

“A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart”

[30 August 1959]

[Montgomery, Ala.]

King elaborates on a dichotomy found in Gerald Hamilton Kennedy's sermon "The Mind and the Heart" to explore the need for tough-minded and tender-hearted Christians¹ Citing inaccurate media portrayals of prime ministers Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Jawaharlal Nehru of India, King regrets that most individuals do not look beyond the 'subjective appraisals of the newspaper headlines to the actual truth of the situation' He warns, "The shape of the world today does not permit us the luxury of [soft mindedness] A nation of soft minded men is purchasing its own spiritual death through an [installment] plan." King also targets "those hard hearted [individuals] among us who feel that the only way to deal with oppression is to rise up against the opponent with physical violence and corroding hatred." He directs his listeners to "another way which [combines tough mindedness] with tender heartedness It is tough minded enough to resist evil It is tender hearted to

¹ Kennedy, *The Lion and the Lamb Paradoxes of the Christian Faith* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), pp. 161–171. In his copy of Kennedy's book, King wrote "The tough mind & the tender Heart" above the title of the sermon, "The Mind and the Heart." While King uses Kennedy's categories of "soft mind," "tough mind," "hard heart," and "tender heart," the body of King's sermon is different than Kennedy's. On the folder containing this sermon, King wrote "Preached at Dexter, August 30,

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resist it with love It [avoids] the complacency and the do-nothingism of the soft minded and the violence and bitterness of the hard hearted " King submitted a more complete version of this handwritten sermon outline for publication in Strength to Love ²

Text "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves" ³

I Introduction open with quote from French philosopher ⁴ Show how the demands of the good life require toughness of mind and tenderness of heart

II Let us consider first the need for a tough mind

A Definition of tough mind—(use Religion in Changing world) ⁵ No one can doubt that this is a great need

B Very few people achieve this toughness of mind But All to many are content with the soft mind It is a rarity to find ~~anyone~~ one willing to engage in hard, serious thinking There is an almost universal quest for easy answer, and half baked solutions Nothing pains some people more than the idea of having to think

C Man's soft mindedness is expressed in his unbelievable gullibility The soft minded person believes anything Take an attitude toward advertizements We ~~may seldom pause to~~ can be so easily lead to buy a product [*words illegible*] because a television and radio advertizement pronounces it better than any other Advetizers have long since learnd that most people are soft minded, so they have developed special skill to create phrases and slogans that will penetrate the thin ~~layer~~ mind of the average reader or listener

This undue guillibility is also seen in the tendency of many to accept the printed word of the press as final truth They fail to see that even facts can be slanted and truth can be distorted So President Nkru of Ghana is considered a ruthless dictator by many because the American press has carefully disseminated this idea ⁶ Prime Nehru is consider a a non committed

² See King, Draft of Chapter I, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," July 1962–March 1963, pp 459–466 in this volume

³ Matthew 10:16

⁴ King most likely refers to the quote he used to introduce the version of this sermon he submitted for publication "A French philosopher once said that 'No man is strong unless he bears within his character antitheses strongly marked'" (King, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," July 1962–March 1963, p 459 in this volume) The quote mirrors lines from an E. Stanley Jones book that King annotated and kept in his personal library (Jones, *Mahatma Gandhi An Interpretation* [New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948], p 17)

⁵ In his book *Religion in a Changing World*, Abba Hillel Silver said, "Our lives need much more than a precise, eager and powerful intellect They need not only knowledge which is power, but wisdom which is control They need not only truth which is light, but goodness which is warmth" (Silver, *Religion in a Changing World* [New York: Richard R. Smith, 1930], p 172)

⁶ During the summer of 1959, articles ran in the *New York Times* characterizing Nkrumah's government as "moving in great strides toward authoritarian rule" (see Henry Tanner, "Ghana Is Divided on Type of Rule," 4 July 1959) Kwame Nkrumah, prime minister (1957–1960) and president (1960–1966) of Ghana, was overthrown in a military coup in 1966 King met Nkrumah during his March 1957

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ingrate because the press has given the impression that his [~~strikeout illegible~~] policy of non-~~of positive neutralism~~ alignment is at bottom a negative commitment to nothing.⁷ Many social revolution in the world growing out of the legitimate aspiration of man for political independence, economic security and human dignity are all too often believed to be communist inspired because a large segment of the press reports it as such. Very few people have the toughness of mind that drives them to look beyond the inevitable biases and ~~prejudices~~ subjective appraisals of the newspaper headlines to the actual truth of the situation.

The soft minded are susceptible to belief in all kinds of superstitions. Almost any irrational fear can invade the soft mind without any sign of resistance—fear of Friday the thirteenth, fear of a black cat crossing one's path. A few months ago I noticed for the first time that the hotel in which I have stayed on several occasions did not have a thirteenth floor. On inquiring from the elevator driver the reason for this omission he said, "most large hotels follow this practice because of the fear of that so many people have in staying on the 13 floor. Actually the 14th floor is the 13th but we could never state it, because no one would stay there."

