

ST. PETER'S.

Anniversary of Laying the Foundation Stone.

A History of the Building.

On Wednesday four hundred years ago—April 18th, 1506—was laid the foundation stone of St. Peter's in Rome, writes a correspondent of the Dublin Freeman's Journal.

When St. Peter's body was taken down from the cross on which he had given up his life for Christ it was laid to rest in a simple grave just beside the place of his martyrdom, on the other side of the Via Cornelia, which flanked the Circus of Nero.

The first years of infant Christianity were such as left but scant opportunity of adorning the burial places of the martyred dead, and more than a generation had passed before any monument decked the last resting place of the Prince of Apostles. But about the end of the first century Pope Anacletus was able to erect a little oratory over the tomb of Peter, and for more than two centuries this was the only memorial that marked the grave of the first Vicar of Christ. Around and near this lowly monument the successors of Peter were buried, down to the year 202, when owing to causes that have never been satisfactorily explained the Popes began to be laid to rest in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus, outside the city, on the old Applan Way.

The years that followed were big with mighty changes. Persecution raged long and terribly. But persecution could not last for ever. The battle of the Milvian Bridge was fought, and Maximian, the last of the persecuting emperors, was defeated and lost his life in the Tiber. Constantine unfurled the standard of the Cross over the conquering Roman legions, and the Catholic Church stood forth at last in the full light of day and liberty. One of the Emperor's first cares was to erect suitable temples to the God of Battles in whose name victory had crowned his career. Foremost amongst these was the Basilica of St. Peter, which he raised over the lowly tomb where the Fisherman of Galilee had been buried.

In the years and centuries that followed no place was more venerated than this. From the ends of the earth pilgrims thronged unceasingly to visit the tomb of the Apostle enshrined in the centre of the Basilica of Constantine. Once more it became customary for the Popes to be buried there, and of all the successors of St. Peter, one hundred and thirty-four Pontiffs have been laid to rest within the precincts of the temple that was erected to his memory, martyrdom and ashes. Writing in the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom exclaimed at the sight of that temple: "Here, as one stands, the view of the shrine strikes on his heart—he is affected as if they that lie there were present; and he quits the place almost another man. I admire the city of Rome, not for its columns or any other vain display, but because of these two glorious pillars of the Church—St. Peter and Paul."

From the day of its first erection by Constantine the history of St. Peter's is but a reflection of the story of Papal Rome—now witnessing Royal scenes, such as the coronation of Charlemagne; now—during the dreary days of the captivity of Avignon, and the still more dreary days of the great schism of the West—with grass growing up to the very steps of its altar, and cattle grazing undisturbed amid its storied aisles. Then was Rome nothing more than the skeleton of a city, as the old chronicler expresses it—so poor that there was no lamp to light on the altar, and the church itself was a tottering ruin, and wolves prowled freely in its precincts and dug up the bodies that had been laid to rest in the consecrated clay round about.

These evil days ended with the election of Pope Martin V., who at once devoted 20,000 gold florins to the erection of a new roof over the venerable temple, which he repaired with unstinted labor and unwearied hand. But the sacred pile was old. It had stood the brunt of

1200 years. Time had laid a heavy hand on its walls, so much so that in the course of some years it was found that these walls were unsound and repairs but temporary.

Under the inspiring influence of the Renaissance, Nicholas V., in 1450, conceived the design of demolishing the old edifice and rebuilding it from the foundations. His idea was taken up by Paul II. and Sixtus IV.; but the project languished for want of funds, and little had been done towards its accomplishment when Julius II. became Pope.

For a time it was the intention of Julius merely to carry on the work of restoration begun by his predecessors, and to extend the old edifice. It was in fact an accident which led him to change his plans. He was a man of great deeds and magnificent projects, and among other plans, he proposed to erect a stately monument to deck his grave in St. Peter's when he should be called away to join those who had gone before him. For this purpose he invited Michael Angelo, who was then a young man, to come to Rome and take charge of the undertaking.

