

went there and they established a very sizeable missionary work. They had a great many converts, and then one of the Spanish officers, if I am correctly informed, at a meeting of some of the Japanese leaders became rather I guess and he talked with them rather frankly, and he said, These friars are coming in here and they are getting people to turn from their Japanese religion and turn to Christianity and when we get the nation all softened up we will simply take it over. At any rate they got that impression. There was a tremendous persecution, and RC Christianity was pretty well wiped out.

Nestorian Christianity is much closer to our belief than RC Christianity, but the Nestorians did a tremendous work in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries in which they spread the Gospel through Asia Minor eastward across India, and there were great Christian churches in China-- hundreds of them-- a tremendous Christian population all through that part of Asia. The Mongul conquerers turned strongly against it and persecuted it and wiped it out so completely that the memory of it was completely forgotten in an area where there had been thousands of Christians.

So we cannot say that Christianity cannot be wiped out of an area by persecution. I understand that there are many secret believers in China today, but no public Christian propaganda or meeting can be held, in that country which holds nearly 1/4 of the world's population today.

But during the period of the Roman empire there were terrible persecutions, but in between there were long periods in which there was no persecution at all. Fifty years before the time of Constantine a Roman emperor made an edict of toleration. During those 50 years many church buildings were built-- fine buildings, and maybe 1/10, maybe as much as 1/4 of the people of the Roman empire became Christians. But then shortly before the Emperor Constantine died, Diocletian began a great persecution-- the greatest the church had ever gone through. Thousands were martyred. There was terrible persecution, but the persecution did not destroy the church. Constantine declared himself Christian. When he began-- became emperor, and put a complete end to the persecution and many of the Christians at this time-- 300 years after the time of Christ felt that now the time of universal rule of Christ had come. Constantine issued many very fine edicts and improved conditions throughout the Roman empire and gave tolerance to all religions but great favor to Christianity and many Christians even ceased to think of the possibility of the Lord coming back and thought now we have the kingdom of God on earth!

However, not very long afterward it became quite obvious that many of the Christian rulers were not very different from pagan rulers. Many of those were nominal Christians. These changes occurred in the attitude of the early Christians. We will look at them further under other heads.

4. Suggested fulfillment in the Papacy.

On the sheet I have out with facts and dates, I mentioned the rise of the papacy and gave the dates. Canossa, 1077 A.D.