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CHURCHES OF DISTINCTION

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Persons of Distinction! Such is one of the most common phrases in 20th Century advertising techniques. The basis of appeal is obvious—an effort to induce people to purchase or to do that which will set them apart from the ordinary and make them, at least in a positional sense, "Persons of Distinction."

Churches of Distinction! Such should be the cry of the 20th Century Christian—indicating to a world at large that ours is an institution marked by differences—differences tangible enough to separate and make "Churches of Distinction."

Unfortunately this is not the case. Rather than standing out in bold relief of variance, the church is hidden by the shadowing effect of similarity. And such is one of the ills of our church—it has lost its distinctiveness.

But what are those marks of distinction which ought to isolate the church from all other social institutions? Consider with us these three: distinctiveness of message, method and mannerism.

Thomas Paine, of early Colonial days, wrote with zealous pen at the threat of losing reputation and life. Why? He stood alone, that purveyor of a message few chose to endorse. Early Christians felt that same enthusiasm for theirs was a message to be heard nowhere outside their area of influence. But today's church lacks the zeal of the reformer or the enthusiasm of the novice. The reasons, pure and simple—the message is not distinctive. Rather than adhering to the message of Life as revealed in Jesus Christ, today's church bespeaks itself in many areas of interest. Its ministers have become experts in the fields of science, politics, and economics, but have remained amateurs in the fields of religion. What a pity—in the field where the church should be the final authority it has become a mere consultant authority. The church has lost its distinctiveness, because it has lost its distinctive message.

Moreover, the church has lost its distinctiveness of manner. Historians and theologians alike have made great sport of the manner of operation peculiar to the general church a few decades ago and true of a few churches today. We refer to the technique variously termed "the altar," "the mourner's bench," "the penitent form," "sawdust trail," etc. Along with the jibes ridiculing these allegedly antedated methods there is the suggestion of more refined techniques, such as raising hands, signing cards, or simply making inward avowals to "do better from now on." Only one comment need be made. The substitute is not as good as the original. For, when the old technique went several virtues disappeared with it. Some of these would include humility, confession, and public declaration. No wonder today's church is dead and lifeless. No other consequence could follow the loss of such vital and life-giving influences. No wonder the

WHAT SANCTIFICATION WILL NOT DO

By F. Lincicome

Sanctification will not produce uniformity. It cannot because of the way sanctified people differ.

First, they differ in their thinking. We can't all be of the same opinion. Opinions are about as numerous as the sands of the sea, and many of them as worthless. Opinions operate in a very limited sphere. They were made to be changed—never to be stereotyped.

Sanctified people differ in their personalities. Of the two billion, eight hundred million people now living, no two faces are alike, no two voices, no two walking gaits. This is why we cannot insist on uniformity in religion. For personality knows nothing of uniformity.

When we speak of unity, there are always those among us who look for uniformity. They think we are making no progress until we think alike, dress alike, see alike, and get blessed alike. Unity is essential and obligatory, while uniformity is impossible and undesirable. It is perfectly irrational to expect the baptism of the Holy Ghost to merge our personalities into one common monotony and, in so doing, make a bunch of apes out of us.

We also differ in our capacity. Some have a hundred fold more than others. This is what makes a bigger heaven for some than others. I believe there will be degrees of happiness in heaven. Someone asks, If this is so, who will be the happiest person there? I answer, The one who has the greatest capacity to take heaven in. We will all be fully happy in heaven, but will not be equally so.

Sanctified people differ in their doctrinal thinking—with reference to the doctrines of the Second Coming of Christ, of divine healing, of baptism.

We cannot all think alike ethically. Some good people think it is wrong to drink coffee, to take medicine, to use the telephone on Sunday, to carry an insurance policy on real estate or life.

Sanctified people differ in their moral and spiritual perception. This is largely due to two things, namely—enlightenment and inheritance. Holiness will produce unity—a threefold unity—unity with yourself, among yourselves, and with God.

The first great work of heart holiness is the co-ordination, organization, unification and harmonization of the soul's faculties. Holiness unifies the faculties of the soul, the heart, the mind, and the will. Everything in us moves in the same direction. The worldward pull and the hellward pull are eliminated.

church is ordinary. It will continue to be so until its distinctiveness, time-honored method of operation is restored. Until that time, the church will continue to operate bereft of its distinctiveness of manner.

Further, a church should stand out because of the mannerisms of the people who occupy its pews each week. It is an eternal, immutable premise of Christian living

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