cious law of the land and crush it blow of their tragic whims and caprices.\(^5\)

We have seen England trampling over India with the iron feet of oppression. We have seen the British and the Dutch and the Belgans and the French crushing Africa with the battering rams of exploitation.

(c) Yet, in the midst of this Christianity insist that there is hope for man. Christianity has always insisted that man's plight is never so low that it can't be better.

(D) This was certainly expressed in the life of Jesus. Throughout his ministry Jesus revealed a deep faith in the possibilities of human nature. He saw within this sea of humanity not a dead sea of impossibilities, but an ocean of infinite possibilities and potentialities.

(E) This is expressed very beautifully in a passage in the fourth first chapter of John. Jesus is presented talking to Peter. Now you remember Peter was undependable, vacillating so fickle in his ever changing moods. But Jesus says to him in substance: although you are Simon now, you will be Peter. It did not look like it. And it was a long time in coming. But it did come. He was saying to Peter “actually you are like sand, but potentially you are a rock.”\(^6\)

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 66, "Accepting Responsibility for Your Actions” / “Faith in Man”

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

“Faith in Man” II

I Introduction

(1) In our age there is a growing pessimism about the nature and destiny of man. Man is fastly losing faith in himself. Many would be in accord with the writer who spoke of man as the supreme clown of creation. (quote other poets)\(^7\)

(2) There was a time when man had to much toward man is far out of line with the Christian religion. Christianity has always insisted that man’s plight is never so low that it can’t be better. We might go so far as to say that Christianity stands or falls with its power to change human nature.

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5 Students noted at the University of Alabama on 6 February to protest Lucy’s court-ordered admission. The University expelled Lucy, allegedly for her protection. It later reinstated her by order of the court only to expel her again, this time for allegedly making accusations against school officials. The court that had ordered Lucy’s reinstatement later upheld the University’s actions. For more on Autherine Lucy, see note 2, King to Fred Drake, 7 February 1956, in Papers 3 128.


7 King quoted Psalm 8, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and Thomas Carlyle’s French Revolution in an introduction to a similar sermon (see King, “What Is Man?”, Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, 11 July 1954, p. 175 in this volume).
Throughout his ministry, Jesus revealed his deep faith in the possibilities of human nature.

Jesus knew that God had given man certain creative powers and had endowed him with high and noble virtues, and that these virtues and powers could be made living realities in the life of man if he properly responded to the Grace of God.

II  Let us state at the outset that there is always the danger of man having to much faith in himself

(a) Modern humanism
(b) Extreme liberal Theology
(c) Man’s faith in Man must never come to the point of the deification of Man

D  True Christian Postition

(1) Man is a creature No matter how much he advances culturally, he is still a creature

III  Faith in man consist in the following beliefs

1  A belief in the possibility of human nature being changed
   (a) Some deny the possibility of being changed after adolescence

2  A belief in man’s better self being able to master his evil self

3  A belief in man’s capacity to rise above his hereditary and environmental circumstances
   (A) Many men are environmentalist and hereditary determinist
   (B) A roll of men who have risen above their environment

IV  Conclusion  If men are willing to submit their wills to God’s will and to cooperate with him in his divine purpose, we will be able to turn the world upside down, outside in, and right side up

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8  King may have used John 1:40-42 (GOODSPEED) as his text, as he did in the previous sermon outline, “Faith in Man.”

9  In another sermon which King filed in the same folder as both versions of “Faith in Man,” he cited Marian Anderson, Roland Hayes, Abraham Lincoln, John Bunyan, Franklin D Roosevelt, and Helen Keller as examples of those who overcame conditions of environment and heredity to make noble contributions to society (King, “Accepting Responsibility for Your Actions,” 26 July 1953, pp 139–172 in this volume)