

TRADITIONALISM

David C F Wright, DD

If you are a Christian and a traditionalist, you are probably accused of being old-fashioned, out of date, moribund and of no use to anyone. In church circles, if you are a traditionalist, there is no place for you in the present day church. The modern church has new songs because the old ones are so out of date; the modern church has entertainment in the sense of pop groups, disco lights, dancing and Sunday is often referred to as fun day. The concept of sin and hell and that you need to be saved and that the Lord Jesus shed His Precious Blood for sin is so Puritan and Victorian that it has little or no place in contemporary worship. And if you still use the Authorised Version, you are so square!

Tradition is the handing down from generation to generation of customs, beliefs and practices of a group of people. It is something of long standing, but, today, it is dismissed, and often rudely, as belonging to a bygone age and is said to be an embarrassment.

Today, people complain about the great old hymns, the Authorised Version and Victorian preaching. They do not want to hear about the danger of being lost because they refuse all this talk about blood and eternal loss which is not wanted. Bible doctrine is not important now; what is important is love and tolerance; we are to be united in diversity; it does not matter one iota what form of baptism you employ; you can live together although you are not married to each other; homosexuals can be married; we can use anything in worship such as pop music, jazz and pretty dancing girls; we have to keep up with society; we have got to be in keeping with the world and the fashions of the day. We don't want sermons or Bible studies but short talks about what people are doing and their experiences.

And, of course, you don't have to wear anything smart. You can wear a tee shirt and jeans, even torn ones. You can have metal studs in your face and body. People quote 1 Samuel 16. 7 ... God looks on the heart and not the outward appearance.

If you are going to meet the Queen how would you dress?

In worship we are to meet the King, the Son of God.

We have been to worship meetings and seen girls in mini skirts and other girls dancing in see-through dresses. That constitutes a sexual statement and feeds the lust of the eyes which lust is condemned in the Bible.

To the true Christian, traditionalism is the acceptance of the authority of the Bible and the teaching of Christ. Truth does not change and that, in itself, supports traditionalism.

Jesus Christ was a traditionalist. He upheld the ten commandments given to Moses some 1500 years before (Matthew 5. 17). He upheld the law of God but it was very old and traditional. He tempered the law with grace (John 1. 17) but He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ but that does not mean that Old Testament writings were not truth.

The old-fashioned traditional law of God states that adultery is wrong. It has always been a sin and always will be. Sex before marriage, illicit sex with another who is not your spouse is sin. Gay sex is adultery and is condemned in both the Old and New testaments. In 1 Corinthians 6. 9 it is stated that adulterers, fornicators, the effeminate and men who abuse themselves with other men will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 22.15 lists those who will not be saved and not have eternal life in Heaven. They are whoremongers, prostitutes, adulterers, the promiscuous, murders, idolaters and liars.

Traditionalism is authorised by Scripture.

The Word of God does not change but abides forever.

B B Warfield wrote that there are three channels by which the truth of God is made known to man which truth man can make his possession. These are the authority, the intellect and the heart.

Man must respond and accept the authority of the Bible. This authority is the realisation that God is omnipotent and has the right and power to command, control and judge. He is the last word, the ultimate government of the world and its people (Isaiah 9. 7). Man must use his intellect, that is to say his mind, and use his intelligence to think, reason, understand and learn. If he is willing to do this, God will grant the that man's heart the truth.

We are to follow Christ not our pastor or some other Christian. Nor are we to follow a denomination. God did not invent denominations.

However, if we exaggerate the concept of the intellect we end up as rationalists in which our personal reason becomes priority and could be used in argument and debate. Paul warns against rationalisation which engenders more questions (1 Timothy 1. 4). Debate, contentions and arguing about matters is unprofitable and vain (Titus 3. 9).

Churches have been plagued with rationalism which is often tolerance. We are told that as Christians we must show love to all and therefore accept that they are different and accept their different doctrines, beliefs, positions and actions. It means that we must allow things to happen and be said and taught even if those things are against Scripture and we disapprove. Some love to argue and debate other doctrines as well as other lines of thought which undermines the Bible and makes the Word of God to be of less effect.

Here is a man who says he is a Christian and yet is often drunk and foul mouthed. Do we tolerate him? Here is a young woman who regularly attends church and has a good husband and lovely children but she is sleeping around. Do we tolerate her? The husband has pleaded with her but to no avail. Does he has to put up with this?

Traditionalism has to deal with the conflicting viewpoint that the church and Christians must be ' with it.' It must ' move with the times.' There is no Scripture that agrees with this. On the contrary, we are told to walk in His ways (Isaiah 2. 3; Isaiah 30.21). We are not to walk after the flesh, not to be worldly or secular (Romans 8. 10) and to walk worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1.10). There are Christians who will not walk in His ways (Isaiah 42.24). We are told to seek the old paths, traditionalism, and walk in those ways.

It will be said that the church must be relevant to the time and age. But that is a different concept. It means that we must present our congregations with present day issues from the Biblical standpoint. We do not sink to the world's level.

There will be dilemmas. A young couple, very much in love, are living together and have two children. Neither of the couple can get a divorce for legitimate reasons and that is true. One day, they go to church and are converted. They feel that their lives are complete but then some people in the church discover that they are ' living in sin.' What should happen?

That awful politician, Harriet Harman, wants churches to allow homosexuals to have positions in the church even with young people. It is clear that she ranks the rights of gay people over the rights of Christians and the teaching of the Bible.

There is a famous film star who declares herself to be a Christian and yet she is in films where she is violent, uses bad language and has appeared nude. Is this an example of the life that pleases God? People excuse her by saying that she is just doing a job.

We are to walk in God's ways which produces blessing (Psalm 128. 1). His ways are just and true (Revelation 15. 3) and traditional.

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