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LONDON, SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1928

GREGORIAN CALENDAR ADOPTED IN EAST

The interesting news was last week cabled from Constantinople that the Congress of Greek Churches now in session there has decided, "after centuries of effort and agitation," to accept the Gregorian reform of the Calendar.

It may not be out of place to recall to mind just what this means. Julius Caesar in the year 46 B.C. established the calendar that was used throughout Europe until its reform by Gregory XIII. in 1582 A.D. But the Julian Calendar was based on the assumption that the solar astronomical year was 365 days and 6 hours; whereas in reality it is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds. The Julian Calendar made the difference of one day every 128 years. About the year 780 it was observed that the equinoxes took place about three days earlier than at the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325 when the 21st of March was fixed upon as the proper date for the vernal equinox—a date of great importance for the calculation of Easter, and therefore of all the movable feasts throughout the year. By the sixteenth century the error amounted to ten days, so that the vernal equinox fell on the 11th of March and the autumnal on the 11th of September. Such alterations were too obvious to be ignored, and throughout the Middle Ages many observers both pointed them out and endeavored to devise a remedy. For this purpose it was necessary, however, not only to determine with accuracy the amount of the Julian error, but to discover a practical means of correcting it. It was this latter problem that stood chiefly in the way of reform, for the amount of error was ascertained almost exactly in the thirteenth century. The necessity of a reform was continually urged especially by Church authorities, who felt the need in connection with the ecclesiastical calendar. It was accordingly pressed upon the attention of the Pope by the councils of Constance, Basle, Lateran (1511) and finally by Trent in its last session in 1563. Nineteen years later the work was accomplished by Gregory XIII. with the aid chiefly of the learned astronomers, Lilius and Clavius. To get rid of the ten superfluous days the 4th of October, 1582, was followed immediately by the 15th; to obviate the recurrence to omit three leap years in every four centuries. To effect this only three centuries—the even century years as 1700, 1800, 1900, &c.—were reckoned leap years if exactly divisible by 400. Thus 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not leap years; the year 2000, however, will be. By the Gregorian rule for the intercalations the year still exceeds the true solar year by 26 seconds, which amount to a day in 3323 years; and that is of no immediate concern.

A newspaper refers to the news of the adoption of the Gregorian calendar by the Greek Churches as "this curiously belated concession to general custom and astronomical truth."

Though the reform was introduced almost at once by all the Catholic nations and the Catholic States of Germany, the German Protestant States adhered to the Julian calendar until 1700. In Great Britain, says the Encyclopedia Britannica, the alteration of the style was for a long time opposed by popular prejudice. The inconvenience, however,

of using a different date from that employed by the greater part of Europe in matters of history and chronology began to be generally felt; and at length the Calendar (New Style) Act was passed in 1750 for the adoption of the new style in all public and legal transactions. The difference then amounted to 11 days; and this was removed by ordering that the day following the 2nd of September, 1752, should be called the 14th of that month.

The Gregorian rule of intercalation of the secular years was adopted in order to preserve uniformity in the future.

So that curiously belated as is the Russian concession to general custom and astronomical truth, it is not without precedent. Great Britain was 171 years behind the times, and the Eastern Churches are just 171 years behind Great Britain.

Another curious coincidence is that the Eastern Churches followed the Church of England precedent of adopting the Gregorian calendar "with reservations" so far as Easter is concerned.

The popular prejudice that kept Great Britain nearly a century and three quarters behind Catholic Europe, and even a half century behind Protestant Germany, manifested itself in a ludicrous protest by British workmen against the loss of eleven days in September 1752.

Though they have now become accustomed to the changed date it must be distressing for our Pope-hating friends who celebrate so enthusiastically the glorious Twelfth—which should not be reckoned a movable feast—to have recalled to mind that their glorious, pious and immortal festival was actually transferred by Pope Gregory XIII. from the First of July to the Twelfth!

"RUM, ROMANISM AND REBELLION"

The Governor of the State of New York is a Catholic. Since his sweeping victory at the polls last November he has been considered as one of the outstanding possibilities for the Democratic nomination for President. Immediately his religion became a dominating political consideration. If Governor Smith were a Protestant, an agnostic or a nothingarian it is safe to say that his demonstrated power to carry the great State of New York would place him in the forefront as Presidential candidate even though he lacked the full measure of those qualities that in Governor Smith secure for him the love and loyalty of political friends and command the sincere respect and esteem of political opponents. As it is, his name is never omitted in the numerous and ever-increasing articles canvassing the political situation for the coming Presidential year. R. V. Oulahan in a recent article of the kind says:

"Among most of those regarded as possibilities for the Democratic nomination, Governor Smith stands out boldly. There is advanced against his chances the argument that no political party will be willing to nominate a Catholic for President. The counter argument is that religious prejudice will cut little figure in the face of Smith's conspicuous ability and his enormous popularity in the largest State in the Union, with its forty-five electoral votes."

