

least 150 million people in this country at the very least who have no idea of what the gospel is, of what it means to be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In a nation that was founded by those who wanted to stand for Christ, who wanted to be where they could be safe from the wicked, unChristian influences they found around them in Europe, in a nation in which there was so long a regard for whatever the Scripture teaches even among many who did not personally receive Christ into their lives--to see the change that has come makes one just wonder what is ahead.

There are many who say it must be that Jesus will return very soon. I think that's a very good statement except for the word "must." We certainly must say Jesus may return very soon. Luke 12 teaches us definitely that it is God's will for all who serve him that they are like servants who wait for their master to come and don't know whether he will come in the evening or at midnight or in the early morning or when, we must always be ready for him. He may come very soon. We have a right to say and should say he may come very soon.

But when I hear anyone say, He will come very soon, we are now in the last days, whenever I heard that a picture comes before my mind of St. Augustine in 430 A.D. lying on a bed of sickness in Hippo, N. Africa, in a region in which there had been hundreds of Christian churches in N. Africa. In a region in which there had been the gospel as widely proclaimed as it ever had in any part of the world. A region in which Christianity had affected the people perhaps as it ever had in any part of the world.

There was that great saint, perhaps one of the greatest Christian thinkers in all history, lying on his bed, his death bed for a month, looking up at the ceiling where he had inscribed the penitential psalms and looking to Christ to cleanse him and forgive his sins, and even as he did so you could hear the cry of those being attacked and ~~xxxx~~ the flames going up, outside the walls of the city of Hippo because the Vandals had already taken all of N. Africa except three cities. A month after his death they took Hippo also, burned it, ravaged it, pillaged it, and today when a missionary goes into that area of N. Africa and works hard for 30 years and if at the end of that time can show you three who have turned to Christ and become real Christians even if secret believers, he feels that he has accomplished a great deal.

If somebody had said to St. Augustine as he lay there, Augustine, your whole world is falling around you! The flames are everywhere. It looks as if things are coming to the end. Surely Christ must be coming in the very near future. I'm sure Augustine would have said, Lord come quickly! But if some one had said, Augustine, there's another 1500 years