

Yet Augustine's acceptance of Christianity was not based simply upon intellectual conviction. He found himself stirred in his heart with the conviction of sin and with the feeling of his need of a Savior. Struggling to turn away from the sin that held him in its grip, he found himself unable to do so. Finally he came to a crisis experience in his career. Deeply moved, he stepped out into the back yard to be alone for a few minutes. While there he heard a child chanting the words: "Take, read; take read." He could not imagine what game a child might say this in, or how it happened that this sound was heard right at that time. But it stirred him to pick up the Bible and to open it. He came upon the verse, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). Immediately he took this as a voice from Heaven for him to step out with faith, trusting God to make up for the weakness of his flesh and to enable him to make a success of the Christian profession which he knew he should adopt. Augustine considered this as the moment of his conversion. Soon afterwards he was baptized by St. Ambrose, the great Bishop of Milan, and began the career that has meant so much to the Christian world.

At first Augustine devoted himself to a study of the Christian faith and its relation to other views of life. He gathered a few friends and with them set to discuss the problems of life and to ascertain how belief in the Lord Jesus Christ gives a satisfactory answer to every one of them. In this period of his life some interesting works were produced.

Soon the fame of Augustine's writings and thinking spread through North Africa. One day he was visiting a little town called Hippo. The pastor here was quite elderly. Although the church was small he thought it would be good to get an assistant pastor for a time, in the hopes that this man might succeed him. While Augustine was attending the church the minister poured out his heart to his people, expressing his desire for a capable assistant. All eyes in the crowd were turned to Augustine and the people began to call out that they felt