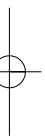


**The great  
Danger of  
Conformity to  
the World**

by

**George  
Whitefield**



*The great Danger of  
Conformity to the World.*

A

**SERMON**

Preached ON Friday OCTOBER 22D. 1742

IN THE  
*High-Church-Yard,*  
OF

GLASGOW.

BY THE REVEREND

**Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.**

*From Romans xii. 2. And be not conformed unto this World.  
taken from his own Mouth and published at the desire of many of the  
Hearers.*

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Romans *xii.* 2. And be not conformed unto this World.

**M**ANY are the Enemies which surround the Christian, Many are the Enemies which wait for his halting, that want to divert him from God, from pursuing his Christian-Race, and pressing forward towards the Mark of the prize, of his high-calling in Jesus Christ. But there seeks to be one that the Christian is most in Danger of; and therefore is most particularly cautioned against in the Scriptures of truth: I mean this wicked World, it's remarkable therefore that our blessed Saviour just before he was about to suffer, in the Pattern of that Intercession, he was to make for his Church now above, He puts up a particular Petition, that his followers, that all these that should he brought to believe on him through the Preaching of the *Gospel*, might be kept from the World, that they might be kept unspotted from the World. Agreeably to this, the Apostle *Paul* in the Words of the *Text* exhorts the Christians in a particular Manner, to take care that they are not conformed unto this World, a short but a most necessary Injunction, and especially in the Age wherein we live.

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The generality of Christians are so blinded with the World, are so exceeding Complaisant, so exceeding plyable, that one will scarce know who is on God's side, and who on the World's side; We are indeed grown conformists in the worst Sense, not to the Rites and Ceremonies of a Church, but unto the Corruptions of the World. In discoursing on the Words of the *Text*, I shall shew you the Necessity of this Duty, of not being conformed unto the World, and what is implied in the *Text* what we are to understand by the World, and what by not being conformed unto the World, and *3dly.* Shew you some Arguments, in order to shew

you that it is your Duty and Privilege not to be conformed unto this World.

And 1st. What we are to understand by the World. By the World we are to understand the Things of the World, and these. Things the Apostle explains when (*he says*) 1 John ii. 10. *For all that is in the World the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the pride of Life, is not of the Father but is of the World.* By the World therefore we are to understand the Things of the World, the Lust, of the Flesh; and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, and every Thing in this World which is contrary to the *Scripture*, every Thing which is contrary unto the Spirit of God, and unto the Meek, and Lowly, and Heavenly Mind of Jesus Christ.

And by the World in the second Place, we are not only to understand the Things of the World but the People of the World; the Men of the World who are called by Jesus Christ the Men of this World, ye are of the World, and the World loves it's own. We are not to be con-

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formed unto the Things of this World, nor unto the Customs of the Men of this World; they are put in Opposition by our Saviour unto the Children of Light.

By not being conformed unto this World, you must not understand it as if the Apostle laid an Injunction on us to leave the World, to leave our Shops, to leave our Trades, and neglect our Duty in Common Life, My Friends I know no Precept in the Scripture that lais us under a Necessity of doing this, so far from it that our Saviour says, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the World, but that thou shouldst keep them from the Evil." By not being conformed unto the World, we are not to understand going out of the World, turning hermits, and neglecting the Duties of our respective Stations. We are to live in the Stations wherein God has called us, to be better Servants & Masters; better Husbands, and Wives, your Religion is to be shewn in the common Duties of Life. And he is the best Christian who is the most industrious and observant of all relative Duties out of Love and gratitude to God.

By not being conformed unto the World, we are not to understand an unbecoming Perciseness and Singularity, People may affect a particular Garb and dress, and a great many Things meerly to be look'd at, and taken notice of, when the Apostle says, *Be not conformed unto this World*, he does not mean we should be singular when there is no Occasion of it. That we should put on this, or that meerly to be take Notice of, or

to be Persons by ourselves. This is a Lesson the Lamb of God never left us, the Lord Jesus Christ came eating and drinking, he came not in a reserved Manner, he conversed with *Publicans* and Sinners the worst of Men.

