international movements of the present day. From the castle yonder comes to the church here this noble gift, at once a token of cordial interest and the expression of greater things.

I have said that during Vane's administration occurred the lamentable trial and banishment of Anne Hutchinson. The tablet bearing her name reads thus: —

THIS TABLET IS PLACED HERE
IN HONOR OF
ANNE HUTCHINSON
BORN IN LINCOLNSHIRE ENGLAND ABOUT 1592
RECEIVED INTO THE MEMBERSHIP
OF THIS CHURCH 1634
BANISHED FROM MASSACHUSETTS
BY DECREE OF COURT 1637
KILLED BY THE INDIANS AT PELHAM, N.Y. 1643
A "BREEDER OF HERESIES"
"OF READY WIT AND BOLD SPIRIT"
SHE WAS A PERSUASIVE ADVOCATE OF THE
RIGHT OF INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT.

For the strife of which this lady was the storm-centre we have small understanding and scarcely the vocabulary to-day. It was, in effect, a protest against the prevalent orthodoxy in matters of faith,—a debate which ranged the little community and the church into two bitter-voiced sides. Vane and Cotton were her advocates; Wilson, Dudley, her opponents. She was a gentlewoman of mental ability and great sympathy. She attended her neighbors in their sicknesses, and eased many a pain-wracked body, and tenderly cared for the little children in the severe conditions into which they were born. Her friends were many, and her influence wide in consequence. But, when it came to such a pass that soldiers would not go out to fight the Indians unless they were led by officers and chaplain who adopted Mistress Hutchinson's theological views, the matter became of politically vital importance, and she was summoned before

the Court. The Court banished her as dangerous to the community, and the record of our church bears this entry: "The 22d of the 1st Month 1638. Anne, the wife of our brother William Hutchinson, having on the 15th of this month been openly, in the public congregation, admonished of sundry errors held by her, was on the same 22d day cast out of the church for impenitently persisting in a manifest lie, then expressed by her in open congregation." And so she was banished and excommunicated. She went to Rhode Island, and later settled on some land which is near what is now Stamford, Connecticut, where she was cruelly massacred by the Indians. Whatever may have been her "sundry errors" of thinking and precept, I am proud to have upon the walls of this church which cast her out this lasting monument to her spotless, helpful, and sincere life. It is a tribute to personal qualities which are always so much greater than theological opinions.

Another tablet bears this inscription : —

SIR JOHN LEVERETT

1616-1679

ARRIVED AT BOSTON

SEPTEMBER 4, 1633

JOINED THE FIRST CHURCH

JULY 14, 1639

CAPTAIN IN CROMWELL'S SERVICE 1656

MAJOR-GENERAL OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY

1663-1673

GOVERNOR OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY

FROM 1673-1678

KNIGHTED BY KING CHARLES II

AUGUST 1676

As a boy, he lived in Old Boston, England. He was baptized by John Cotton in St. Botolph's Church. His father was one who defeated many designs to molest Mr. Cotton for non-conformity; and, when Cotton came to this new land, the Leveretts came with him. John Leverett, the soldier, saw much fighting against the Indians. John Leverett, the trusted commissioner of the colony, was sent to the settlements of Maine to declare them to be under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and was one of four persons selected by the General Court to keep the First Charter safe and secret during the troublous political times. John Leverett, the governor, was he who withstood the insolent Edmund Randolph face to face, — answered insolence for insolence, as the only language Randolph could be made to understand, — and by sturdy dignity and the power of a righteous cause, both in America and in England, accomplished much good service to the State.

Side by side are two tablets to Simon Bradstreet and his "dear wife" Anne.

SIMON BRADSTREET

ONE OF THE HISTORIC FOUNDERS OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY
"THE NESTOR OF NEW ENGLAND"
GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY 1679 to 1686
AND ON THE DOWNFALL OF ANDROS
AGAIN 1689-1692
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED COLONIES
1653 AND AGAIN 1663 AND 1664
HE HELD MANY OFFICES OF
RESPONSIBILITY AND TRUST
AND WAS THE SEVENTH TO SIGN THE
COVENANT OF THIS CHURCH.
BORN AT HORBLING ENGLAND
MARCH 1603
DIED AT SALEM MASSACHUSETTS
MARCH 27 1697.

