but they must not appear to brook no argument, their presentation must balance what is known with what is not known lest the reader be given a distorted picture. Above all, there is a need to communicate something of the enthusiasm a research worker feels for his subject, so that the account is no deadly recital of barren facts, and here the publisher as well as the author comes into the picture: good presentation clear illustrations, well-prepared diagrams and a price that is not so high as to be discouraging all play their part.

Thames and Hudson’s ‘World of Science Library’ seems to fulfil most of these criteria, and if two guineas seems high for a book of a couple of hundred pages, the liberal use of colour ought to assuage any doubts about extravagance. Their layout is admirable, the printing first-class and Dr Gaskell’s text for the volume Physics of the Earth is highly charged and admirably clear. Beginning with a discussion of the Earth’s origin, he plumps heavily for the recent and geologically attractive possibility of the subsequent ejection not only of the Moon, but of Mars as well, and then goes on to the problem of planetary cores. There then follow excellent descriptions of continental drift, of the mantle, of terrestrial magnetism, the ocean floor and earthquakes. Volcanoes and mountain building come next and all are dealt with so that any reader should gain a clear idea of the phenomena and their cause. But having given his facts, Dr Gaskell does not end here, as one might have expected, but adds a speculative chapter on the uses and possible abuses of geophysics. This ranges from artificial earthquakes to melting the ice caps to cause flooding on a vast scale, and is a thesaurus for science fiction writers: it also rounds off a first-class plain man’s guide to geophysics today.

Colin A. Ronan

Astronomy and Astrophysics, a Bibliographical Guide

D. A. Kemp


Despite the existence of abstracting journals, information retrieval systems and all the paraphernalia of information services there remains the need for a compact document which will allow those new to any field of study to find the relevant literature. It is such a need that the present bibliographical guide serves in the field of astronomy and astrophysics. Selected papers have been chosen for their usefulness as a guide to the remaining literature. Because of this selection the choice is bound to be personal. However, the author, formerly librarian at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, has made sufficiently comprehensive choices to suit all tastes if one may judge the whole by the sections of particular interest to this reviewer. While one could argue in detail about any particular entry it is the overall effect of a section which matters.

Bibliographies of this type are at the mercy of a rapidly changing science. However, there is much of permanent value in this compilation. The first two sections on Reference Media and Star Catalogues, Ephemerides etc., have lasting value. These sections will be of great assistance to all sections of the astronomical community and should be of particular value to those working in the space sciences who frequently are unaware of the type of astronomical information available.
The price of this work is reasonable and it is very good value for money. It should be a mandatory purchase for any astronomical library and indeed to any library which caters for astronomy (in the widest interpretation).

Why review this book in the *Geophysical Journal*?—apart from the right answer there is a bibliographical guide to Geodesy (Section 20) and Time, Rotation of the Earth and Latitude Variation (Section 24).

D. McNally