

## Man at the Crossroads

When Francis Neilson produces a book it is taken for granted that a valuable contribution to the philosophy of freedom has been given the world. His latest book (*Man At The Crossroads*, 272 pp., Nelson Publishing Company, Appleton, Wis., price \$1.50) is the culmination of a life time of reflection on his favorite topic, supplemented by that brilliance of observation which comes from constant testing of events in the light of fundamental principle.

This volume constitutes a natural sequel to his two most recent books: "Control from the Top" and "Sociocratic Escapades." In the former the author makes a spirited attack on the rhetorical solutions of economic problems by the Messrs. Tugwell, Soule and Chase. In the latter, Dr. Neilson summarizes thus: despite man's entry into the social

welfare field, he has not made a success of it, and from the evidence of political and economic events, we have every reason to expect the disintegration of present day society. Dr. Neilson is no equivocator. There is nothing weak-kneed in his analyses of the planners. He goes after them, not with tongs and hammers, but with skillfully thrust rapiers.

In "Man at the Crossroads" he wastes no time in getting down to fundamentals: "So far as we know man received the earth into his possession as a gift." From that point on Dr. Neilson develops his thesis: man the primitive achieves greater satisfactions in the fashioning of tools; capital becomes a mighty implement in his development.

But man's gregariousness led him into errors from which he suffers. Along with the accumulation of desirable capital there came two new developments in the economy of organized society which were detrimental to the social well-being of man: the appropriation of land by individuals, and the development of an overpowering State. The restrictive measures imposed upon man by the State destroy the objective of man's gregariousness, which is individual satisfactions.

The effect of State-ism on man is expressed in Dr. Neilson's evaluation of our planners: "I am of the opinion that the system might be reformed if it were not for the disintegration that is taking place in the minds of men, and the dislocation of the mentality of reformers. To me, it is a question of mind, and there does not seem to be any mind dealing with these problems. Any brash young man who comes from a university with a diploma is supposed to be an authority on almost any subject he wishes to deal with. And as there is no public opinion worth a vagrant's louse, there is no one to challenge these very young people."

Dr. Neilson is disturbed by the "liberals" of today in contrast with their fellows of a generation ago. He feels that most of those who believed in Socialism before the turn of the century lived long enough to see the error of their thoughts. He finds it far worse for a man to be born in economic sin than the sin of the priest is most concerned with; the Church holds out a promise of redemption, but redemption in economic bypaths makes it necessary for one to go "through the ordeal of profound study for fundamental economics."

It would take too much space herein to enter the sphere of Property, Government, Man and Society, Rights of Man, the Consumer, the Unemployed Question, Piece Meal Reform, Industrial Warfare, Banking and Credit—all of which Dr. Neilson discusses briefly and succinctly.

We recommend a careful reading of this book. It shows the power of worthwhile leisure—when a true thinker is fortunately able to take time and foresight by the horns, and put the gems of his mind on paper for the rest of us.

W. W. N.