

G.K. Chesterton

Discover the wit and wisdom of Gilbert Keith Chesterton

6/20/15

The Equality of Sexlessness

IN almost all the modern opinions of women it is curious to observe how many lies have to be assumed before a case can be made. A young lady flies from England to Australia; another wins an air race; a Duchess creates a speed record in reaching India; others win motoring trophies; and now the King's prize for marksmanship has gone to a woman. All of which is very interesting and possibly praiseworthy as means of spending one's leisure time; and if it were left to that, even if no more were added than the perfectly plain fact that such feats could not have been achieved by their mothers and grandmothers, we would be content to doff our hats to the ladies with all courtesy and respect which courage, endurance and ability have always rightly demanded.

But it is not left to that; and considerably more is added. It is suggested, for example, that the tasks were beyond the mothers and grandmothers, nor for the very obvious reason that they had no motorcars and airplanes in which to amuse their leisure hours, but because women were then enslaved by the convention of natural inferiority to man. Those days, we are told, "in which women were held incapable of positive social achievements are gone forever." It does not seem to have occurred to this critic that the very fact of being a mother or grandmother indicates a certain positive social achievement; the achievement of which, indeed, probably left little leisure for travelling airily about the hemispheres. The same critic goes on to state, with all the solemn emphasis of profound thought, that "the important thing is not that women are the same as men—that is a fallacy—but that they are just as valuable to society as men. Equality of citizenship means that there are twice as many heads to solve present-day problems as there were to solve the problems of the past. And two heads are better than one." And the dreadful proof of the modern collapse of all that was meant by man and wife and the family council, is that this sort of imbecility can be taken seriously.

The London Times, in a studied leading article, points out that the first emancipators of women (whoever they were) had no idea what lay in store for future generations. "Could they have foreseen it they might have disarmed much opposition by pointing to the possibilities, not only of freedom, but of equality and fraternity also."

And we ask, what does it all mean? What in the name of all that is graceful and dignified does fraternity with women mean? What nonsense, or worse, is indicated by the freedom and equality of the sexes?

We mean something quite definite when we speak of a man being a little free with the ladies. What definite freedom is meant when the freedom of women is proposed? If it merely means the right to free opinions, the right to vote independently of fathers and husbands, what possible connection does it have with the freedom to fly to Australia or score bulls-eyes at Bisley? If it means, as we fear it does, freedom from responsibility of managing a home and a family, an equal right with men in business and social careers, at the expense of home and family, then such progress we can only call progressive deterioration.

And for men too, there is, according to a famous authoress, a hope of

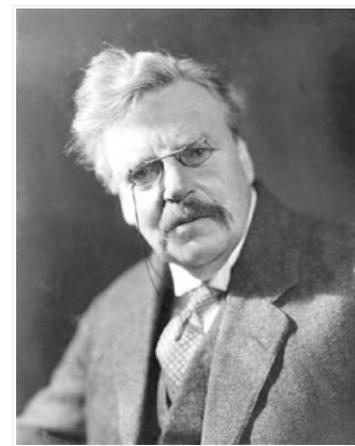
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freedom. Men are beginning to revolt, we are told, against the old tribal custom of desiring fatherhood. The male is casting off the shackles of being a creator and a man. When all are sexless there will be equality. There will be no women and no men. There will be but a fraternity, free and equal. The only consoling thought is that it will endure but for one generation.

~G.K. Chesterton: in *GK's Weekly* (July 26, 1930)



(A January 1929 issue of *G.K.'s Weekly*)

Posted by Thomas Yonan at 18:54

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