

Book Reviews

Advances in immunology. Volume 36, Edited by F. J. Dixon. Academic Press Inc, Orlando, Florida. 1984. Pp. xi + 248. Price: £26.00, \$36.50 (U.S.).

This review series in immunology has been running since 1961 and it has always provided the most academic and thorough of review articles available in immunology. The present volume is no exception. The 5 articles cover very diverse areas of immunology, and in most cases are extremely comprehensive with a lengthy reference list. The information they contain is reasonably up to date with many 1983 references and a few 1984. *Advances in Immunology* has avoided the journalistic style associated with some other review series, but has established its reputation by providing comprehensive reviews covering relatively narrow areas of immunology.

In this volume the article of most general interest is that on "Antibodies of predetermined specificity in biology and medicine" by R. A. Lehner which covers the research in the use of short polypeptides to raise antibodies that react with defined sites on native molecules. This is an area of research which has considerable potential in identifying the products of cloned genes and in constructing vaccines. The article contains pairs of coloured stereo pictures which are spectacular but can only be appreciated by those fortunate individuals with cyclopean vision or by using a stereo viewer.

The other 4 articles cover aspects of cellular immunology and make ideal reading for any researcher wishing to be brought up to date with the aspects of immunology covered by the review. These include two articles on more conventional aspects of cellular immunology; one on "Human thymic microenvironment" by B. F. Haynes and one on "A molecular analysis of the cytolytic lymphocyte response" by S. J. Burakoff *et al.* Finally, there are two articles of a more specialised nature; one on "Aging, idotype repertoire shifts and compartmentalization of the mucosal-associated lymphoid system" by A. W. Wade and M. R. Szewczuk and the other on "A major role of the macrophage in quantitative genetic regulation of immunoresponsiveness and anti-infectious immunity" by G. Biozzi *et al.* This latter article is perhaps the most specialised dealing with the innate and immuno-resistance to infections in two lines of mice developed by Biozzi and his co-workers selected for their ability to give a high or low antibody response following challenge with any antigen.

The series "Advances in Immunology" is one which any library covering the immunology literature ought to take. It is questionable whether it is a series that many private individuals would wish to purchase. One great asset with this series is that at the end of each volume

they print the contents of all the previous volumes, thus making it very simple to find a comprehensive review in many aspects of immunology.

A. J. MUNRO
*Department of Pathology,
University of Cambridge*

The phenomenon of man revisited. A biological viewpoint on Teilhard de Chardin. Edward O. Dodson. Columbia University Press, New York. 1984. Pp. xix + 257. Price: \$32.50 (U.S.).

Emeritus Professor E. O. Dodson has replaced Teilhard de Chardin's Lamarckism with elementary Mendelism, and added a brief survey of the course of evolution in the main groups of animals. He attempts thereby to make *The Phenomenon of Man* more acceptable to present-day scientists. He also points out what in Teilhard de Chardin's theories is open to experimental approach and what is not.

It is doubtful whether such cosmetic action can do much for Teilhard de Chardin, and characteristic of this general school of thought that evil should not appear in the index, and should be dismissed in the text (pp. 223-224) as something we all know enough about. The book has strong affinities with Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733) which (in part) provoked Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), and Soame Jenyns's *Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1757) which was pulverised by Dr. Johnson. No, it will not do; if individual persons are as valuable and as directly the subjects of providential care as Christianity asserts, the fates of too many of them are too appalling. A genetically correct account of evolution does not help, even when combined with a Christianity allegorised beyond belief.

This whole problem is simply passed by. While "struggle for survival" does appear in the index, referring to a remark by Teilhard de Chardin that there is a great deal of biological efficiency in it, waste is not mentioned at all. The "prodigality of nature", which also appears "is a simple result of the fact that reproduction is a geometric process rather than an arithmetic one"—a choice example of that mathematical fallacy in explanation which is the opposite to the pathetic fallacy—and there is a brief reference to Teilhard's indifference of life; "Life passes over a bridge made of accumulated corpses, and this is a direct effect of multiplication" (p. 133). On the next page we read "Only with the appearance of mind can this indifference be replaced with solicitude" (another word not in the index). But