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But all this while he was not conformed unto this World, he conversed with them, not as their Companion but as their Physician.

By not being conformed unto this World the Apostle means, as much as comes to this don't let the World be your Rule, let not their Maxims be four Maxims, let not the Men of the World be your Example so as to follow nor to be led by them. You are not to be conformed to the World, so as to be led by the Lust of the Flesh, nor the Lust of the Eyes, nor the Pride of Life. Take care the World don't step in between your Heart and God; nor make the World instead of your *Bible* the Rule of your Actions, the World is not to be the Rule of thy Actions nor thy Guide, you are to live in a holy Nonconformity unto the World.

But *2dly*. My Friend, if you are Believers in Christ, you are not to be conformed unto the Lust of the Eyes in having great and splendid Furniture in your Houses; and, having your Bodies loaded with fine Cloaths, having as much on them as would maintain many of your starving Neighbours: It's unlawful for Christians to study the Fashions, its unlawful for you to imitate the World in the Lust of the Eye, in the Pride of Life. You must not be conformed unto the World in paying idle visits, and talking over your Neighbours Character at your *Tea-Tables*, and murdering your Neighbours there. You must not be conformed unto the World in any Thing wherein they are not conformed unto the Lord Jesus Christ. One would imagine that there were no such Thing in the *Scriptures* of Truth, how many are there that spend their Time in idle Visits,

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and study the Fashions, and spend many Hours adorning their Bodies which ought to be better spent in Trimming them for God. I know very well I will have a whole Voley of Objections against me here, this is hard Doctrine, who can bear it. I would says same, but I know I shall be Singular. Dost thou ever think to go to Heaven without being Singular? If thou canst not bear to be Singular thou must go to Hell; 'tis a sober Singularity that thou must have, if thou art a Child God. O *says another!* "I will be despised, I will be pointed at, and taken Notice of, I will be

counted a Fool." And so thou must if thou be a Servant of Jesus Christ thou must be counted a Fool, if thou can'st not bear a little Breath: 'tis a Sign that the Lamp of thy Love burns but slowly, that a little Breath will put out. My Friends, if you cannot think to bear a little contempt for God, I cannot think how you would burn at a Stake for God. I but *says another*, "We must become all Things to all Men." If by any Means we may save some, but we must take care not to do any Thing that's Evil, for instead of Saving another; we will ruin our own Soul, and we must never do Evil that Good may come of it, we should be holily affable to others; but at the same Time take care not to indulge them in Sin. If we will indulge Person's in fine eating and fine dressing, and going to Balls to bring them to Christ, do you think that Christ will Countenance that Way. 'tis the most unreasonable Thing in the World for People to be afraid of Contempt. Examine yourselves at the Heart, and you shall find that it's a Fear of being despised by, and spoken of by the World; & would you be well spoken

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of by them, I am sure, if I were, I should not be a Servant of Christ; you will observe, when the *Devil* spake well of our Saviour he always stopt his Mouth in the Days of his Flesh, Be not afraid of Contempt, it is thy Honour to be despised of the World, and when you see that you are hated on Account of your Nonconformity to the World, thou mayest say with holy *Ignatius*. "Lo, now I begin to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ." This will Answer the Objections that are made against being Singular, you do not Fear being mocked at or being laughed at, by those who are Haters of God.

