

Inspirational Art: “Faith” by Sculptor Hammatt Billings



She is called “Faith”, and referred to as the “Monument to the Forefathers”.

She is an exquisite granite work of art, standing at 81 feet tall, and is a tribute to the first English settlers to the land of Plymouth, Mass.

She is the largest solid-granite monument in the US and was dedicated in 1889, some thirty years after its cornerstone was laid.

She is surrounded by 15-foot -tall allegorical figures, in addition to bas-relief sculptors illustrating scenes of the Pilgrims and their arrival on the shores of Plymouth and interacting with Native Americans.

What is most compelling about this statue is that “Faith” holds a Bible and is thought to be pointing up to the heavens. Additionally, one of the 15-

foot-tall allegorical figures is “Morality”, who holds a tablet bearing the beginning of the Ten Commandments, “I am the Lord thy God.” Niches in the base of Morality’s throne give tribute to prophecy and evangelism.

This statue begs the question: “Were our founding forefathers Christians? Or were they “free-thinkers” and the victims of the Christian Nation Myth?

I think the answer is clear. The truths of America’s Christian heritage are visible and obvious when the monuments and documents of America are closely examined, with “Faith” being no exception.

An additional note of interest is that, according to the Plymouth Visitors Center and Historical Society, financial contributions were received from 11,000 individuals, “in this and other countries”, during the 30 years between laying of “Faith’s” cornerstone and completion. One such contributor is said to have approached the sculptor for a copy of the schematics, which were later used as a source of inspiration for a work of his own - a work which is now known as the Statue of Liberty.