

Tom's Pen

If Stones Could Talk

by Tom Wacaster

Archaeologists have long recognized the value of ancient remains. The spade and shovel can unearth relics from the past, and with some study and examination we can learn about the customs, dress, and history of a nation that has long sense been relegated to the dust bins of history. The stones cry out from the ground and the astute student will hear the more subtle and eternal truths that archaeologists often fail to hear.

This past month it was my privilege to travel to the ancient city of Warangal, India while doing mission work in that area. We in America are not accustomed to cities that date back more than two or three centuries. But in this part of the world there are truly some "ancient" sites that date back more than ten centuries. In Warangal there once stood an ancient walled castle, portions of which remain today. The ruins of the Kakathiya Kingdom and the rule of Queen Rudrama Devi stand as a reminder of those days long before the British colonization of India. For almost a dozen centuries the walls of this castle have looked down upon the city of Warangal. Its massive stones still form the archway into the castle area, as well as the protective bulwark for the kings and queens that lived within its walls during that era. Near the center of the more than one hundred acres of castle grounds stand the remains of the palace where Queen Rudrama Devi once lived. Though most of the walls of her palace have long deteriorated there remains enough to know that she must have lived in luxury. The elaborate carvings speak of attention that was given to exquisite and decorative living. No longer do kings and queens live within the walls of that castle. It is now occupied by the common man, and a few official government structures. As brother Gootam and I drove through that castle area on our way to the next preaching appointment, I made the comment, "If stones could speak!" Here is what these massive stones of this castle might tell us.

First, they would tell us that kingdoms of men rise and fall. How many dynasties have ruled India in the ten centuries since that castle was first erected? How many governments have taken their turn, only to fade into history as did the Kakathiya Kingdom? The prophet Daniel reminds all of us that kings are placed on the throne of power, and removed from their position of rule by He Who rules in heaven. History is replete with its Hitlers, Hussains, and henchmen who thought they could beat the odds. If those walls could speak they would tell us that God is in control of His world, and He blesses those kingdoms that submit to His rule, and removes those who rebel.

Second, if those stones could speak they would tell us that wealth and power is not the way to happiness. The elaborate castle that Queen Rudrama Devi inhabited appears to

have been one of the best that men and money could have built. What little contentment she may have acquired from her power and prestige was limited and temporary. Our Lord still speaks to us through His word and reminds us that a "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he might possess." Could those stones speak there is no doubt that they would tell us that the elaborate castle occupied by Queen Rudrama Devi did not bring lasting happiness.

Third, if those stones could speak they would tell us that those nations that forget God bring upon themselves swift destruction. History tells us that, until recently, India has not been very receptive to the gospel of Christ. From the early martyrdom of Thomas, down through the centuries, Hinduism has ruled over the hearts and minds of men and women in this country. Idolatry has darkened their minds so that the light of the gospel could not shine in their hearts. If stones could speak, they would tell us that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Finally, if stones could speak, they would remind us of the brevity of life. Compared to the average life span of 60 or 70 years, ten centuries may seem like a long time. But in the overall scheme of things, ten centuries is but a passing vapor. If men would be wise they would look at things through the hour glass of eternity, where time is meaningless and where one's life is but a short time given to man to prove himself to his Creator.

Oh yes, if stones could talk, they could teach us some great lessons. But those same truths that cry out from the stones of the ground are clearly set forth in God's holy book, the Bible. Perhaps if men would listen more closely they might hear the message those stones send forth; not because the stones speak, but because God speaks to us through His word and reminds us of the important truths that those stones might tell us if indeed "stones could talk."