

GOALS OF ECONOMIC LIFE, edited by A. Dudley Ward, 459 pages, published by Harper & Brothers, New York, 1953, \$4.

Reviewed by MARSHALL CRANE

This is the first of a series to be published by the Federal Council of Churches. It is excessively orthodox; orthodox in the same way as the elementary textbooks of forty years ago. I noticed with some amusement that in the section on the various schools of economics Henry George was not mentioned at all. Quesnay and *les Economistes* got perhaps two hundred words—nothing more than the fact that they favored direct taxation. Ricardo gets less than a page. John Stuart Mill is the white-haired boy of the classics. The editor apparently has never even heard of either Jevons or Marshall. Among our esteemed contemporaries, Professor von Mises does not get a single word, and Professor Schumpeter's name is just barely mentioned in two references and a short footnote. And this is the book which pretends to really cover the subject!

The *Goals of Economic Life* does not believe in planned economies, but it does believe in calmly ignoring whatever it does not choose to see. And its attitude in general is decidedly archaic in tone. It seems to me that it is going to do more harm than good.

It is nothing new for some earnest, but rather naive, gent to come up with the suggestion that our economic troubles would disappear if we could persuade our princes of industry to become philanthropists. But none of these good souls has ever proposed any concrete, practical plan for bringing about the change of heart, not even Reinhold Niebuhr, whose final essay more or less keynotes the book. The nearest he comes to it is what seems to be the proposition that these endowers of pipe organs and stained glass windows actually are bestowing untold blessings on the poor without realizing it. Maybe he is right.

My objection to the book as a whole is that it proposes nothing positive. It seems to be dedicated to the principle that if you do nothing, you will do nothing wrong. Apparently the writers turned their eyes away from everything they did not wish to see. They had to have a villain for their piece, of course, and chose communism. It is traditionally opposed to religion—"the opiate of the masses"—and it is across the ocean; it does not seem to be such an immediate menace to "the American way of life," as to force them to examine that way at all objectively or closely. The authors mean well, no doubt, but they write as special pleaders, not as scientists, and what they are pleading for is reaction, pure and simple—very pure, and very, very simple.