Governor Smith himself has on all occasions said simply but unequivocally that he is not a candidate. Still the House of Smith is found in every political horoscope. Bigots of a certain type, noisy and numerous, have become almost frantic. A Presbyterian minister in a church paper last week headed an hysterical anti-Smith article "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion," the famous political catch-phrase that was intended to help but is credited with having defeated James G. Blaine and elected Grover Cleveland.

Recently Governor Smith signed the Bill passed by the Republican Assembly and Democratic Senate of the State of New York, which repealed the State law for the enforcement of the Volstead Act. For those to whom Prohibition is the whole law, the prophets and the Constitution this has made the Governor the target of much violent criticism and abuse. Our own Canadian newspapers carried stories and more or less informed comment on the New York Governor's action; and as Prohibition has, according to the point of view, poisoned or purified the politics

of this continent it may, in the circumstances, be worth while to present the facts of the case.

Many confuse the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States with the Volstead Act. In some cases this confusion may be due to the deliberate desire to mislead; to misrepresent the position of moderate men and women who want the Volstead Act amended so as to give a reasonable interpretation to the Amendment.

The Amendment reads: Section 1.—After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2.—The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

The Volstead Act declares that anything containing over one-half of one per cent. alcohol is an intoxicating beverage. There is of course neither truth nor sense in such a declaration. As the New York World says, it is a lie, and none the less a lie because enshrined in an Act of Congress. It is not the Constitutional Amendment. The Volstead Act can be rescinded, amended or superseded without in any way infringing the Eighteenth Amendment.

The second section of the Amendment gives the individual States concurrent power to enforce Prohibition by appropriate legislation; but the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that the State law, if any, must conform to the Federal law—at present the Volstead Act—in the definition of what alcoholic content constitutes an intoxicating beverage. Massachusetts, Maryland, Rhode Island, have no State laws on this matter. Every living former Attorney-General of Massachusetts as well as many of her distinguished lawyers have advised:

"The Eighteenth Amendment gives Congress and to each of the forty-eight States the concurrent right to enforce the amendment. This is not a command but an option. It does not create a duty." And yet even President Harding indulged in clap-trap about secession and nullification in referring to the repeal of the Mullan-Gage law.

In his Memorandum filed when he signed the repealer, Governor Smith, in pointing out what the repeal of the Mullan-Gage law will not do writes:

The United States Supreme Court said: "The power conferred to Congress by the Eighteenth Amendment is in no wise dependent upon or affected by action or inaction on the part of the several States or any of them."

If the right of Congress is paramount, its responsibility must be paramount.

Expanding this idea the statement signed by the Attorney General of Massachusetts adds:

"Nullification, as defined by the highest authority is the action of a State intended to abrogate within its limits the operation of a Federal law."

This no one proposes to do. The mere omission to maintain a State statute in no way abrogates a Federal statute. It seems to me that this effectually disposes of the loose talk about the nullification of the Constitution by refusal on the part of any of the States to enact separate statutes.

Its repeal will not make legal a single act which was illegal during the period of the existence of the statute.

Let it be understood at once and for all that this repeal does not in the slightest degree lessen the obligation of peace officers of the State to enforce in its strictest letter the Volstead act, and warning to that effect is herein contained as coming from the Chief Executive of the State of New York.

Space forbids going into the effective presentation of the positive reasons for the repeal; but for the following characteristically straightforward declaration we must make room. It clears up the real question in issue that has been obscured by loose talk and uninformed comment:

The whole treatment of this question, and I speak only from history, has been marked by hypocrisy. There should be no such things as carrying water on both shoulders. What the country is looking for today, if I read the signs of the times aright, is a constructive, forward-looking suggestion that disregards entirely the fanatical "wets" and the fanatical "drys."

I yield to no man in my reverence and respect for the Constitution of the United States, and I advocate

nothing which will infringe upon the provisions of the Eighteenth Amendment. It is nevertheless a fact that the definition of an intoxicating beverage contained in the Volstead act is not an honest or a common-sense one. It is impossible to divorce from the public mind the impression that the definition of an intoxicating beverage as containing not more than one-half of one per cent. of alcohol was written by the fanatical "drys" in defiance of the general experience of mankind and of actual fact.

