

A Word With You

ASSOCIATION in equality, says Henry George, is the law of progress.

Some feel he would have done better to say, association in liberty; that "equality" too much suggests the egalitarian state where all men are forced to the same measure, procrustean style—the big ones cut down, the little ones stretched.

But liberty is not liberty unless all have equal liberty. So it comes to pretty much the same thing.

Forcing men into a procrustean pattern means that someone is doing the forcing, and so equality is violated. If I work and produce twice as much as a fellow worker and half is taken from me, my equality as well as my liberty is violated—for I am not being equally rewarded for my efforts.

But, beyond the synonymous quality of the two concepts, I think there was another reason why Henry George chose the term "equality"—and that is, the essential unity of human nature.

George quotes approvingly Deutsch's observation on the past and present human condition: "They were even as we are." We need to apply this to the present, too, and say of the people who live on the other side of the hill, "*they* are even as *we* are."

George found the similarities among humans to be more striking than their differences. It is quite true that every person is a unique individual, just a

little different from everyone else. But this is also true of snowflakes and maple leaves. Not one of the billions of these are said to be like any other one—yet there is no doubt that they are maple leaves and snowflakes. It is a case of "variety within unity."

Much more goes to make up a human being. The variety is rich, but the unity is still more impressive. Some "stupid" people turn out to have unsuspected talents — "smart" people have areas where they are totally dull — it may very well all balance out.

The human brain is a marvelous creation of two billion years of evolution, and one brain is not much different from another. When the greatest genius of the 20th century, Albert Einstein, died, his brain was examined and found to be — an ordinary human brain.

Number one rule for writers and speakers is, "Don't underestimate the intelligence of your audience or overestimate their knowledge." And there's the key to it. We are endowed with essentially the same equipment, but different people do different things with it. Few would dispute that all should have equality of opportunity to develop their potentials.

The principle of equality of opportunity (which is another way of saying liberty) is after all, based upon the essential equality of all men.

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community — known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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