

BOOK REVIEWS

MTP International Review of Science. Biochemistry Series One, 12 volumes

Consultant Editors: H. L. Kornberg and D. C. Phillips. Each volume is published at £10.45 and contains 300–400 pages. Butterworths; London: University Park Press; Baltimore

The aim of this Review of Science is to provide a comprehensive, critical and continuing survey of progress in research. Insofar as the series on biochemistry is concerned, the editors state the volume of the literature in the molecular aspects of biology is such that it is threatening to overwhelm the reader so that any one person cannot appreciate the advance of the subject as a whole. It has, therefore, been the aim of each Editor and the contributors to each volume not only to provide authoritative and up-to-date reviews but carefully to place these reviews into the context of existing knowledge so that their significance to the overall advances in biochemical understanding can be understood also by advanced students and by non-specialist biochemists. It is expected that further or revised volumes will appear from time to time.

The reviewers are all members of the Staff of the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Leeds. It was thought that it might be interesting for a group of biochemists who are actively concerned with teaching biochemistry to a wide range of undergraduates to assess to what extent the volumes succeed in the objectives laid down by the Consultant Editors. The verdict seems to be that the quality of both the editing and contributions is patchy. Some of the volumes are outstanding, especially no. 10, others succeed to a reasonable degree, but in our view five fail in their objective. Much of the fault must be the responsibility of the volume editors. The volumes are well produced and the good ones are a sound investment for the departmental library.

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