- D The soft minded always fears change. The most pain of all pain for them is the pain of a new idea. They get a security in the status-quo. Give example of white man.
- E Soft mindedness has often invaded the ranks of religion. This is why religion has been all too slow in accepting new truth.
 - (1) Galileo's experience⁸
 - (2) The theory evolution was considered blasphemous, and there are still those religionists who, in spite of the most definitive evidence, reject this theory with religious passion.
 - (3) Higher Criticism of the Bible⁹
 - (4) Reason in Religion
 - (5) All of this has led to the [*widespread?*] belief that there is a conflict between science and religion. This isn't true. There may be a conflict between soft minded religionists and tough minded scientists, but not science and religion.

visit to Ghana to celebrate the nation's independence. He reflected on this experience in his sermon "The Birth of a New Nation," Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, 7 April 1957, in *Papers* 4:155-167.

⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India (1947-1964), developed a foreign policy during the Cold War that included nonalignment with both the United States and the Soviet Union. On 10 February 1959, during a trip to India, King dined with Nehru (see King, "Notes for Conversation between King and Nehru," in *Papers* 5:130).

⁸ The Inquisition sentenced mathematician and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) to life imprisonment, served under house arrest, for affirming heliocentric theories found heretical by the Catholic Church.

⁹ In the draft of this sermon submitted for publication in *Strength to Love*, King elaborated on higher criticism (King, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," July 1962-March 1963, p. 462 in this volume).

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F We have all seen the ominous consequences of this type of soft mindedness in the modern world

- (1) Dictator after Dictator has capitalized on it, and as a result lead humanity more than once to blistering fires of barbarism It came to its most tragic expression in Hitler (Quote from Mein Kampf)¹⁰
- (2) ~~The cancer of Race prejudice is also produced~~ [~~strikeout illegible~~] Soft mindedness is also one of the basic causes for race prejudice They always pre-judge a race of people {Life was an eternal mirror in which he saw only himself, and not a window through which he saw other selves }
 - (a) Racial [*prejudice?*] grows out of fears which are groundless
 - (b) Quote Abraham Curse and the soft mind believe¹¹
 - (c) The Negro is [*criminal?*] He doesn't stop to see that these conditions are environmental
 - (D) intermarriage
 - (e) ~~Ruth Re~~ Superiority of the white in spite of Ruth Benedict and M Mead ¹²
 - (f) Show how politician capitalize on this¹³

G There is little hope for us in our personal or collective lives until we become tough minded enough to rise about the shackles of half-truth and legends The shape of the world today does not permit us the luxury of soft minded A nation of soft minded men is purchasing its own spiritual death through an instalment plan

II But we must not stop with the cultivation of a tough mind The gospel also demands a tender heart Tough mindedness without tender heartedness is cold, and and detached It leaves one life hardened by like a perpetual without the warmth of spring and the gentle heat of summer There is nothing more tragic than to see a person who has risen to the disciplined heights of tough minded and has sunk to the passionless depths of hard heartedness

A The ~~hard~~ hard hearted person ~~experiences~~ truly loves He only engages in a crude utilitarian love, which is not love at all (Define Ut love)¹⁴ He only loves himself He has never experienced the beauty of friendship

10 In the published version of "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," King wrote "Adolf Hitler realized that softmindedness was so prevalent among his followers that he said, 'I use emotion for the many and reserve reason for the few' In *Mein Kampf* he asserted 'By means of shrewd lies, unremittingly repeated, it is possible to make people believe that heaven is hell—and hell, heaven The greater the lie, the more readily will it be believed'" (*Strength to Love*, pp 3-4)

11 In the draft, King discusses Noah's curse upon the children of Ham (King, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," July 1962-March 1963, p 462 in this volume)

12 Ruth Fulton Benedict (1887-1948) and Margaret Mead (1901-1978) were anthropologists whose studies of non-Western societies rejected the notion of cultural superiority

13 In the draft, King identified politicians who relied on the soft-mindedness of their constituency, such as Arkansas governor Orval Faubus (King, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," July 1962-March 1963, p 463 in this volume)

14 King defined utilitarian love as "love at the lowest level" in which "one loves another for his usefulness to him" He labeled this type of love as "crude [*selfishness*]" (King, "Levels of Love," 14 August 1960)

