



OUR BOOKSHELF

TICHENOR'S "CREED OF CONSTANTINE."

(By Eugene V. Debs.)

The complete title of this latest book of Harry Tichenor, the best contribution from his virile and versatile pen to current radical literature, is "The Creed of Constantine; or, The World Needs a New Religion." In its opening chapters it is a companion volume to "The Life and Exploits of Jehovah," and every one of the many thousands of readers of the latter work will be interested in the "Creed of Constantine."

The style of the author lends itself readily to the popular treatment of almost any subject, however dry it might appear to other writers, and in this latest work he has invested the early history of the Christian church with the liveliest interest and with all the glamor of romantic literature. He opens his narrative with the following novel statement, which he proceeds to prove by quotations and facts from contemporary history and from the writing of commentators down to the present day.

"The prophet of Christendom is not the gentle Jesus; neither is the gospel of brotherhood and peace the Christian creed. The prophet of Christendom is the Emperor Constantine, and the Christian creed is the decision of the First Council of Nice."

The Council of Nice was held in the year 325.—This was a few years after Constantine's "conversion" to Christianity, or, more properly speaking, Christianity's conversion to Roman paganism. The manner in which the early Christian movement founded by Jesus was captured by the wily Constantine and converted to a ruling class "religion" is narrated in detail and supported by copious extracts from many of the ablest writers and commentators of ancient and modern history. It is a thrilling story, also a tragic and revolting one, and the author of the "Creed of Constantine," in his own graphic style and with irrefutable logic, scathing satire, withering sarcasm, relieved by flashes of wit and ridicule, does it entire justice.

The story, in the telling of which Gibbon, Froude, Comte, Darwin, Haeckel, and other historians and scientists are freely quoted, must be read to be understood and appreciated. Scarcely more than a hint of its interest and value can be given in the space of an ordinary review.

But it is in the closing chapters in which the author presents his "New Religion," that the solid worth of his work appears. In these pages he reveals himself as a prophetic soul with a social vision, and he writes as one inspired. Listen to him:

"Once, long ago, came one who voiced the hope and longing of the race with infinite love and passion. He told of a Source of Life and Love that the world had never known, of a common Father of a common humanity. He dreamed of a society strange and beautiful—the Brotherhood of Man. His teachings were garbled and doctored by the priests that wrote of him years after his tragic death, yet will we but search the sweet message that he taught, the burden of his soul can be found. He was not the tortured god of the dogmatic creeds—he was the lowly carpenter, the brother of the workers, the friend of man and the lover of woman. 'Call no man master,' said this sweet-souled carpenter, 'for ye are all brethren.' * * * He wrote no book, he formed no creed. He simply trusted that the words he spoke and the dream he dreamed would some day

find expression and life in the soul of his class—the working class. He had come to set the captive free. Again and again his tender heart bled for all who bore the heavy burden, but with more anguish than all for woman, the doubly-chained captive. * * *

The few preserved sentences that fell from his passionate lips—the scathing denunciation of the master class and the infinite love of the outcast—these are all I want. I turn from the dogmatic epistles, half ancient Judaism and half Greek mythology, and I go again with the Peasant of Palestine down the beaten path to Bethany, where in an humble home lived Mary and Martha. There I can still hear the music of his voice, the simple story of love and brotherhood, as on the vine-clad porch he told it time and again. And the little children, how they swarmed to meet him! He was their comrade, their lover, and the companion of their childhood. And now another voice, perhaps more stern than his, cries glad tidings to the woman and her child. It is the worldwide call of Socialism. Women, children, when every chain is broken yours shall be the greater freedom, for yours has been the greater slavery."

The writer then proceeds to present what to his social vision appears as the true religion and he makes it for all the race. It is in these pages that the author pours out his great heart to his readers. The voice of human brotherhood is distinctly heard there, not in pious platitudes, but in soulful plea for the emancipation of the oppressed and the crowning of emancipation with the brotherhood of the race. The new religion Tichenor advocates is divine because it is rational and rational because it is divine; it is free from creed and dogma, free from sodden superstition and spineless servility, but packed full service, and brotherly love. It is a wholesome, sweet and serene-spirited religion and the day it dawns upon the world the world will be at peace and humanity will be civilized.—"Rip-Saw."

AN APPEAL.

When Death himself shall drink of death,
And nerveless falls his wearied hand,
When Peace shall like a vernal breath
Drive wintry war from this dear land—

What, then, shall be the issue, friend?
What lesson from the leaden rain?
What love-birth from the throes that rend?
What beauty from the womb of pain?

Shall what has been be then once more,
And Life from Death no message learn,
And foul suspicion as before
Pollute the wells of truth, and spurn

The prophets of a purer quest
Than earthly gold and petty power,
And Policy and Interest
Possess once more the fickle hour?

From you, a million under earth,
Plucked sharp from life in perfect bloom,
And children cheated of their birth,
And children that shall take their room

Demand reply; they ask not kiugs
For answer; no, nor statesmen proud,
Nor diplomatic underlings
That play with war and scorn the crowds.

But you, O friend, a common man,
Yet dowered with imperial sway
To make, unmake, to bless and ban
And say that War's delirious day

Is ended and for ever o'er:
Will you not answer that high call,
That what has been may be no more,
But Love and Law be over all?
—A. D., in "The Labor Leader."

We will do better in the spring.