Bradstreet was the last survivor of that little group which had founded the colony. Six months after Leverett, the grand old soldier of the Commonwealth died, Bradstreet was chosen to fill his place. At that time he was seventy-six years old, and held in peculiar reverence. Although a strict Puritan in faith and decidedly opposed to all "heresy and schism," he was imbued with a spirit of gentle charity and was guided by a somewhat better religious influence than marked his associates. When Anne Hutchinson was arraigned, Mr. Bradstreet was all for persuasion and not for force. He frequently took grounds in favor of freedom of speech, and often voted, in opposition to the magistrates, against the imposing of fines upon offenders who "spoke words in contempt of government." When the witchcraft delusion played such havoc with the sanity of men's opinions, he preserved a human heart and a steady temper. A chronicler of that epi-

demic mentions, “ the few men of understanding, judgment and piety, inferior to few if any in New England, that do utterly condemn the proceedings, and do freely deliver their judgment that these methods will utterly ruin and undo poor New England ”; and among the first of these few men mentioned he sets the name of Simon Bradstreet. He lived out a long career as judge, legislator, governor, ambassador, and royal councillor, dying at last in great honor at the age of ninety-four,—the white-haired and wise-tongued Nestor of the Puritan commonwealth. On his tomb in the ancient burial-place in Salem were cut these words: “ He was a man of deep discernment, whom neither wealth nor honor could allure from duty. He poised with equal balance the authority of the king and the liberty of the people. Sincere in religion and pure in his life, he overcame and left the world.”

ANNE BRADSTREET

1612-1672

FAITHFUL DAUGHTER OF

GOVERNOR THOMAS DUDLEY

DEVOTED WIFE TO

GOVERNOR SIMON BRADSTREET

ANCESTRESS OF MANY ILLUSTRIOUS AMERICANS

“MIRROR OF HER AGE; GLORY OF HER SEX.”

JOHN NORTON

GENTLEWOMAN, SCHOLAR, PUBLICIST,

POET

WITH HER AMERICAN POESY BEGINS.

“JOINED TO THE CHURCH IN BOSTON”

1630.

The most of her girlhood was probably spent in the castle of the Earl of Lincoln, as her father was steward of those estates. And, when at the early age of sixteen she married Bradstreet, it was the beginning of that pathetic process by which many a tender woman's life was lifted from the genial soil of England and thrust into the harsher surroundings of the New World. Her history is one of many a suffering, many a privation,—accentuated by the scant privileges, the crude, shaggy forms of society in the colony. Her poetic temperament, which is always sensitive, and her innate sympathy with the classic beauty and rich associations of English life, received many a shock. But she had no complaints to make in public, no burdens to add to those which her fellows were so bravely carrying. One must read between the lines to find the plaintive moments of her life. In an autobiographic sketch she wrote: "After a short time I changed

my condition and was married, and came into this country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But, after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it, and joined to the church at Boston." She is known in literature as the author of a book of poems entitled "The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America,"—a book which was printed in London a year after the execution of Charles I.; a book stilted in phrase, exaggerated in expression, but, while guilty of all the literary faults of the period, was nevertheless full of the spirit and words of genuine poetry. In this way, I think, she found relaxation from her daily cares, and threw around her an horizon wider far than the restrictions and cramping demands of family and household. If it be true, as Mr. Lowell declares, that "poetry frequents and keeps habitable those upper chambers of the mind that open toward the sun's ris-

ing," then surely Mistress Bradstreet rejoiced in
the

“light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream.”

One other tablet remains, inscribed

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN ENDECOTT

1588-1665

SOLDIER, MAGISTRATE, LEGISLATOR
GOVERNOR OF LONDON'S PLANTATION IN THE
MASSACHUSETTS BAY IN NEW ENGLAND

1629

GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS BAY

1644-1645, 1649-1650, 1651-1654

1655-1665

DEPUTY GOVERNOR

1641-1644, 1650-1651, 1654-1655.

A FOUNDER OF THE COMMONWEALTH

A PURITAN AMONG PURITANS.

