

**HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM** by Richard Soulen. Lutterworth Press, 1977. pp. 191 £2.95 paperback.

This book has the distinction of being what it says it is. It is not a Handbook of Biblical Scholarship in general—the hungry fact-finder will search in vain for news on *Herod Antipas*, *Lachish*, or *Scarabs*. Nor is it a Handbook of Biblical Theology: *Charismata*, *Church*, *Son of Man* and *Sin* are unrepresented. Its main concern is with methodologies, as the introduction makes clear; so *Form Criticism*, *Source-Criticism*, *Structuralism*, *Text-Criticism* etc., along with their associated technical terms—e.g. *Chria*, *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (see *Palimpsest*), *Gemeindeordnungen*, *Narrative*—are typical entries. The size of entries varies from about four pages on *Hermeneutics*, to two or three lines on *Daughter Translation* or *Polyglot*. There's a nice tenderness for the students for whom this work is written, as can be seen from the entry headed *Pre-Pauline*: "The term is perhaps self-explanatory, except that it is frequently misunderstood by the tyro in New Testament criticism, for in normal use it refers to doctrines, formulas, ideas etc., which were in existence within the Church prior to Paul's use of them, rather than prior to Paul himself or to his conversion." On the other hand, Dr Soulen doesn't mollificoddle the aforementioned tyro. The entry on Structuralism is at least as difficult as the subject would demand, and perhaps would only be comprehensible to a tyro who had al-

ready rubbed shoulders with Barthes and Company.

Given the guiding principles on which the book is constructed, I would include in my list of its omissions *Deuteronomie Historian*, *Genealogy* and *Testimony* (though there is a short mention of *Florilegium* with reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls). And I don't know on what basis *Glossolalia* is included, unless it is that every American Religious paperback has by law to mention the phenomenon.

Dr Soulen also gives us a brief curriculum vitae of numerous doyens of Biblical criticism, from *Origen* (circa A.D. 185 - 251/254) via *Lessing*, *Gotthold Ephraim* (1729-1781) to *Albright*, *William Foxwell* (1891-1971). On the last of those, I suppose it *might* be useful to a faculty-sherry-party-name-dropper to know that he was "... the recipient of six honorary degrees from foreign universities, and twenty from institutions in the USA", but it might have been more useful to the student to hear how Albright's views on the Old Testament as history differ from those of Alt. And while we're on the subject of name-dropping, why do we have *Lightfoot*, *R. H.* but no *Lightfoot, J. B.*?

But let me not carp. The book is excellent both for reference and for browsing; and £2.95 isn't wildly expensive.

COLIN CARR O.P.

**A RATIONAL ANIMAL AND OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS ON THE NATURE OF MAN** by Anthony Flew. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978. pp. 245 £5.95

Flew's aim is to vindicate an Aristotelian view of man in opposition to the Platonic-Cartesian tradition. In doing so, he defends Darwin, Malthus, Hume and others. Bad marks are awarded to writers like B. F. Skinner, Peter Winch, A. C. MacIntyre, Sartre and Lenin. For Flew, man is a rational animal (emphasis equal on 'rational' and 'animal') who is free. At the same time, he is very much a creature of flesh and blood, certainly not a disembodied 'entity'. In accounting for him, it is important not to describe him using only one of the kinds of explanation that are possible.

The book is a collection of writings

published elsewhere and worked over to provide a single volume. In reading it, one often feels bogged down in unnecessary analyses of other people's writings; but the collection still holds together very well. And Flew's position is often cogent and impressive. Some of his discussions, notably those of Sartre and Skinner, are very effective indeed. But there are also some notable lapses.

Take, for example, the chapter on Darwin. According to Flew, Darwin undermines Paley, whose famous argument for God is "annihilated" (p. 26) by the philosophical implications of Darwinism. The argument is not spelled out in detail, but