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- B The hard hearted person has no genuine compassion He is unconcerned about the pains and misfortunes of his brothers He passes by unfortunate men every day, but he never really sees them He sees men hungry and feeds them not, he sees men naked and [clothes?] them not, he sees men sick and visits them not.¹⁵ He becomes cold, self-centered and heartless If he decides to give to a worthy charity, he gives his dollar and not his spirit
- C The hard hearted individual never sees people as people They become objects and impersonal cogs in some ever turning wheel If he is a hard headed business man people become mere producers of dollar They are digits, numbers etc (see Buttrick.¹⁶)
- D. Jesus told many parables to illustrate the characteristic of the hard hearted The good Samaritan was good because he was tough minded enough to gain economic security and tender hearted enough to have compassion for wounded brother on life's highway¹⁷ The rich fool was foolish not because he wasn't tough minded but because he wasn't tender hearted¹⁸ Life was an eternal mirror in which he saw only himself, and not a window through which he saw other selves Dives went to hell not because he was wealthy but because he was not tender hearted enough to see Lazarus He went to hell because he was so hard hearted that he guarded compassion and made no move to bridge the gulf between himself and his brother¹⁹
- E So Jesus reminds in a striking way that the good life demands combining the toughness of the serpent with the tenderness of the dove To have serpent like qualities devoid of dove-like qualities is to be passionless, mean and selfish To have dove like qualities without serpent like qualities is to be sentimental, aimless, and empty We must combine in our characters antithesis strongly marked
- F This text has a great deal of bearing on our struggle for racial justice We as Negroes must combine tough mindedness and tender heartedness if we are to attain the goal of freedom and equality There are those soft minded individuals among us who feel that the only way to deal with oppression is to adjust it They acquiesce to the fate of segregation They have been oppressed so long that they have become conditioned to oppression Like Shakespeare's Hamlet²⁰ But this isn't the way It is only for soft minded cowards. its

¹⁵ Cf Matthew 25 41-46

¹⁶ King may refer to George Buttrick's analysis of Jesus's parable of the rich man and the beggar (Buttrick, *Parables of Jesus*, pp 137-146)

¹⁷ Cf Luke 10 25-37

¹⁸ Cf Luke 12 16-21

¹⁹ Cf Luke 16 19-31

²⁰ Cf *Hamlet*, act 3, sc 1 King referred to this quote in the version of this sermon he submitted for publication, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," July 1962-March 1963, p 464 in this volume)

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There are ~~still other~~ those hard hearted ind among us who feel that the only way to deal with oppression is to rise up against the opponent with physical violence and corroding hatred They have allowed themselves to become bitter But this is not the way It creates many more social problems than it solves

There is another way which cobinds tough mindnes with tender heartedness. It is tough minded enough to resist evil It is tendered hearted to resist it with love It avoid the complacency and the donothingism of the soft minded and the violence and bitterness of the hard hearted ²¹

III Conclusion I cannot close without close without applying to meaning of our text to the nature of God The greatness of our God lies in the fact that he is both tough minded and tender hearted This tough mindednes of God is expressed in an austere masculinity The tender heartedness of God is expressed in a gentel feminty He possesses the firmness of a father and the softness of a mother The Bible stresses both the tough midedness of God—his justice and Wrath—and the tender mindedness of God—his love and grace. God has two strong arms—one that is strong enough to surround us with justice and one that is gentle enough to surround us with grace On the one hand the Bible pictures God as a stern Judge who punishes Israel for he wayward deeds On the other hand he is a loving father who gladly forgives a Prodigal Son and gives his only begotten son to redeem man ²² I am so thankful this [*morning?*] that we worship a God who is both TM and TH If God were only TM he would be a cold and passionless despot, who sits in so far off heaven “contemplating all”—as Tennyson has it in his Palace of Art ²³ He would be an Aristul [*Aristotelean?*] unmoved mover or an Hegelian impersonal absolute who was merely self-knowing, but not other loving If God were only TH he soft and sentimental unable to function when things go wrong and incapable of controlling what he has made He would be like H G Wells’ God in God the Invisible King who is a lovable Being who with unrelenting passion desire to make a good world, but finds himself helpless before the surging powers of evil ²⁴ No, God is neither hard hearted nor soft minded He is tough minded enough to transcend the world He is tender hearted enough to be immanent in it—He leves us not alone in our agonies and struggles He seek us in dark places and suffers with us and for us in our tragic prodigality

There are times when we need to know that God is a God of justice When evil forces rise to the throne and slumbring [*grants?*] of injustice rise up in the earth, we need to know that there is a God of Justice who can cut them down like a green hay there and leave them withering like the grass ²⁵ But there are

²¹ In the draft of this sermon submitted for publication in *Strength to Love*, King identified this “third way” as “non-violent resistance”

²² Cf Luke 15 11–32 and John 3 16

²³ Alfred Lord Tennyson, “The Palace of Art” (1832)

²⁴ H G Wells, *God The Invisible King* (New York: Macmillan, 1917)

²⁵ Cf Psalm 37 2

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times when as need to know that God is a God of love and mercy When we are staggered by th chill winds of andversity and th battering storms disappointment, When through our folly and sin we stray into some destructive far country and are frustrated because of a strange [*homesickness*?], we need to know that there is Someone who loves us, who understands, and who who can will give us another chance When days grow dark and nights grow dreary we can be thankful that our God is not a one- sided incomplete God, but he combinds in his nature a creative synthesis of love and justice which can lead us through life's dark valley to sun lit pathways of hope and fulfillment

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 17, "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart "