

of history before Christ will come back. I'm sure Augustine would have said, What utter nonsense! Fifty years before Augustine died all of the souther half of Europe, --Spain, what is today France, what is today Switzerland, Italy, Greece, what is today Turkey, Asia Minor, North Africa, Egypt-- in all this area, I would not be surprised if 90% of the people literate.

^{my and} Read education was perhaps at as high a standard as has ever been reached in the history of the world. Two hundred years later if there was one person in 100 in that area who could read I would be surprised. The devil swept in power over Europe and it too several centuries before Europe approach even a fourth of the standard of civilization that it enjoyed in the time of Augustine.

Today we can say Jesus may come very soon. Today we should say as John did, O Lord Jesus come quickly. But to say Jesus will come very soon is definitely going against the teaching of Scripture which says of the times and seasons it is not for you to know, for the Father has kept them in his own power. If there could be 1500 years after Augustine until today, there could be another 1500 years after this for all that anybody can say to the contrary. Jesus Christ may come very soon but we cannot say that he will come very soon.

About the time of Augustine or a little before, the Nestorian missionaries began going outside the area of the Roman empire into Asia. Their work spread as far as China. In the 12th cent. A.D. there were hundreds of Christian churches in China. There were thousands of earnest believers in what is today China. Then the Mongols invasion swept over China and persecuted the Christians and rooted them out so completely that very few people today even know that there ever was a Christian church in China in those years.

Then there were centuries in which Christ was hardly mentioned in China. Then about 150 years ago a number of earnest Christians felt a great burden for China and the work there, and when I was in college it was the greatest land of missionary enterprise probably in the world. Christian missions were found in every province of China and most of the cities. Many Christian organizations were working intensively in that land.

Then came the great Japanese attack in which much of China was taken over by the Japanese and time after time 30-40 years ago I heard missionaries tell about their experiences among the Christians in China and they said, Once the war is over there will be the greatest opportunity for missions in China that the world has ever seen. They said the Chinese people so realize how the missionaries are helping them in these days of adversity and difficulty that the gospel will just flow through China once this war is over! Little they could predict the future!