

GEORGE WASHINGTON WARREN

GOVERNOR WINTHROP'S
RETURN TO BOSTON: AN
INTERVIEW WITH A GREAT
CHARACTER

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Governor Winthrop's Return to Boston

On the seventeenth day of September, A.D. 1880, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the town of Boston, the event was commemorated, among other ways, by the inauguration of the statue of John Winthrop, in Scollay Square. He is represented by the renowned sculptor in the garb of a gentleman of his day, holding in his hand the royal charter of the Massachusetts Colony, which he brought over with him.

His serene countenance falls like a benediction upon this city of ours, which shows a wonderful and prosperous growth. He may be said to be the founder of the First Church of Boston, of the City itself, and of this Christian Commonwealth,—a threefold distinction. To have been the founder of a single one of these would have insured his immortal fame.

He was also the author of the covenant of the First Church,

which was gathered in Charlestown, Aug. 27, 1630, and which soon after removed to the Boston side of Charles River. The covenant is in these words:—

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to His holy 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 sanctified 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."

Probably there are very few, if any, original documents in America of so ancient a date which have been preserved, and which are still in force, as this identical covenant, which has been signed and kept by hundreds in each generation for nearly three centuries. Far superior to the Andover creed, or to any other creed of seminary, council, or church, it has ever been a bond of union, and not a bone of contention. Aptly phrased and including all the essential conditions of a vital church organization, it will stand for centuries to come, and will outlast all creeds of human invention, ever promoting beneficence and charity.

This poem represents the spirit of Governor Winthrop returning to the city and the capital of the Christian Commonwealth he had founded, and taking possession of the bodily form which the artist has reproduced of him, clothed in his own antique costume. He surveys the extended limits of Boston, including Charlestown, with Bunker Hill Monument, and four other townships with hundreds of church steeples pointing to the sky. He misses from the old site on Cornhill the single house of worship where Wilson and Cotton preached, and where he was wont to expound; but soon he descries from afar, in his mind's eye, standing where, in his time, the waves of the sea were surging, the beautiful church edifice and the elegant chapel where five hundred Sunday-scholars are weekly taught. He dwells with supreme satisfaction upon the good deeds done by the church he established, and predicts for it a still more prosperous future and a greater spiritual growth. He recognizes only two things which existed in his day, and have remained unchanged,—the church covenant he wrote, as it were, by inspiration, or at least by a wise forecast of future needs, and the Communion cup he gave, which has singularly escaped the hazards of fire and the chances of time, and which has been, ever since, constantly used in the holy commemorative service.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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