“ A grave, strong man, who knew no peer
In the Pilgrim land, where he ruled in fear
Of God, not man, and for good or ill
Held his trust with an iron will.

“ He had shorn with his sword the cross from out
The flag, and cloven the May-pole down,
Harried the heathen round about,
And whipped the Quakers from town to town.
Earnest and honest, a man at need
To burn like a torch for his own harsh creed,
He kept with the flaming brand of his zeal
The gate of the holy commonweal.”

That you recall as the poet Whittier's description of the governor. Probably no man of all that early group has been so written about or has had so many harsh criticisms flung at him as Governor John Endecott. He was severe, even to the point of brutality, in religion. He was impulsive, even to the point of rashness, in politics.

Yet his very firmness and integrity won the confidence of his contemporaries, as the many elections to the highest office within their giving witness. "He was a faithful sentinel upon the watch-towers of his country's interests, ever jealous of her rights, ever zealous for her welfare. He fulfilled all the trusts committed to his care with an honesty of purpose and a fidelity that knew no fear, having for his reward the approval of his own strict conscience in a life well and usefully spent." The point of view for the proper estimating of any character must always be, not whether the person meets requirements as you or I see them, but whether he meets requirements as he sees them. Judged thus, Governor Endecott will not be found wanting; for he followed the dictate of his own conscience, whatsoever it might cost him, whithersoever it might lead him. The early years of his life in the colony were spent in Salem; but shortly before he was elected

governor he came to Boston to live, and became identified with this church.

It is not the simple standing in history of these men which we admire from a safe distance, not merely the memory of a past, however inspiring, but the presence of a sense of duty, the presence of God, the everlasting presence of the ideal in the lives of men. We may deprecate the Puritan's rigid interpretation of righteousness, but that righteousness was the strong, red blood that flowed in his brains. We stand aghast at his grim notions of what pure and undefiled religion should be; but that religion was his life, and we have not yet striven unto blood, and he had. His was a time when God's clock marked an advance for the sons of men. And when their little ships dropped anchor along this coast, it was the signal that God was about to speak, in words made flesh, some other truth which hitherto men had not been able to bear. No spirit less intense,

no thought of God's direction and care less definite and tangible, no enthusiasm less concentrated, would have sufficed for the work in hand. If the Puritan had a grim religion, he also lived in a grim age. If he had a severe holiness, he had to face severe demands upon it. If it narrowed life, it also condensed life. It laid the foundations of this country on a basis more enduring than Plymouth Rock itself. It nerved fainting hearts when all else failed; it gave sinew to morals more precious than rubies. Their doctrinal sermons, their undiluted laws, have passed away with their flint-locks, their clothing, their queer houses, and their tithing-man. But the things that have passed away did not make the Puritan. What he meant in all his sternness was God,—God intimately in all parts of human life, God the blesser of a righteous people, God the King eternal, immortal, invisible. So deep ran this conviction that any trifling with its sobriety was

to be put down. There was no respect of persons : there were sober searchings of hearts. There was an earnest literalism about cutting off the right hand if it offended, or the plucking out of the eye if it caused to stumble. Say that his life was rugged as the mountains, say that it gloried in the lighting and the thunder, yet always was it spring-fed, and always those springs flowed out in resistless search of the great, booming, rushing sea of God.

The harvest ripened by the sun of other days we must plant again in the sunshine of our own. Already the new day has come. All up and down the eastern sky play the promiscuous shafts of light. The evening time of darkened counsel, of doubtful experiment, of incomplete attainment, is broken in upon by the dawn of larger things, of power, of peace, of glorifying results. And, as we clearly see both our privilege and our responsibility, we shall also see why it is that, though

they “ obtained a good report through faith, they did not receive the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

The *FIRST CHURCH* in *Boston*
asks the *Courtesy* of your *Presence* at a
Special Service on
FOREFATHERS' DAY
in *Recognition* of *Six Tablets* erected
to do *Honour* to

Governor HENRY VANE

Mistress ANNE HUTCHINSON

Governor SIMON BRADSTREET

Mistress ANNE BRADSTREET

Governor JOHN LEVERETT

Governor JOHN ENDECOTT

Berkeley and Marlborough Streets

December TWENTY-FIRST

At Eight o'clock

[1904]

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