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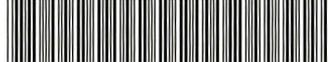
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WOMEN'S LIB.

By D.B. Knox

The Protestant Faith

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We have been hearing recently in Australia a good deal about the Women's Liberation Movement (Women's Lib. for short). Its leaders are directing attention to what they regard as the inequalities and injustices which our society inflicts on women. If these statements are true, it is a matter which directly concerns Christians, for Christians must always be alert to any injustices and be active in redressing them because God is eminently just and righteous. All His dealings with us are on the basis of what is right and just and fair and He requires that all our dealings with one another should be on the same basis. Justice, fairness and righteousness is the only possible basis for peace between nations or true relationships between people. Christians must always be anxious to forward justice and to redress injustice.

Christians are especially interested in the status of women in the community because it is the Christian religion which has done so much for women. Jesus set the example; women shared His friendship and accompanied Him on His preaching journeys. Then the great apostle Paul taught very clearly that there is to be no inequality between men and women. In Gal. 3:28 he said that in Christ there is no male nor female, but all are one; and again in I Cor. 11:11 he pointed out the exact equality between the sexes. This was a great change from what he had thought before he became a Christian which may be illustrated from the Jewish Prayer Book. Right to modern times the Jewish Prayer Book has a prayer for men to say "Lord I thank you that you did not make me a woman". (Women say "I thank you that you made me according to your will"). This was the prayer Paul and all the apostles would have prayed constantly before they became followers of Jesus. You will see what a profound change the Christian religion has created in our sense of relationship between the sexes. This change can be illustrated further by

looking around the modern world to see how women fare in non-Christian countries, e.g., in the Mohammedan countries; or again, by reminding ourselves of the servile state of womankind in the ancient European world of Greece and Rome. In those cultures they were never allowed to take any part in society.

It is the Christian religion which has been the charter of women's rights, because the Christian religion teaches us to serve one another and not to seek our own interests at other people's expense whether 'bossing' it over others or even demanding equality in a self-centred way. Jesus said "I am among you as one that serves" and His life and death was on behalf of other people. It was in terms of service that He saw His crucifixion. "The Son of man", He said, "came not to be served by others but to serve them and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This is the character of God - "I am among you as one who serves" and by the Holy Spirit's power we Christians are able to reflect the same spirit.

The Women's Liberation Movement will never succeed in reaching its goals because it ignores reality, and in particular, it ignores the fact that mankind is sinful. The problem to which Women's Lib., addresses itself arises from a twofold fact. Firstly, men and women are sinful and therefore self-centred and are not primarily interested in justice to other people so much as in forwarding their own interests. The second fact is that the male sex is stronger physically and perhaps more self-sufficient emotionally. Being physically stronger, and also selfish (as are all men and women who are not under the influence of God's spirit) it follows naturally - and we see this in every non-Christian country - that women are the drudges. Physical strength coupled with unrestrained

self-centredness means that the weak get the raw deal. Women's Lib. ignores these facts which can only be overcome by the Christian ideal of humbly serving one another. However, Women's Lib., ignoring the fact of sin and selfishness and the need for the antidote of humility, proceeds on the antithetical method of demanding things. The two most conspicuous of these demands are promiscuity in sex, and abortion on demand. It is absurd for Women's Lib. to think that these two things are going to advance equality for women. They have both been tried before: In the ancient Greek and Roman world, from which our civilization stems, promiscuity was an accepted thing, but it was the women who suffered. So too the destruction of infant human life, when it was regarded as an inconvenience, was widely condoned. But this didn't elevate women's status. On the contrary, mothers had to destroy their infants if their husband didn't want to raise the child, and it will be the same with us, if we repeal the laws against abortion. Women will have to destroy the life they are carrying when their husbands require it, with all the emotional trauma this means for the mother.

If the way chosen is by demanding rights and so on, then men will always be out in front as they have more muscle power behind their demands. This has been and is the case in every non-Christian society. But the Christian way is not by demanding things for ourselves, but by considering one another and serving one another. "I am among you as he that serves" said Jesus. This is God's character. Promiscuity is not going to enhance the status of women nor is abortion on demand. These things will depress the status of wives and mothers and provide them with all sorts of mental anguish.

Women's Lib. attacks Christianity, but it is women who would be the chief sufferers were these

attacks to succeed in our society.

The leaders of this movement are determined that women should be equal with men in the possibility of selfish liberty. To achieve this they advocate the destruction of human life when it gets in the way of one's own convenience. There is all the difference in the world between deciding not to start a human life and the decision to destroy it, which is abortion. This is a most serious decision and should not be made except for the gravest reasons. Women's Lib. will ultimately fail, though it may do a great deal of damage to our Christian society in the meanwhile, if it is not checked, especially if it persuades people to approve abortion on demand, that is, the lighthearted destruction of human life. Such an attitude will have a most damaging effect on our personality and society.

Women's Lib. ignores the facts of sinfulness on the one hand, which needs not slogans but the Gospel to cure, and it ignores on the other hand the differences which make the sexes complementary. Certainly men and women are equal, but they are not the same in physical build or indeed in psychological response nor perhaps even in styles of mental thought. The mistake of Women's Lib. is to think that equality means being identical and the same in every respect so that if there are differences of life style and occupation this is said to be inequality. But it is plain that women are different from men, if only in that they have weaker biceps. But this does not mean that they are unequal, but only different. They become unequal when the superior muscles are used selfishly to depress the weaker instead of used in a Christian way to serve the weaker. The Christian way is that men and women should use their different gifts to advance each other's true interests and happiness in an open society of mutual respect, serving one another and honouring one another.

The attempt to achieve equality by making demands for oneself springs from a sinful character and is bound to fail. For when everyone is selfishly making demands the strongest gets the lot!

Women's Lib. will do us all a service if it directs our attention to the way we treat each other, for we are all subject to sin. For example, are Australian husbands really acting in a Christian manner in the home or are they being self-centred? Again, are they giving their company to their wives or do they go off to the pub for the whole evening with their cronies? Are husbands sharing the chores of the home in a fair and just way? Do they ~~take~~ their proper place in training and teaching the children, or do they leave all this burden to the wife? These things are to be shared each according to the gifts of nature which God has given us. We Christians should be teaching positively that there is no place for injustice and unfairness between the sexes and that laziness and indolence must never have any place in the home or outside. Men and women must share together the burdens, as well as share together the joys and rewards of human life. We Christians must teach this, ~~this~~, and also teach that there is the possibility for all to achieve this by the power of God in Jesus Christ, and not only teach this, but set the example by living it.

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