

# Griffin's History

## Chapter XI

### **CORNER STONE EXERCISES OF THE STRONG PLACE BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKLYN**

"The introductory exercises were by Rev. Dr. Welsh and Rev. Mr. Hodge. Address by Rev. Dr. Dowling, Ceremony of laying the stone, with the benediction, by the pastor.

"The address was one of the happiest efforts of the author, particularly Baptist and orthodox. While the speaker disclaimed any New Testament injunction or precept for the customary ceremony in laying the corner stone of a church edifice, he nevertheless most happily showed the appropriateness of such a service, and satisfied his hearers that in its observance on the present occasion neither himself nor the church and society engaged in the enterprise could be charged with 'going toward Rome.' "

Of course not. Every beast must have his day. The first has had his, and now the second must reign. Therefore, instead of your 'going toward Rome,' she must come towards you, and present you with the image. See 13th chapter of Revelation.

The description of the exercises, from the Recorder, thus continues:

"The history of the Baptists and their connection with the development and progress of religious liberty in England and our own country, was briefly but most happily set forth. It was on the whole one of the most interesting ceremonies of this nature, we were ever privileged to enjoy. The leaden box, closely sealed and put in the corner stone, contained, among other matters, the following: A Bible, bearing the imprint of the American and Foreign Bible Society; Brooklyn City Directory; New York Recorder, Watchman and Reflector, and other denominational papers; Annual Reports of denominational Societies; a quantity of American coin, &c.

"The prospects of the young church and society are encouraging. They have a subscription of twenty thousand dollars raised among themselves, with expectations of a still farther increase from the vicinity in which their house is located, of which it is to be an ornament. The church was constituted in March, 1849, with but sixty— six members; it now numbers one hundred and ninety— three. They built their present chapel at an expense of about ten thousand dollars,

and supposed it would be ample in its accommodations for four or five years. The increase of the church and congregation has so far exceeded their expectations as to render it necessary to enlarge immediately the place of their habitation. Their contracts require the house to be ready for occupancy by the first of April next.

"The building, with a spire of about two hundred feet, is to be of solid stone work. A description of the design of the building will be hereafter given."

Now why, we ask in all candor, was this 'quantity of American coin' hid in a 'leaden box' from all practical use, while those who did it profess to believe it might have been instrumental in saving souls from eternal death? Which are we to believe, their words or their acts?

Again, they had twenty thousand dollars subscribed, to which they expected a farther increase, for building a new chapel, with a spire of two hundred feet. Why all this extravagance to make their chapel an 'ornament to the vicinity?' If this people believed what they pretend to believe, would it not be more consoling to their hearts and consciences to worship in a house less costly, and with the balance of the money save a portion of the heathen from endless woe, than to gratify their pride and vanity by an ostentatious display? Surely, they could have curtailed a little for the benefit of the poor heathen, even if it had been only ten feet of the spire. That would have left one hundred and ninety feet, which, if not so 'ornamental,' certainly would have been ample for a Baptist church.

We shall now conclude this part of the subject with an extract from a letter written by Rev. Joseph Kennard, to the New York Recorder, showing the spirit and manner of raising funds for these purposes, viz:

"I suppose you have accounts of the progress of mission feeling among our churches. I have been a pastor many years in Philadelphia, but I have never before witnessed anything to equal what we have seen in the last two weeks. The spirit of God seems to be poured out from on high. The meeting of last Wednesday evening was with my people, and to my grateful astonishment resulted in securing twenty—six life—memberships, in the midst of a special effort to pay a heavy debt on our meeting house. As a friend of Missions you will rejoice in this result. The same spirit is manifested in all the churches in this city."

We must now conclude this chapter on Missions. We have designedly travelled over a wide field, for the purpose of showing the outline of missionary character. But we must inform the reader, that we have mainly kept on the outskirts. We have not attempted to enter the deep, dark, mysterious ocean of iniquity, which has been

practiced by priestcraft among "the great and particularly civilized nations of the earth." As the grand objects of missions is to evangelize the world and to advance the Redeemer's kingdom, we will conclude this chapter with a few extracts, showing the result of all their efforts. Lest we might be considered unfair in our selections, we have given extracts relative to the state of morals in Boston and New York City, the great headquarters of missionism.

The Boston Christian Observer, of October 24, 1851, in a leading editorial, after alluding to the recent murders in that city, says:

"Other vices are by no means confined to our foreign population, as we have continual occasion to know. We must, then, come to the conclusion that the morals of our city, taking its population, with their origin, numbers, &c, into the account, is alarmingly low. If we were disposed to dwell upon the vice of licentiousness alone, and give the proofs which are at hand of its existence in high places, as well as low, and especially among heads of families, of both sexes, the same conclusion would be reached."

The New York Recorder comments on the above as follows, viz:

"Such a statement as this, and particularly that portion of it which I have black faced, call for the instant and serious consideration of every true friend of his country. For what is alleged of the morals of Boston, it is to be feared is also applicable to our own city; indeed, to the country at large."

The foregoing extracts are the admissions of missionary papers. If our limits and inclination permitted, we could select hundreds of extracts, from the religious and political press, showing a worse picture of affairs than is exhibited above.

We shall now close this chapter with an extract from the Sunday Times, being a reply of the late Major Noah, a learned Israelite, to a question propounded, relative to the second coming of Christ, viz:

"He would, we think, be less welcome to the Christians than to the Jews. He could not, we think, recognize reformed religion which is carried out in his name. He who preached against pride, ostentation and arrogance—who was the friend of the poor, and rebuked the rich and worldly—minded—who preached peace on earth and good will to men—who ordained obedience to the laws and submission to rulers—would not brook the desecration of the Christian pulpit, occupied by some men who endeavor to stir up rebellion and division among the people—who falsely quote the scriptures to carry out their fanaticism—who openly defy the laws, and

wickedly commend opposition to them—who are sowing division and misery throughout the land. He would say, 'I had trouble with the Scribes and Pharisees, who were my own people—they did not recognize my mission; but here are my followers—as they represent themselves to be—who ought, in my name, to carry out my principles, but do not—who consider that there are many of my orders, directions, and doctrines which they cannot carry out, alleging that they do not conform to the spirit of the age! !' He would find his own people as he left them two thousand years ago—with one faith and one God; but the modern church he would find divided into numerous sects, one arrayed against the other—preaching all kinds of doctrines— and understanding better what he meant to establish than he did himself. The question is not, 'How could the Jews receive him?' but, 'How would he be received by those professing to be Christians?'"