To set before you this Duty or Nonconformity unto the World: I shall set before you the Example of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. You all profess yourselves his Disciples, you all bear the Christian-Badge and Name, as he was in the World, so are you to be also, read the Gospel and you shall see how he walked, and he that saith, "He abideth in Christ ought himself to walk as he also himself walked." Now look through all the Gospel, and see whether Jesus was conformed unto the World, he indeed became all Things to all Men: If *Pharisees* asked him to dine with them he went, if a Ruler asked him to dine he made no Scruple to go. But did he spend whole Evenings in tippling and drinking in Taverns, did he spend the whole Time in Foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient: Did he indulge the Lust of the Eye, the Lust



of the Flesh; or the Pride of Life; No? wherever he was is Conversation was in Heaven, if when he went with the *Pharisees* unto Dinner, and saw how they chuse chief Seats at their Feasts, he Lectures

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of Humility, wherever he was, he always spiritualized the Objects he met with. When he saw how carefull the *Pharisees* were in cleansing the Outside of their Cups, he gave a Lecture of Hypocrisie: And when he saw *Martha* preparing for his Entertainment, the Lord Jesus fell a Teaching of preparing for their Souls, of labouring for the Meat that perisheth not. He would not do the World so much Honour as to have one Foot of Land in it.

Another Reason why you should not be conformed unto the World, and the Things of the World, and that is, that the Things of the World they are as contrary to Jesus as the Light is to Darkness, Heaven to Hell.

I know we have a great many that want to Trade betwixt God and the World, that want to serve their Heart as the Woman wanted the Child, should be in *Solomon's* Time, they want to divide it betwixt God and the World, They are almost but not altogether, Christians, but the inspired Apostle says, "To us all Things in the World are not of the Father, the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh and the Pride of Life, all these are not of the Father." The Children of this World and the Children of Christ are put in Opposition to each other. *You cannot serve God and Mammon:* This may serve for an Argument why you should not be conformed unto this World; that the Things of this World are as contrary to the Spirit of God as Light to Darkness, Heaven to Hell.

A third Argument, Why you should not be conformed unto this World, is because there is nothing in the World that can satisfy your Souls, go to Balls, go to Assemblies, Dress up yourselves

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in fine Cloathing. live delicately and fare sumptuously every Day, say to your Soul eat Drink and be Merry. Tomorrow shall be as this Day, & much more abundant. Will the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, or the Pride of Life make you happy? I appeal to any Men of Pleasure here who have been at Balls, and at dancing, and who have sat at Card[ing], and what they call polite Conversation, did this satisfy you, did you find Content in it; *Solomon* tried all this, tried what it was to conform unto the World, and yet after he had tossed up human Happiness in all it's

Parts and Articles; *he says*, “All is Vanity; and what is worst, Vanity of Vanity, and what is worst of all, Vexation of Spirit.” You will go to Balls dancing and Assemblies to please the World: And what will the World give you for it, will the World be Damned for you? Will it Answer for you, when you come to appear before God at the great Day when you Die, and are buried, they will be as Merry as before you went out of the World, will you please the World that will Laugh when you Die, and for fear of being laughed at, forsake the dear Redeemer.

Another Argument, to perswade you not to be conformed unto this World, is, it is what you have solemnly renounced at your Baptism, 'tis so far from being a Friend unto you that you have renounced it in the great Congregation. O you that are to receive the Sacrament, do not go to the Table of the Lord that are conformed unto the World! Your Ministers may give you a Token, but O you will be cursed of God! You are excluded by the great God if you are conformed unto the World. You have sworn that you would

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be at perpetual War with the *Devil*, and the World. You have got a better Master, give him your Heart.

Another Argument, to perswade you not to be conformed unto the World, is, That if you are, you do as much as in you lies, to overturn the Design of your being redeemed, the Lord Jesus Christ came to redeem us from this present World. The World deceives but never satisfies us: 'Tis just like so many golden Apples thrown by the Devil to divert us from our christian Race; they are Baits below the Dignity of a Heaven-born Soul. We cannot say Christ has done any Thing for us, untill we find such a Power over the World as to make us to trample it under our Feet.

