the greatest attainment of truth, the greatest service of the poor, and the greatest salvation of the soul and bodies of men

If the Church entered this kind of competition we can imagine what a better world this would be

(C) Suppose the teaching of Jesus should be accepted by the competing nations of the world, particularly Russia and America. They would no longer compete to see which could make the bigger Atom bombs, or which could best perpetuate its imperialism, but which could best serve humanity. This would be a better world.

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 50, Sermons Not Preached

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

"The Danger of Mis Guided Goodness"

I Int

A One of the basic functions of the Christian Church is to keep alive a certain degree of moral sensitivity. See the Church must of necessity urge men to be good, to be sincere, to be conscientious. There are basic moral principles. But they are not enough. To say of a man that he is conscientious and means well, important though that is, does not cover the ground. Not only must we be good, but we must be intelligent. Quote Socrates. One of the most dangerous forces in the world is misguided goodness.

B Some of the most shameful tragedies of human history have been committed, not by bad, people, but by good, conscientious people who didn’t know what they did.

(1) those who made Socrates drink the hemlock
(2) The crusades
(3) the people that threatened Galileo
(4) The trial of Joan of Arc

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1 Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, p. 223, "To say of a man there that he is conscientious and means well, important though that is, does not cover the ground. He must not be stupid."

2 King may be citing a paraphrase of a speech by Socrates found in Plato’s *Apology* 58a. "The examined life is not worth living."

3 The Crusades were military campaigns carried out by European Christians intermittently between 1096 and the late thirteenth century to conquer and convert non-Christians and recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

4 Jeanne d’Arc (1412–1431) led French troops during the Hundred Years’ War but was later tried and burned at the stake for heresy and witchcraft. Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, p. 223. "The Athenians who made Socrates drink the hemlock, far from being bad, were among the most earnest, conscientious, religious people of their day. So, in intention, the crusades were not so much wicked as stupid, the people who threatened Galileo with torture were not wicked but stupid, the judges at the trial of Joan of Arc were not bad but senseless, and over the most shameful tragedies of history, as over the cross of Christ, the judgment stands ‘They know not what they do.’"
A profound passage comes out of one of Paul’s Epistles to give something of a scriptural sanction to our theme.

King may refer to Romans 10:2 as he does in the sermon Sincerity Is Not Enough, 3 June 1951, pp. 119-120 in this volume.

"The Unknown Great"

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
Prophets—[Isaiah?], Jeremiah, Ezekiel
2 Early Christian—Paul Peter
3 Greek culture—Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
Lit. Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes
4 Roman civilization—Caesars 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 individuals.
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.