It seems to me that common-sense backed up by good medical opinion, can find a more scientific definition of what constitutes an intoxicating beverage. Such a definition should be adopted by Congress as a proper and reasonable amendment of the Volstead act and a maximum alcoholic content should be prescribed by Congress which would limit all States to the traffic in liquors which are in fact non-intoxicating within the meaning of the Eighteenth Amendment.

Amongst the chorus of criticism and commendation of Governor Smith's exercise of discretionary power, William Jennings Bryan, in an article in the Sunday edition of the New York Times, contributes a rhetorical condemnation of the Governor, and holds him up to the scorn of all true upholders.

The New York Times itself, though strongly urging the veto of the repealer, said editorially on the announcement that Governor Smith had signed:

"Let it be set down first of all that Governor Smith, in finally deciding to sign the bill repealing the State law for the enforcement of prohibition, undoubtedly acted in accordance with his convictions. If political expediency had swayed him, he would have vetoed the repealer."

On the occasion of the publication of Mr. Bryan's article (Sunday, June 10) the leading editorial riddled the "arguments" of the oft-defeated Mr. Bryan and made a spirited defence of the man whom New York City and New York State delights to honor. We can of course give but a paragraph or two; they are a good sample of the attitude of the reputable press in the face of the animus and calumny of unscrupulous opponents.

"In another part of today's Times Mr. Bryan derides Governor Smith for signing the bill repealing the Mullan-Gage law. The Times regrets that the Governor conscientiously took the course he did; but it is difficult to have patience with some of Mr. Bryan's arguments, if arguments they can be called."

So far as Mr. Bryan is talking about State rights in connection with the exercise by the State of the concurrent power granted to the several States by the Eighteenth Amendment, he is bombarding in a vacuum. The Eighteenth Amendment laid no constitutional duty upon the several States. It gave them the opportunity or privilege or right of passing statutes, if they chose, to enforce its provisions; but it does not lay upon the several States any duty of passing laws in aid of its enforcement or to increase its stringencies. They can take it or leave it.

"The State of New York has left it as it stands. The talk about 'nullification' is drivel. The State is doing its full constitutional duty; and its affirmation of its right to do its duty, and to do no more, in this time of loose, amateur Socialist ideas and bureaucratic magnification and the all-wise wisdom of Washington is in itself to be applauded. In his amene, altruistic way Mr. Bryan says of Governor Smith:

"We have yet to learn whether his consecration to the cause of State rights, applied to the control of the liquor traffic only, will make him feel it his duty to offer himself as a candidate for President."

Governor Smith is perfectly aware that his signature of the Mullan-Gage repeal bill makes his candidacy impossible, if nothing else makes it improbable. There is no reason why he should be insulted for being a brave and constant man; and Mr. Bryan, whatever his virtues, his engaging qualities, and his delightful and invincible ignorance should be estopped by his record from attributing to anybody else, however wickedly wet, the feeling of his duty to offer himself as a candidate for President."

The foregoing, we hope, may give our readers a sufficient grasp of an interesting political situation and a fair idea of an outstanding personality in American public life. The "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" crowd will continue to picture the man and the situation as black and menacing; and prate at the same time of civil and religious liberty.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE LATEST gossip about the ex-Kaiser is that he is at work upon a new version of the Bible. The dethroned monarch has not heretofore been credited with any undue fund of theological acumen or biblical lore, but he has perhaps as much right to consider himself competent to expound scripture as some self-appointed expositors have had before him. We have heard of a projected "Women's Bible," a "Worker's Bible" and a "Modernist Bible"—why not a "Kaiser's Bible?" If Scripture is to be manipulated to fit every fantastic idea which a generation may bring forth, why should not Wilhelm have his fling?

THE EXISTENCE of a Catholic "Bible Class," in connection with St. Patrick's Church, Washington—almost under the shadow of the Catholic University—should be a matter of some concern to those who have been in the habit of imputing to the Church discouragement of, even active hostility to popular circulation and study of the Scriptures. The truth is that such individuals fail to discriminate between inaccurate translations and the legitimate version authorized by the Church, as well as confusing the illegitimate with the legitimate use of the sacred writing. Indiscriminate circulation of the Bible, divorced from its only authorized interpreter, has indeed become one of the great scandals of our time.

