

One wonders what is ahead. Some mention was made of St. Augustine earlier in the evening. I'm afraid that Augustine was not quite properly represented in case there should be someone here who did not know a great deal about him. Because the reference was made to his evil life and of the ~~fact~~ that our lives are restless until we rest in thee. That is all true, but it is not the whole truth. It was made in the first third of Augustine's life, perhaps a little more it was a life of loving the present world. Then he found in Jesus that rest and satisfaction. Then Augustine went on to do as great a Christian work as anyone has ever done in history. One of the great leaders of the Christian church through the ages.

When Martin Luther and J. Calvin went forward with the reformation they often said they were carrying forward the teachings of St. Augustine/ When Augustine became a Christian and went back to his home in N. Africa, there was a great extensive area filled with beautiful Roman buildings, an area in which Roman civilization reigned as it did in Europe. In Europe and in N. Africa at that time the overwhelming majority of the people could read and write and many of them were highly educated, Civilization was probably at a higher ebb then than it was in this country say 100 yrs. ago, or in Europe. Except for our technological advances it may have been at the higher level then than it is today. Augustine went into a ~~land~~ in which civilization seemed very very high. There he studied how to present the teachings of the Word of God. But even as Augustine was having a great influence in spreading these teachings the people of Rome were failing to defend themselves properly against the forces from outside that were against them, and the evil forces were coming upon them and by Augustine's death just a few years later, the whole vision of the world had changed.

As I look at the world today it seems as though we've gone about 2/3 of the way from ~~the~~ the beginning of Augustine's ministry to the end. But when it came to Augustine's last days when he lay there in Hippo in N. Africa upon his bed, in his last months of his life looking up at the ceiling where he had written in large letters the penitential psalms and reading them over in the Hebrew and praying them, and looking to God to remedy the errors of his life and to bless the accomplishments of his life, even as he was doing it, the Vandals who had swept in across the Roman empire clear to Spain and then were coming back across N. Africa, had taken all of N. Africa, except the cities of Hippo and Carthage. You could stand on the wall not far from the ~~XXXX~~ room in which lay dying and you could look out and you could see the villages with the smoke going up as Roman civilization was being burned and destroyed and disappearing. A century later I doubt if there was one person in 200 in Europe who could read and write. A century later there was no part of Europe or N. Africa where you could go without looters and pilagers would come through any minute and kill you and take everything you had. That period of the Dark Ages lasted for ~~a~~ centuries had begun, and many of the people rushed into the monasteries and in order to keep them out of mischief the people in charge of the monasteries themselves not very literate by this set the others to copying manuscripts, and if it were not for what they copied, we might not know today there had been a great ancient Roman civilization, so terrible were those Dark Ages that lasted for nearly 1000 years before civilization