

THE EXILIC AGE. By C. F. Whitley. (Longmans; 16s.)

'To outline the historical and intellectual movements of the sixth century, and to interpret the work of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah in relation to such movements': such is Dr Whitley's stated purpose. He gives the impression of having been inspired by H. and H. A. Frankfort's *Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (on which indeed he heavily relies), and of intending to examine a single significant epoch in the history of Hebrew thought with the same critical methods which they have used for its entire range.

For the political history of the period the author selects and appraises his sources shrewdly enough, though he barely refers to the recently discovered and exceedingly important 'New Babylonian Chronicle'. But the information he provides on the intellectual movements of the period is really too meagre to throw much additional light on the thought of the great exilic prophets with whom he is concerned. Most of the questions and difficulties which have been raised with regard to these prophets are ably discussed, and here again the author's choice and handling of sources is able.

Throughout the book Dr Whitley appears to be working around and towards such ideas as 'emancipation of the individual from the bonds of organized religion', 'personal fellowship with God', and 'the religion of the spirit'. Taken in isolation, these ideas remind one rather of the England of the nineteenth century A.D. than of the Israel of the sixth century B.C. In fact his preoccupations in this one direction seem to have led the author to neglect certain equally vital concepts in another: those of community, common cultus, priesthood, and law, which, especially in Ezekiel, were at this period so greatly deepened and transformed. Without these the picture seems decidedly one-sided and unbalanced, and one cannot help wondering whether the author's judgment has not been unduly swayed by his personal predilections.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

NINE SERMONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE ON THE PSALMS. Translated and introduced by Edmund Hill, O.P. (Longmans; 18s.)

Fr Hill has chosen the group of Augustine's sermons on the psalms beginning with that on psalm 18 and ending with the small gem of a treatise on grace, faith and works, the sermon on psalm 31. The sermons have no more and no less unity about them than any similar group chosen from Augustine's popular preaching might have. In this, perhaps, lies the value of this collection, since it gives us a representative if not wholly random sample of Augustine's preaching, and of his approach to Scripture in a homiletic setting.

This is not to say that the collection lacks any coherence whatsoever.