Michael Angelo consented, and in accordance with the Pope's wish, drew up the design of a monument, which was, however, of such colossal proportions that if it was to be carried into effect a new and vast edifice should be erected to contain it. The great architect Bramante was then in Rome, the right-hand man of the Pope. Julius consulted him on his project. Bramante's answer was to plan a new and glorious Basilica that was to surpass all other existing structures in size, beauty, and magnificence, and was to "embody the greatness of the present and the future." Pastor thus expresses the idea that dominated the minds of the Pope and the architect:—"The mausoleum of the poor fisherman of the Lake of Genesareth was to represent the dignity and significance of the office which he had bequeathed to his successors. The idea of the Universal Church demanded a colossal edifice, that of the Papacy an imposing centre; therefore its main feature must be a central dome of such proportions as to dominate the whole structure. Thus, Bramante thought, could be best attained by a ground-plan in the form of a Greek cross, with the great dome in the centre, over the tomb of the Apostles. His contemporaries were enthusiastic in their admiration of his design, and the poets of the day sang of it as the ninth wonder of the world."

Julius was a man of action. He lost no time once he had made up his mind. Accordingly he made rapid preparation for a beginning, and was able to lay the foundation stone on Low Sunday, April 18th, 1506. Accompanied by Cardinals and Prelates he went in solemn procession to the excavation that had been prepared for the foundation, twenty-five feet deep. Into this he descended along with two Cardinals and a few masons, and fitted into its place the foundation stone of white marble, which was in readiness, with a suitable inscription recording the contemplated work. Underneath the foundation stone were placed twelve medals specially struck for the occasion. Will the evolutions of time ever bring them to light?

The progress of the undertaking was as swift as the beginning had been prompt. Julius had 2500 men employed, and he personally superintended much of the work. But his was not a long life, and he was cut off ere he was able to see anything more than the erection of the four gigantic pillars that were to support the dome. But his project was eagerly taken up by Leo X. and Clement VII., and the huge structure continued to grow inch by inch and year by year.

Bramante, too, died while yet the work was in its infancy, and his place was taken by Raphael Verone, and Sangallo, who made some alterations in the original designs. These were in turn succeeded by Balthazar Peruzzi and Michael Angelo, who made further changes in

Bramante's plan, and who, during the Pontificate of Paul III., Julius III., Marcellus II., and Paul IV., labored with all his boundless energy down till his death in 1564. Pius V. and Sixtus V. entrusted the work to the architects Della Porta and Fontana, who, under Gregory XIV., completed the dome, which later on was adorned with mosaics by Clement VIII. At the suggestion of the architect Maderno, Paul V. consented to change the final plans prepared by Michael Angelo, and lengthened the structure considerably—a change that, like most of the ideas of Maderno, has met with little favor ever since. The Basilica was finally dedicated to Urban VIII, in 1626.

Thus, after 120 years' incessant labor, under the direction of the most brilliant architects the world has yet seen, at an expenditure of twelve millions sterling, the glittering pile was complete, and men could gaze in wonder on the

"Rich marbles, richer paintings, shrines where flame
The lamps of gold, and haughty dome which vies
In air with earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the clouds must claim."

It is a common thing to hear visitors at the first sight of St. Peter's complain that it falls short of their expectations—that it seems much smaller than they had imagined. Such is, indeed, the case. But this impression arises not because the building is small, but because of its perfect proportions—each part is so well adapted to all the rest that the gigantic dimensions of the structure are toned and mellowed into harmonious appearance. In reality it is difficult to imagine that the measurements of St. Peter's reach the following immense figures:—It is 614 feet in length, 445 in breadth, 152 in height. The distance from the floor to the cross surmounting the dome is 448 feet; while the dome itself is 139 feet in diameter and 443 in circumference. All this, added to the glittering ornamentation that decks every inch of St. Peter's, fully justifies the enthusiastic language of a writer of sixty years ago: "We have before us a scene which no earthly edifice ever presented, which no imagination can picture, no pen describe. The vastness, the solitude, the symmetry—the richness, the beauty, the grandeur—the gorgeous magnificence, in a word, that surrounds us on every side, enchants the eye, expands the mind, warms the heart, lifts the soul to the lofty objects of eternity, and prompts us to fall down in spontaneous and grateful acknowledgment to God, Who has gifted man with such sublime conceptions, and enabled him to call forth such wondrous creations."

The stupendous monument designed for the tomb of Julius II. was never carried out. An obscure memorial in a deserted corner of St. Peter's marks his resting-place. Nothing could have better pleased the Pope. In him there was nothing selfish nor mean. His one object was the glory of God and the exaltation of the Church, and assuredly, had he lived to see it, he would have been well content with the glorious pile that, out of a plan for his own tomb, was raised above the resting-place of the Prince of Apostles. None could say with better reason than Julius: "Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice"—if you seek a monument to my name, gaze on the mighty dome of St. Peter's.