THE CLASS in Washington which has set itself to the thorough and devout study of the printed Word is under the direction of Dr. J. B. Tenny, Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Sulpician Seminary, Catholic University. Dr. Tenny, being a recognized authority on Scriptural exegesis, and a linguist of considerable attainments, we may be sure that under his guidance the course of study pursued by the class will not only tend to the spiritual advantage of its members individually, but by equipping them with a sound knowledge of the Bible, and its true mission, fortify them for the work of the apostleship. The success it has met with in this respect would seem to point to a wider adoption of the plan.

OF THE evils predicated of denominationalism in the discussion on the subject of union with other bodies in the Presbyterian Assembly at Port Arthur there is not one that does not apply with tenfold force to the divisions brought about by the repudiation of Church authority in the sixteenth century. "There is nothing even in the splendid missionary work of the last century," said the chief exponent of union, "quite equal in its enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and success to the missionary triumphs of the first century when the Church was one" and "I do not believe a sweeping triumph of Christianity possible in the modern world until the present divisions in the body of Christ are healed."

WE WOULD not presume to take sides in this crisis which threatens to split the great Presbyterian body in twain. It may however be permitted us to say that while we regard the aspiration after union as in every way admirable in spirit, it is but the merest delusion to imagine that, as formulated by the three denominations concerned, it can bring them any nearer to that essential unity—unity of doctrine and perpetuity of teaching—which Christ predated as exclusive marks or notes of His Church. On the contrary, as we read the documents bearing upon the subject of union in this as in other similar movements, such end is to be attained only by the whittling down of dogmatic teaching, and the sacrifice of the cherished if mistaken convictions of former generations. It is but another step in the increasingly rapid progress to the repudiation of definite teaching altogether for which the present generation is conspicuous. For this reason our sympathies go out rather to those who are fighting an uphill fight for the retention of such truth as they have inherited from their fathers. If they could but see that the only true union is to go back to the mother Church, whom their fathers in an evil day repudiated! The testimony of history becomes every day clearer, however, that such repudiation was not so much of their own volition as the result of pressure from without.

THE SPIRIT behind the union movement comes out very strongly in a letter to one of the daily papers, written by a well-known lawyer, who is also a Presbyterian elder. "A great majority, of whom I am glad to be regarded as one," he writes, "are more concerned for the great unity of the Christian Church than for the maintenance in organized form of the historic Calvinism of the Presbyterian Church, however Scriptural it may be. I venture to say that very few of my brother elders are able to define clearly what Calvinism really is, and I do not think that, considering the advantages of union, it really matters. We will continue to believe it, union or no union. It certainly is not a 'saving grace,' and if anyone is exercised about the 'decrees,' or 'fore-ordination' there is no reason why he should not maintain any credal differences even in the United Church."

IF ANYONE is in doubt as to the binding force which the founders of Presbyterians imputed to the doctrines mentioned he has but to consult the Westminster Confession of Faith to have such doubts dispelled. But imagine any church professing to teach in the name of Christ regarding "credal differences" as a mere detail!

SUPPLEMENTING our remarks of last week on Spain, we append some notes on the Catholic character of her people as a whole, and their freedom from that singularly barbarous type of intolerance from which non-Catholic countries have rarely been free. That the Spaniard is passionately attached to his own Faith is certainly true, and it is to his infinite credit that it should be so. But that there is none of that bitter personal hostility against those of other faiths is testified by the latest editor of Ford's "Gatherings from Spain." One example will suffice.

"FROM the beginning of the eighth century," says this writer, "when the Moors, conquered with incredible rapidity the whole of the peninsula, except two small provinces in the north-west, to the end of the fifteenth, when Ferdinand and Isabella, by the capture of Grenada, were able to scour the infidels out of Spain, the native Christians were engaged in a fierce and incessant crusade. From Church and King came inspiration and leadership, and to both a passionate loyalty was evoked. The divinity that hedges a king became a very real thing in Spain. Two centuries, however, of Bourbon ineptitude and misrule have cured the Spaniard of his idolatry of kings, but his fervent devotion to the Catholic faith has never waned. There has been no break in her spiritual or intellectual domination. She has always maintained her hold on the loftiest as well as in the lowliest minds. Calderon was a royal chaplain and wrote seventy autos sacramentales; Lope de Vega was a priest and an officer of the Inquisition; Cervantes died a Franciscan tertiary."

