

Book Review

Specialist Periodical Reports: Photochemistry, Vol. 9, Senior Reporter, D. Bryce-Smith, published by the Chemical Society, London, 1978; 653 + xii pp.; price £38.00.
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This volume of the Specialist Periodical Reports on Photochemistry covers the literature published up to June 1977; in most cases the review period is one year. The Senior Reporter (Professor D. Bryce-Smith) introduces the book with a "Review of the Year", and he is assisted by twelve contributors. There are five main Parts of the book, each concerned with a different branch of photochemistry.

Each individual chapter is essentially a narrative acting as a vehicle for literature citation. The authors all attempt to give their expositions form and direction. However, it is clearly impossible, given the constraints of space and the enormous quantity of material published, for the reporters to offer detailed analysis and criticism. Thus the book is most useful as a more or less comprehensive literature guide for the review period.

The division into the Parts is very similar to that of previous volumes. Physical photochemistry occupies 189 pages, Inorganic and organometallic 52, Organic 305, Polymer photochemistry 41 including an 11 page patent table, and the book finishes with 19 pages on Solar energy conversion. Part I includes a chapter on Spectroscopic and theoretical aspects by R. Devonshire, which covers a *two*-year period from July 1975. Both instrumentation and techniques and Photobiology are omitted from Vol. 9, and it is intended that these topics should be reviewed biennially.

There is no doubt that the Report is an extremely valuable source of information, and libraries would be well advised to have the series on their shelves. From the individual's point of view the situation is less clear. The word "Photochemistry", while appearing to embrace a compact, coherent and identifiable discipline, in fact covers a rather wide field. The nature of the Reports makes it unlikely that the entire book will be read for general interest. Rather, a reader is likely to stray to sections outside his own research interests for source references on specific topics. Although the publishers have kept costs to a minimum, the price of this volume reflects the expense of producing such a work. This factor, taken together with the other considerations, makes it seem as though the book is really most suitable for purchase by institutions rather than by individuals.

R.P.W.