C  A profound passage comes out of one of Paul’s Epistles to give something of a scriptural sanction to our theme.

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 87, Why the Christian Must Oppose Segregation

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5 King may refer to Romans 102 as he does in the sermon Sincerity Is Not Enough, 3 June 1951, pp. 119-120 in this volume.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

“The Unknown Great”

[1948-1954]

I  Introduction

A  In every epoch of human history and in every civilization there are certain names that stand out and that are not forgotten.

1. Hebrew culture—Moses and Abraham
   
2. Early Christian—Paul Peter

3. Greek culture—Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
   Lit. Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes

4. Roman civilization—Caesar, Lucretius, Augustine

5. Middle Ages—

B  The contributions of these individuals have been great and lasting and history would be at a lost without them. But in every age there have been a group of men and women whose contributions have been equally significant, but whose names have passed into the dim unknown. They have gone down in history forgotten and unknown. They have faded into the dark halls of oblivion.

   A clear example of this is found in our text for the morning.

C  Text—Ecclesiastes 9:14-16

II  Let us notice first that the course of history is not changed by the creative work of a single individual but by the cooperative endeavor of a group of individual

1  The minor prophets prepared the way for the greater prophets

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1  Aeschylus (525-456 BCE), Euripides (ca. 484-406 BCE), and Aristophanes (ca. 450-ca. 388 BCE) were renowned Athenian playwrights.

2  Lucretius (ca. 96-ca. 55 BCE) was an influential Roman poet.

3  "There was a little city, and few men within it, and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength; nevertheless the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard."

4  King refers to the minor prophets whose lives were documented in the twelve shorter books of prophecy in the Old Testament. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. By greater prophets, he refers to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.
1948–1954

2 Paul was not the only missionary
3 Reformation was not started by Martin Luther
4 The abolition of slavery had been advocated long before Lincoln.

III Let us notice again that behind the work of the individuals whose greatness remains known is the so often made possible by the work of [strikeout illegible] individuals whose names are not remembered and not know

1 Doing a little in a big way
2 Marion Anderson
3 The Captain of the ship—We could not survive without someone doing the dirty work

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 118, "Sermon Material"

5 In his sermon “Conquering Self-Centeredness” King discussed Marian Anderson’s acknowledgment of her mother’s sacrifice “Let us never forget that Marian Anderson, that great contralto, is there today because somebody in the background helped her to get there. Because there was that mother who was willing to work days and nights until her eyebrows were all but parched and her hands all but scorched in order that her daughter could get her training and an education” (King, Sermon Delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, 11 August 1957, in Papers 4 255)

“Human Freedom & Divine Grace”

Text Son of man stand upon your feet and I will speak to you Ez

Int This text stress the point that the redemptive process is one of cooperation between man and God. Human freedom and divine grace are not opposing entities, but they interpenetrate. God is saying to Ezekiel in substance, “you are free and so use your freedom to help yourself and after you reached the limits of your freedom by doing all that you can I will step in and help you.” Here we avoid both the extremes of humanism and determinism

I The Meaning of Freedom It is presupposed in the ethical life. It means that you have the possibility of contrary choices

1 Cf Ezekiel 2:1 “And he said unto me, stand upon thy feet that I might speak with thee.” In King’s dissertation while discussing Tillich’s notion of human freedom, he draws on the words from a dissertation by Jack Booser (“The Place of Reason in Paul Tillich’s Conception of God” [Ph D dissertation, 1952], pp 62–63). “Man has in a sense left the divine ground to ‘stand upon’ his own feet” (King, “A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman,” in Papers 2 532–533)

2 The theme of this sermon aligns closely with one of the major issues King discussed in his dissertation regarding Paul Tillich. In addition, some of the phrases used in this sermon come directly from notes taken for DeWolfs History of Christian Doctrine course taken during the 1952–1953 school year

This correlation indicates a sermon date between 1952 and 1953