

Confessions - Book V - Chapter Xiii

by St. Augustine

Transcript

23. When, therefore, the officials of Milan sent to Rome, to the prefect of the city, to ask that he provide them with a teacher of rhetoric for their city and to send him at the public expense, I applied for the job through those same persons, drunk with the Manichean vanities, to be freed from whom I was going away--though neither they nor I were aware of it at the time. They recommended that Symmachus, who was then prefect, after he had proved me by audition, should appoint me.

And to Milan I came, to Ambrose the bishop, famed through the whole world as one of the best of men, thy devoted servant. His eloquent discourse in those times abundantly provided thy people with the flour of thy wheat, the gladness of thy oil, and the sober intoxication of thy wine.[146] To him I was led by thee without my knowledge, that by him I might be led to thee in full knowledge. That man of God received me as a father would, and welcomed my coming as a good bishop should. And I began to love him, of course, not at the first as a teacher of the truth, for I had entirely despaired of finding that in thy Church--but as a friendly man. And I studiously listened to him--though not with the right motive--as he preached to the people. I was trying to discover whether his eloquence came up to his reputation, and whether it flowed fuller or thinner than others said it did. And thus I hung on his words intently, but, as to his subject matter, I was only a careless and contemptuous listener. I was delighted with the charm of his speech, which was more erudite, though less cheerful and soothing, than Faustus\\

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