

A Word with You

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A tendency has been developing in the intellectual world, notably among educators, that may have gone a little too far, though it doubtless had a healthy beginning. That is the tendency to confess, in the face of a problem (especially one of mankind's big problems)—“I don't know the answer!”

This “answer” is the new intellectual's assurance to you that he's a right guy. It's his safety badge worn proudly.

It is well to admit that one doesn't know everything. That's good—but after all! Humility and a confession of ignorance may be the beginning of wisdom—but only the beginning! Long study and probing of problems should eventually yield *some* answers that the student can endorse — something better than an enthusiastic confession of ignorance.

On the other hand, it's true enough that numerous and various doctrinaires are firmly convinced that they have *all* the answers—and, as usual, the reaction against this has gone too far.

“Prove All Things”

We who have discovered the wonderful philosophy of Henry George have to guard against the know-it-all intoxication, too. It is such a sane, simple, basic philosophy and so much less known than it should be, that it's often tempting to lay it on thick and curse those who hold back.

It is also a known weakness of advocates of all sorts — something else to guard against — to give sweeping and often unstudied applications to new facts as they arise, and then to find themselves in conflict with other ardent aficionados.

The George philosophy does give us certain basic truths that are harmonious with other truths, and it gives us an important key to an understanding of the world we live in. It does not absolve us from the requirement of constantly observing facts and reasoning with them — also, surely listening to the observations and reasoning of others.

Knowing *some* answers is nothing to be ashamed of. Not knowing *all* the answers is no disgrace, either.

It is high time for our public leaders and educators to start thinking about answers to the big basic questions confronting mankind. And maybe it's time for some of us with answers to tailor them to human size.