I  Title—"Forgiveness"

Theme—Forgiveness does not take away the fact of sin. But it restores the
offender to communion with us, which he had forfeited through his offence.
Purpose—to show that the forgiving spirit is one of the greatest experiences in
life.

III  "Facing life’s Inescapables"

Theme—There are certain great inevitables in life which cannot be escaped
Purpose—to show the listeners how to face these inevitables.

[signed] M. L. King

AHDS. CSKC: Sermon file, folder 56, "Sermon Notes."

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

Sermon Introductions

Why Religion?

INTRODUCTION

Recently, a very serious minded friend of mine asked me the question, why reli-
gion? I found myself unable to give a concrete answer to this question, for I had
never given it a thought. I could have probably answered his question by saying, if you
have religion you will go to heaven, but in reality I know nothing about heaven. Or I
could have said, if you dont have religion you will go to hell, but personally I dont
believe in hell in the conventional sense. Or maybe I could have quoted some scrip-
tural passage, but suppose he doubted even the authority of the Bible. He wanted
some concrete evidence on the necessity for religion. And so after giving the question
some serious thought, I will attempt to answer it in this sermon. Why Religion?

Life Is What You Make It

INTRODUCTION

Many people wander into the world, and they pick up everything they can get
their hands upon looking for life. They never get it. What they get is existence.
Existence is what you find; life is what you create. Therefore, if life ever seems worth while to you, it is not because you found it that way, but because you made it so.16

_Civilization’s Great Need_

**INTRODUCTION**

The greatest need of civilization is not political security; the greatest need of civilization is not a multiplicity of wealth; the greatest need of civilization is not the superb genius of science, as important as it is; the greatest need of civilization is moral progress.17

_The Effects of Conversion_

There is no greater revolution in the world than conversion to God.

It might be profitable to those who have not yet undertaken this internal revolution of their spirits, to acquaint themselves with the three beautiful results of conversion.18

_What Is Man?_

One of the most pertinent and pressing problems of our time was raised by an ancient poet of Israel when he asked, “What is man?”19 What men have believed about themselves, what they have thought was their nature and destiny, have been among the most potent facts in history.20

[signed] M. L. King Jr.21

AHDS. CSKC: Sermon file, folder 36, “Sermon Notes.”

expanded upon this theme in the sermon “Creating the Abundant Life,” Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church (26 September 1954, pp. 187–192 in this volume).

16. Keighton joined the words “worth” and “while.”

17. For a complete version of this sermon, see King, “Civilization’s Great Need,” 1949, pp. 86–88 in this volume.

18. In a March 1948 radio address titled “The Effects of Conversion,” Fulton J. Sheen stated: “Friends: There is no greater revolution in the world than conversion to God. It might be profitable to those who have not yet undertaken this internal revolution of their spirits, to acquaint themselves with the four beautiful results of conversion.” King kept a copy of this address in his sermon file. Fulton J. Sheen, head of the American branch of the Catholic Church’s Society for the Propagation of the Faith from 1951 until 1966, began radio broadcasts in 1930 while a professor at Catholic University in Washington, D.C.


20. Keighton noted at the bottom of the assignment, “These are _ried & all very good; especially the first.”

21. King folded this assignment lengthwise and signed his name on the verso of the last page.