Another Argument, to make us not to be conformed unto this World, is the Things of this World murdered and stabb'd the Son of God. The Men and the Things of this World made Jesus Christ bleed and Die, can you love to see the Marks of the Redeemer's Blood, can you Love the Lust of the Eye, Lust of the Flesh; the Pride of Life, that gave thy Saviour such a horid nab in his Side, and pierced his Hands and Feet, that murdered the Son of God when nailed on the Cross. Every Time you dress for a Ball, every Time you dress for the Pride of Life, you on the Matter say, I will give Christ another hearty Stab in his Side: The *Jews* did it not enough, I will Prick him now in his very Heart, and if it were in my

Power, I would cause Blood and Water gush from his Side again: Perhaps you would not say this in express Words, but this is the Language of your Hearts, Every Time you indulge your Lusts, you Stab the Son of God, and if you profess to be his Followers you say, Hail, Hail, but *Judas* like betray him.

Another Argument, is, that if you be conformed unto this World, you will never live with God in the World to come. Either you must please God or the *Devil*; if you please the World you please the *Devil* much, the *Devil* Rules in the World, and if you are

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the Servants of the Devil, you cannot live where Christ is, [??] where Christ is there his Servants will be also. I have seen a few of the many Arguments that might be used for us not being conformed unto the World: But I fear that Time would fail if I were to enlarge on it; many Arguments might be used to diswade from Conformity to this. O that the Lord Jesus Christ might press these home upon you!

I come now unto the Application of this Subject As a Day for preparing to meet Christ at his Table, exhort every one to examine yourselves before you of that Bread, and, you shall find we have been too much conformed unto this World, it is so then, let us humble ourselves this Morning before God, and beg in the Strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, we may be formed unto it no more. You that are Followers of Christ shew yourselves, and separate from your idle iters and Company, that do your Souls a great deal of hurt, dare to be Singular, the Lord Jesus Christ Support you, fear not the Breath or Men, and ice of *Devils*, follow Christ, and resolve to bear a rt of Christ's Reproach, such a one may be counted an *Enthusiast* & Madman, but ere long you shall shine in the Kingdom of your Father, you are they that have not been ashamed, of me before Men; come my dear re-deemed ones, and take your Crowns. And what will the Men of the World do then, when you are praising God in Heaven, they will be thrust down into Hell, and what would they then give that they had not been conformed unto the World, when with Dives they lift

up their Eyes in Hell, being in Torment, And those now study to please if they go along with us to Hell, will be Tormenters to us for ever. Then set an Example of Jesus Christ before you, and the Example of the great, Apostles, and Martyrs, and Confessors of Jesus Christ, And let us make God, not the World, God's Word. And not the Men of the World our Example. And take care to do every Thing according the Rule of God's Word, fear not the Reproaches

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and Calumny of the World: 'Tis only the Contempt of the *Devils* Children, and would you be commended by them, if the *Devils* Children did not contemn and Reproach; me, I should not think I were, a Minister of Christ, but I hope the *Devil* and I are not in one League. Don't be afraid of the *Devil* nor of the Men of the World, the *Devil's* Children cannot hurt you, they are like so many Mastiff-Dogs chained, they cannot do you any harm. Do nothing to disoblige any Man, if they hurt you, do you Kiss their Feet that trample on you, but fear not the Men of the World nor the *Devil* in Hell; the Lord Jesus will support you, and carry you through, what can they do unto us, they may take away our Estates our good Name and our Lives; and then send our Souls unto God; fear them not, but be bold for God, and don't fear the World as you have done, you female Christians, that adorn your Bodies with fine Cloathing, having as much on your Hands and Ears, as would maintain many poor starving Families, lay up for yourselves Treasure in Heaven, by giving to the Poor; you must mind you are Stewards of the manifold Gifts of God: I know such a Conduct may expose you to the contempt of Men, but you shall meet with the Approbation of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ will at the great Day abundantly Reward you, as you have been Singular for him on Earth, so shall you be singularly honoured of God in Heaven. *Even so Lord Jesus, Amen and Amen.*

CHRIST OUR FRIEND

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***FINIS.***



