a foretaste that those interested in the philosophy of religion would have been helped to turn at once to exploration on their own account. For it must be remembered we have here, in a form as unlike as possible to an ordinary systematic treatment of the subject, the author's philosophy of religion; and, as the author is one to whom religion is the supreme interest of life, the shape, strange as it may seem, into which his thoughts have been thrown, is expressive of his individual genius, and must not be left out of account in estimating the thoughts themselves. No one who cares enough for the theme of the work to give it, undeterred by the difficult manner of presentation, the patient and sympathetic study which it deserves, will miss an abundant reward for his pains.

There are some misprints in the book besides those corrected in the slip of Errata circulated with the Second Impression, but most of these will be readily corrected at sight. What, by the way, can be meant (at p. 156 of vol. i) by the reference to a King of Sardinia in 1164?

CLEMENT C. J. WEBB.

AUGUSTINE'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPEMENT.

Augustin : Studien zu seiner geistigen Entwicklung, von Lic. Dr HANS BECKER, Leipzig. (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1908.)

DR BECKER's volume, with its array of carefully selected passages from Augustine's writings, should prove a welcome help to those who desire to trace the progressive developement of Augustine's religious thought. The term *geistig* is often a stumbling-block to the translator, who is apt to hesitate between the renderings 'mental' and 'spiritual', for in German usage now the one idea, now the other predominates. Here, however, it should occasion no difficulty, for in Augustine's case mental and spiritual developement kept pace with one another in a remarkable degree. During the whole of his mature life he was an ardent seeker after truth to satisfy his intellect, but in an equal degree a searcher after spiritual peace, for to him the two were inseparably connected.

In the present volume Dr Becker confines himself to the works written before the year 400. In a subsequent volume he proposes to deal with Augustine's later thinking on history, religion, and philosophy contained in the *De Civitate Dei* and other works.

The chief problem which arises out of the writings under review in the present volume is to determine the exact period in his life when Augustine ceased to be a sympathetic philosophical enquirer, and became a positive believer and a Catholic Christian. According to the

narrative in the *Confessions*, after the famous scene in the garden at Milan, in the year 386, a complete change came over him which altered not only his moral life but all his tastes and pursuits. He resigned his professorship of rhetoric, for he would not longer fill a Chair of Lies, and he retired to a quiet country house where he spent his time in reading the scriptures and in penitential prayer in preparation for baptism. We possess, however, four treatises written by Augustine during his retreat at Cassiciacum: *Contra Academicos*, *De Beata Vita*, *De Ordine*, and the *Soliloquia*, which exhibit his mood and his avocations in an entirely different light. He is surrounded by a group of cheerful, sympathetic friends, and he and they are keenly interested in literature and especially in philosophy. Augustine himself lavishes praises on the life of the philosopher, and when writing to his friend Romanianus, to whom one of the treatises is dedicated, he almost seems to speak as if philosophy was the sole pathway to truth and blessedness. Of preparation for baptism we do not hear a word.

So striking is the contrast between the two accounts that M. Gourdon, in his *Essai sur la conversion de Saint Augustin*, comes to the conclusion that the narrative in the *Confessions* must be set aside in favour of the contemporary writings which prove that at Cassiciacum Augustine was no Christian but a Neo-Platonic philosopher. Augustine's own words are, however, a refutation of this extreme view, for in the *Contra Academicos* he names himself a disciple of Christ, from whose authority, he adds, he will never depart; but his references to Christianity and to scripture are, it must be admitted, singularly few when compared with the large space given to philosophy. The following is Dr Becker's judgement on this vexed question (p. 56):—

'It has been the custom to place the final developement of Augustine with respect to Christianity in the wrong place. It has been looked for in the period associated with the three names, Rome, Milan, Cassiciacum. In a certain respect this is right. Augustine learned during this period to value Christianity afresh—but for the sake of the Neo-Platonic philosophy. The time when he was to require no philosophical authority in order to prize Christianity aright lay in the distance. This time, when he arrived at the conviction that the Christian religion—to use an expression of Goethe's—is in itself a mighty entity, far exalted above philosophy, and requiring no support, lies in the years 387–389.'

I doubt the justice of Dr Becker's remark that Augustine valued Christianity for the sake of the Neo-Platonic philosophy. I should be disposed to put it the other way, and to say that for the sake of Christianity he put a high value on the Neo-Platonic philosophy by means of which he hoped to interpret and to vindicate the Christian

system to himself and others. By his experiences in Milan his heart had been drawn towards Christianity, but he felt the need of help to justify his faith in a world which was still largely hostile to it ; perhaps also to justify it to himself.

A comparison of the narrative in the *Confessions* with the *Dialogues* makes it difficult to acquit Augustine of having given a one-sided, not to say a misleading, account of his life and pursuits at Cassiciacum. But at the time he wrote the *Confessions* he was alienated from his former philosophic self ; he had therefore no desire to inspire his readers with a love for philosophy ; he wrote for their edification, and one writing for edification has seldom much scruple in omitting whatever does not serve the immediate purpose which he has in view.

The second portion of Dr Becker's book is devoted to an examination of Augustine's knowledge and use of the writers of classical antiquity. His mind was so saturated with their thoughts and words that he could hardly open his mouth without betraying his familiarity with, and in many cases his love for, his ancient teachers. As he got older his admiration becomes colder, and is often mingled with sharp censure. It was one of the tragedies in the lives of cultivated Christians in the Patristic Church that the authors to whom they owed their education, and whom they had learned to love well, were the representatives of a hostile faith against which they had to contend. As ecclesiastical feeling grew stronger the alienation became more marked, as we see in the writings of Gregory the Great, whose opinions determined the attitude of the mediaeval Church.

But Augustine never altogether lost his admiration for the teachers of his youth and early manhood. Dr Becker writes (p. 155) :—' Although he did not spare "heathenism" and antiquity in his polemics, what is best in antiquity remained with him as a lasting heritage, viz. the idealism, the enthusiasm for investigation and for knowledge, the open eye, and an interest for all the world and for the questions relating to human life ; in short the *καλὸν καὶ γαθόν* of classicism. After he became a Christian, with that consistency which was native to his character, he placed everything in the light of the Gospel in which he had found peace for his soul. Although we find in his writings—and the older he became the more frequent they are—a number of unfavourable judgements on the spiritual world of antiquity, which envired him, nevertheless, to the end of his life, he represented not only an outward but an inward relation between Christianity and culture, and embodied in his own personality the truth of the word of scripture, which was so often forgotten by the Church in later times : πάντα ὑμῶν, ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ θεοῦ.'

JOHN GIBB.