AN AID TO MOTHERS.

Baby's Own Tablets is the very best medicine in the world for curing the minor ailments of babies and young children. It is the best because it is absolutely harmless. It is the best because it never fails to effect a cure. A few doses relieve and cure constipation, indigestion, colic, diarrhoea and simple fevers. It breaks up colds—thus preventing croup—expels worms and brings teething without tears. Not one particle of opiate or poisonous soothing stuff is in this medicine. Mrs. Hugh B. Denton, Scotchtown, N.B., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets and have always found them a satisfactory medicine." You can get the Tablets from any medicine dealer or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

PAPACY PRESENTED AND OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Connection of Pius X With St. Peter as Historically Evident as That of Roosevelt With Washington.

(F. D., in the Intermountain Catholic.)

In this age of critical examination and religious investigation two facts, as important as they are far-reaching in their logical consequences, are deserving of serious consideration, and these are, (1) the unbroken continuity of the papacy and (2) the unchangeableness of the teachings in faith and morals of all the successors of St. Peter in the papal chair.

The former is as historically evident as the succession of president George Washington down to President Roosevelt. As historical facts the legitimate succession of Theodore Roosevelt to President Washington to the highest honor that could be conferred by the citizens of the United States is no more evident than that of Pope Pius X to St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome. This being a public fact around which all other facts of history have centered for twenty centuries, the long lapse of time between these distant extremes is not to be taken into consideration in the investigation of this important truth. The consequence of this unbroken succession proves that the church of which Pius X is the present Supreme Pontiff is the church of St. Peter who received his appointment from Christ, its divine founder, as the succession of Theodore Roosevelt, as President of the United States, proves that we have the same government; i. e., the same political body as we had when George Washington first presided over the new born government.

But this fact suggests another and still more important fact, viz., the power and authority attached to the commission given by Christ when he made his appointment. In the first place, his selection of teachers, who were to be invested with his power and authority, were not the proud, haughty, learned and rich men of Judea, but humble, lowly and poor fishermen. In empowering these to continue his work he said: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach all nations. . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." These words of the Savior, taken from the last chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, are repeated in St. Mark's gospel. "And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature." These texts prove clearly that Christ, before he ascended into heaven, commissioned a body of teachers to perpetuate his work. He was addressing his apostles, and they were "to go into the whole world." The power and authority conferred on the apostolic body whom he had chosen, was either personal, and therefore limited, or it was general and therefore extended to their successors. "According to all the lights the contexts afford," it could not be personal, in the sense that it would cease, and therefore limited. (1) "They were to teach all nations." (2) "They were to go into the whole world." These two requirements were impossible, humanly speaking, for the apostles to personally accomplish. Therefore it was not a mere personal commission which would cease when the apostles died. (3) It must then extend to their successors, and the teachers, who inherit it, must be in some way identical with the apostles because the context shows that Christ contemplated who were to succeed them. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." To be always present, as directly stated, must mean that the apostles were always to remain as teachers; i. e., till time ended, and eternity began for all. As the teachers are, in every sense, inseparable from the apostles, so they cannot, in every sense, be identified with the apostles. Personally the teachers cannot be identified with the apostles in the sense that

the apostles have long since passed to their reward, and yet those who received that commission were to continue as teachers till the end of time—"unto the consummation of the world." The end of time, when the consummation of the world takes place and the commission given to the teachers will cease has been and is yet a future event. Then if the commission given to the apostles personally meant limitation and therefore ceased after their death, the word of our Lord would be meaningless, since it was to continue "unto the consummation of the world," which simply means that it would survive their natural lives. In this sense only it must be conceded that the words of Christ addressed personally to the apostles are to be taken. But how were the apostles to survive themselves and perpetuate the power and the authority contained in the texts already quoted? Only as a corporate body of teachers, which, like any corporation, must always preserve its identity after the original members of the corporate body have passed away.