"THE ATTITUDE of a Spanish congregation," he proceeds, "is marked by a quiet reverence in striking contrast with that of an Italian or French crowd at High Mass. Indeed, so interwoven is the Catholicism of Spain with the very fabric of the national being, that any failure to observe the usual acts of reverence at the elevation or the passage of the Host, or other solemn function, is regarded rather as a sign of ill-breeding than of irreverence. When the writer some few years since, was present at the celebration of the most popular of church festivals at Grenada, that of the Virgin del Pilar, as the bannered and gorgeous pageant passed by amid kneeling women and bare-headed men, one, scornful or indifferent, stood uncovered. The Halberdier turned to the offender, and in gentle tones rebuked him, saying, 'Senor, when the most Holy Virgin passes it is usual to remove one's hat.' This said, he marched gravely on."

CHURCH UNION

By THE OBSERVER

If John Knox and John Wesley had sat down together to consider a union between their followers, the despatches from the scene of their conference would have been interesting reading. Nothing could be more striking than the difference between the teachings of Knox and

those of Wesley. The Presbyterian religion was built upon the doctrines of predestination and election. The Methodist religion was an emotional appeal to consciousness of sin. The Presbyterian religion was an intellectual appeal to reason but a reason carried to fantastic lengths, and soured with gloomy theories taken from the Old Testament; while the Methodist religion was an appeal to spiritual excitement which found emotional physical expression, and in abandonment of hope or else in unreasoning certainty of salvation.

No two religions were ever more unlike than Methodist and Presbyterianism. Yet while the final conference of the Presbyterians in Canada was on at Port Arthur we looked in vain in the reports of the speeches for a single attempt to distinguish the one from the other in point of doctrine. There seemed to be a unanimous agreement that there was no longer any definite difference between them in point of doctrine or of faith; and that all that remained to dispute about was, such matters as efficiency, historical identity, concentration of effort, cost of operation, and other matters of the like incidental importance. So far as I was able to by see the speeches, there was not a man to take a stand on the doctrinal integrity of the Presbyterian Church. One has a pretty clear idea of what John Knox would have thought of a Presbyterian General Assembly of that sort.

If it be true, as it seems to be, that the Presbyterian Church has no longer any standards of doctrine which are incompatible with union with the Methodist Denomination, nothing more is needed to mark the abandonment that Presbyterians have made of doctrines that were for many generations held sacred by their forefathers as integral and essential parts of the religion of Knox and Calvin. The note of the Assembly and of all the gatherings that have been held in the Church Union movement so far, is, that it is agreed that there is not anything in those doctrines of either religion which gave it its peculiar and special character, that is worth any longer preserving. The movement that is called Church Union is not really a union at all. It is not a reconciliation of contrasting and inconsistent doctrines, such as would have confronted Knox and Wesley had they ever met. It is an abandonment by both Methodists and Presbyterians of all that was ever distinctive in their respective creeds; an agreement to give up beliefs rather than an acceptance of anything hitherto rejected. The movement is not so much one for the acceptance by either, of doctrines and practices that were peculiar to the other, as one to let go as many as possible those things which distinguished Methodism from Presbyterianism, and these were, formerly at least, many and important.

Is it really a step towards union for people to agree to believe less instead of more? Does not such a movement tend rather towards individualism, which indeed has been the bane of all Protestantism for a very long time, in fact ever since it started? Will not the net result of the compromise between the Methodists and the Presbyterians be a shorter and more meagre creed than either of them ever had before? Is not the whole matter a victory for those who have persuaded themselves, in defiance of the teaching of both Wesley and of Knox, that there is no need of dogmas or of a creed, but that religion is a mere matter of personal religious experience?

If this view is correct, the movement that is called church union is in reality not a union but a new step in progressive disunion. There is little use in calling a thing a union if its natural and inevitable effect will be, to give a fresh boost to individualism in religion.

LORETTO COLLEGE ALUMNAE ORGANIZE

St. Louis, June 15.—On Alumnae Day of Commencement Week at Loretto College, Webster Groves, Mo., the Loretto College Alumnae Association was organized. By-laws and constitution were adopted and the following officers elected: President, Mrs. Ruth Loftus Weiler; vice-president, Miss Ernestine Zavisch; secretary, Miss Frances Probst; treasurer, Miss Leone Garvey. An executive committee was appointed, consisting of the officers and following additional members: Miss Florence Waddock, chairman, Mrs. Elizabeth Hennessy Jones, Miss Mary Burks, Miss