A RULER DIVINELY APPOINTED

There is a certain political gent in this province whose name is W. R. Ross. He is a staunch and hide-bound Conservative. Also a chronic office-holder. At least he hangs on to office like grim death to a dead nigger. Most Conservatives are easy to beat, as the result of the late election in this province amply proves. Not so with W. R. Ross, however. He stays. He hangs on against odds that are at times apparently insuperable, or at least would so appear to any one possessed of less faith in the righteousness of his cause and without that stubborn determination to never lay down in the face of any attack made upon it by the cohorts of evil, that is markedly characteristic of the aforesaid Ross. Ross is now safely and firmly seated as a member of the provincial house for another term. He sits as the member for Fort George. True, he had a somewhat narrow escape from defeat at the election last September, but it is pleasing to record that he triumphed over the machinations of those evil-disposed persons who are to be found in every community, and whose chief business in life seems to be that of snapping at the heels of political probity and otherwise annoying men of large affairs and broad statesmanship, particularly of the Ross type.

It is recounted that W. R. Ross at one time triumphed over his jealous political foes and envious rivals at Fernie, B.C., through the fortunate intervention of fire, as it were. It seems that the result of the election at that time had been so close, and so many wicked tales had been told by no doubt designing persons of corrupt practices having been indulged in at the polls, that steps were taken by certain jealous and envious ones for a recount of the votes cast at that election. No one doubts that the result of such a recount would have absolved Ross from any and all suspicion of turpitude in connection with the election, but unfortunately some power unseen of men intervened in the matter and destroyed part of the ballots that were to be recounted, by burning them up. Whether the fire at the Fernie court house, which destroyed the ballots, was merely an act of Providence or simply one of those mysterious occurrences that frequently happen because they do happen, and the reason of their happening passeth all human understanding, except, of course, in the case of those who know all about the why and wherefore of the happening, is neither here nor there. The fact remains that through this intervention of fire in the matter of the recount at Fernie, the suspicion has been firmly fixed in the minds of some that the aforesaid political gent may not be without need of purification of the spirit before he would be eligible to dwell among the sanctified and the blessed.

At a later election, at this same Fernie place once more, was this Conservative crusader saved from the disgrace of a recount of the ballots that had already presumably elected him. A recount had been called for, but intervention again frustrated the designs of the wicked who sought the political scalp of the Conservative brave. Intervention came this time by flood. A maritime disaster resulting in an overturned canoe, and the ballots being swept away by the angry tide circumvented the machinations of the wicked and saved the scalp of our hero from being exposed in the market place to the jeers and jibes of the ribald and unthinking rabble. And thus was preserved to his grateful country the splendid talents of this statesman, favored by fortune and whose enemies had been scourged both by fire and by flood.

As will be seen in another column,

Ross has again been saved through providential succor at the opportune moment. A call for recount having been made at Fort George, and the result of the election having been an extremely close call for the distinguished political gent, while the story of the campaign, and the practices indulged in on Ross' behalf were lavishly embellished with rare and racy incidents strangely suggestive of corruption and fraud, it looked for a moment as though Ross might be overtaken and overwhelmed by the enemies of his particular brand of political righteousness. But for a moment only, mark you, for let it be known that neither providence nor mystery had as yet withdrawn their protection from their favored son of fortune. Intervention again came to his rescue, but not this time in the shape of either fire or flood. It came this time in the shape of justice, and British justice at that. The application for a recount was made within the time prescribed by law. The date to be fixed for the recount was (according to the act) to be within eight days of the day upon which the court fixed the date upon which such recount should be made. Upon November 29 justice, with eyes tightly bandaged, with the sword in one hand and the fish scales in the other, fixed the date of the recount upon December 8. When that date arrived discerning counsel, on behalf of Ross, pointed out to the court that December 8 was not within eight days of November 29, hence the recount could not legally obtain, for the very simple reason that the Act had not been complied with. The justice of this was at once recognized by the court, and the recount was, of course, thrown out. To do otherwise would have been a gross violation of justice, and such a proceeding could not, for a moment, be tolerated by any one not possessed of criminal instincts. And thus endeth the third lesson, with this truth indelibly impressed upon us. He who is shielded by fire, by flood, and by justice, against the machinations of his political enemies, may go his way serene and undisturbed. He cannot be beaten. He will remain constantly with us. Against his shield naught can prevail.

We are extremely indebted to the B. C. Federationist for the valuable service they have rendered to our party members in presenting this gratuitous information. It may at some future date save us much heart-burning, and certainly much useless labor and finance, to be assured—"That this Gawd appointed politician cannot be defeated," as votes can never prevail against such omniscient favors.—Ed.

KILLED HER BABE; FREED.

French Girl Said She Had Been Attacked by Germans.

Paris, Jan. 25.—It is not a crime for a mother to kill a child born as a result of the mother's being violated by Germans. A Paris jury has so decided in the case of Josephine Barthelmy, twenty years old. She is a domestic at Gennevilliers, the eldest of five children, and one of her brothers has been killed. Only after the greatest difficulty was the woman persuaded to speak. Then she said she was a servant at the military hospital at Chambley, in the invaded regions. All the orderlies there were German soldiers. In December, 1915, eight of these orderlies attacked her in the chapel of the hospital.

"I killed my child," the woman continued, "because I did not want to be the mother of a child whose father was a German."

There are but two general classes in society: those who are engaged in productive and useful industry and those who do no useful service for society. The aim and hope of Socialism is to put all people into the class of the productive worker and thereby do away with classes.