Admitting the premises, which are undeniable, namely, that Christ gave his apostles a commission to teach which was universal both in space and in time, the conclusion is inevitable, namely, (1) that it was given in the sense that the corporate body of teachers would survive "unto the consummation of the world;" (2) that as the apostles, after the ordinary span of life, had passed away, and could not survive as individual teachers, the commission was not meant for them in their individual capacity; and (3) its survival and perpetuation could be only in the sense of a corporation or a constituted body of teachers. Then only the body of teachers who are linked with the apostles can or do share in the power and authority contained in the original commission, "Go teach all nations." How can they teach unless they be sent? The connection of Pius X with St. Peter is as historically evident as that Theodore Roosevelt with George Washington, the first president of the United States. In the long list of Supreme Pontiffs, numbering 256, the date of each pope's accession to the chair of Peter and the length of his reign are officially authenticated. In this long unbroken, yet visible, chain, we are taken back to the solemn moment when Christ was commissioning the original members of the corporate body of teachers. "Go teach all nations. Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

But the old objection to the supreme authority and universal jurisdiction of the pope over the entire church appropriately suggests itself here. The objection is founded on the fact that Peter received no special commission as distinct from that of the other apostles, nor did he exercise any authority over them. Therefore he had none. Only the popes, in the lapse of time, assumed such arrogant power and authority over the universal church, including bishops, priests and laity. The conclusion does not follow from the premises laid down. Because Peter exercised no authority over the other apostles, it does not follow that he had no such authority. Again can it be proven that Peter received no special authority or unlimited jurisdiction in spirituals? The Bible, to which we are always referred as the court of last appeal, gives frequent intimations of the supremacy and superiority of Peter over the apostles. It mentions his name always first, and tells that our Lord bestowed on him a special mark of distinction when he commissioned him, and him alone, "to feed the lambs and sheep," also, "to confirm the brethren." This surely denotes a very great distinction and marked superiority. What, then, becomes of the objection founded on a mere assumption, or, as the logicians say, "beg-

ging the question?" It may be true that Peter exercised no authority over the apostles whose mission, like his, was an extraordinary one, and who equally with him were inspired. But the same is not true of their successors. Peter's successors succeeded him in the authority and jurisdiction of his apostleship. The successors of the other apostles succeeded them in the episcopate. Both the Scriptures and Christian tradition dating back to the days of Peter prove that he was the prince of the apostles, and if our Lord had not established his primacy of authority and jurisdiction it could not be established at all. "Only the popes in the lapse of time assumed such arrogant power," contradicts the history of the early church, and the unbroken tradition of all the early Christian people of the East and West, including the Greek as well as the Latin Church. Long before Constantine, the first Christian ruler, the primacy of authority and jurisdiction, exercised by Peter's successors, was universally acknowledged. Therefore it existed independent of any temporal power, or before any temporal ruler could aid or prop it up. If "arrogantly" assumed, we would naturally conclude that other bishops and patriarchs, no less arrogant and equally ambitious, would rebel against any such usurpation. Yet the verdict of history, confirmed by the early tradition of the first centuries, is, that they did not. This fact, coupled with the fact that the popes never changed the ancient faith, are the two facts that are as important as they are far-reaching in their logical consequences, and appeal to every man's critical examination.

Archbishop Riordan Cancels Trip and Returns to Stricken Flock.

When the great catastrophe overtook San Francisco, Archbishop Riordan of the stricken city had reached Chicago on his way to Baltimore to take part in the joyous celebration of the Cathedral centenary, says the Catholic Union and Times.

"I must return to my people," he said, "I am anxiously awaiting news from home and as soon as the way is open I will return to aid in the work of relieving the sufferings of the people."

"I can hardly realize that the noble city I left four days ago is now a pile of fire-swept ruins. The churches in which I have spent the best years of my life are all gone. The work of a lifetime was wiped out in a moment."

"The suddenness, the enormity of it all has stunned me. I know that many of my people are dead and all of them are suffering and in danger. I wish that I was there to help them in their hour of need. All that can be done at present is to rush food and medicines to the city in order to save the panic-stricken people from starvation and to care for the sick and wounded."

"When I left San Francisco last Monday there had been no warning of the awful catastrophe. It was an ideal spring day and the city seemed to be in its holiday attire. Crowds of laughing, pleasure-seeking people filled the streets as if rejoicing in the beautiful spring weather."

"I received no news of the earthquake until I arrived at Omaha. As the train I was on drew into the depot I heard a newsboy crying that San Francisco had been destroyed. I bought a paper and read the terrible story, but still I could not believe that it had happened."

"I thought that the story of the earthquake had been exaggerated and that later news would prove that the destruction was not so great as had been reported. When I arrived in Chicago this morning, however, I realized the full extent of the tragedy."

"I understand from the newspaper reports that St. Mary's Church has been destroyed by fire and that the Dominican Church fell at the first upheaval. When I return I will make an effort to organize the priests of my diocese into a relief corps, and we will do all that is possible to aid the helpless people."