

Conformity

“For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself;” Rom. 14:7. “But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ,” I Cor. 8:12. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,” Matt. 5:16.

Obviously, among other things, the preceding Scriptures suggest that each person is a social being and is responsible for conducting himself (or herself) in a way so as not to cause others to stumble, and that one should, by “*good works*” performed, be instrumental in causing others to glorify “*your Father in heaven.*” Indeed, no man “*lives to himself!*” Everyone is an example, either for good or evil, and influences others accordingly.

However, being **concerned** about our influence as individuals should not make us **unconcerned** about our *individuality*. But alas! We are living in an age of conformity, and should anyone dare to be a non-conformist, he is automatically branded as some sort of “odd ball” that we’d best ignore!

“**Conformity**” is defined as: (1) “correspondence in form or character; agreement, congruity, or accordance.” (2) “Compliance or acquiescence.” How many, even in the church, feel that somehow they must correspond “in form or character” with the sinful wishes of the crowd? How many teenagers, otherwise basically good people, “go along” (conform) with the demands of the crowd lest they be called “chicken?” How many spend money they don’t have, in order to buy things they don’t need, in order to “keep up” (conform) with the standards set by the Joneses, who just refinanced because they are trying to “keep up” with the Smiths?

The desire to conform destroys the simplicity of life, and robs one of inward peace, as he desperately tries to squeeze himself into the mold everyone else has set for him. “What will **others think**,” with entirely too many, has taken the place that should be reserved for “what does **God require**.” “What will please God” has been supplanted for “what will please man.” “What is **socially acceptable**,” with multitudes, has taken priority over “what is **scripturally authorized**.”

How many otherwise “good people” nervously laugh at filthy jokes, lest they be considered both “unfriendly” and “out of touch” with modern society? How many “line up” in order to guard their “reputation” than **stand up** in order to preserve their own peace of mind? How many preachers have “gone over like a lead balloon,” simply because they made more effort to mimic the gestures and speech of a fellow preacher than they did to “*speak as the oracles of God?*” I Pet. 4:11. How many professed Christians spend more time worrying about what **people** will think than in studying what **God** has said?

I’m not recommending that we all join some rabid, fanatical, howling mob, whose chief conformity is in conforming to non-conformity, and then going all out to “buck the

system,” but I am recommending that, as individuals, we should be **individualistic!** Since when did it become “old hat” to be yourself instead of a tight-rope walking pantomime artist, feeling duty bound to walk the line and mimic the sound of what “everybody else” is doing and saying!

Thank God that Jesus Christ did not choose to lose His identity by conforming to the unrighteous expectations of unrighteous men! Yes, it got Him into trouble. He was crucified! But salvation for all was therein made possible, Heb. 2:9, and Jesus now is “*highly exalted,*” and has been given “*a name which is above every name,*” Phil. 2:9. And it is now a part of the “*all truth*” into which His apostles were guided, John 16:13, that you should “*not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God,*” Rom. 12:2. In brief, each one of us should hasten to put off conformity, and put on “**transformity**” by living “*soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age,*” Tit. 2:12. Consider ye well!

*** — Bobby Witherington

The Devil

The devil goes about seeking whom he
may devour.
He travels in all kinds of weather, even
rain or shower.

The devil visits day and night
the way-side bar,
And a great many times pushes into
the family car.

Be wise and obey God as you go
about.
Quite often he or she is medium, slim,
small, good looking, or stout.

God expects all to resist the devil, and
not to go by style.
Then live according to the Bible, so you
can be with Him after awhile.

Is this true? False? Or just some words
to utter?
It ought to make people think,
and shudder.
