structure and function and relation to the immune response. The liver is then considered as a whole in relation to its circulation and interaction with other organs. Finally, the major disease mechanisms, hepatocellular regeneration, cholestasis, fibrogenesis, neoplasia, and portal hypertension are considered. The practising hepatologist, gastroenterologist and even biochemist or pathologist will find this book hard to read. He (or she) must be encouraged to persevere, it represents the liver disease of tomorrow. It is fitting that this book is dedicated to Hans Popper, the founder of modern hepatology. He has himself contributed an excellent chapter on hepatocyte death. The book may seem costly, but it is a bargain for the material it contains. It is a must for hospital libraries.

SHEILA SHERLOCK

Gastroenterology: pathophysiology and clinical applications By Harvey J Dworken. (Pp. 660; illustrated; £35.) Boston/London: Butterworth Group, 1982.

The tempting title suggests an exciting scientific exploration of the pathophysiological basis of clinical gastroenterology. The book opens with an extensive discussion of gastrointestinal symptoms followed by short reviews of gastrointestinal hormones, pathophysiology and clinical aspects of oesophageal disease. The pathophysiology of the stomach is useful, particularly the sections concerned with gastritis and peptic ulcer. Disorders of the liver receive particular scrutiny but, while well referenced, the views and conclusions are usually personal ones rather than critical review of the literature. Small bowel receives less detailed attention and the pathophysiology and clinical aspects of the large intestine is reviewed only briefly.

The house officer and practising physician to whom it is recommended will find an amiable treatise delivered at the pace of a novel. Even as an introduction 'The liver is an admirable and complex organ . . . sitting so quietly in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen . . . shaped somewhat like Gibraltar' seems inappropriate for a scientific text.

The print is small, clear but dull. The endoscopic illustrations are poor – black-and-white copies reproduced from originals in a colour atlas.

A single author attempting to cover pathophysiology and clinical aspects of gastroenterology probably presents an insuperable challenge. The author in the preface hopes that 'the mighty effort will have been worth the while'. Sadly, I think it wasn't.

ROBERT ALLAN

Regulatory peptides of gut and brain Edited by R A Gregory. (Pp. 100; illustrated; £9.50.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1982.

This slim volume is required reading for everyone who professes any interest in the gut peptides. At first sight, it has little to offer to clinicians. As Professor Barrington comments: 'It is, of course, profoundly ironical that the initial discovery of the secretin effect, which seemed at first to have rendered neural regulation of alimentary secretion almost nugatory, should have revealed, after a half-century of research, unexpected links between hormonal regulation and neural functioning which are still far from understood.' In this collection of essays, the emphasis is on the role of the peptides in the enteric and central nervous systems, and as Barrington emphasises, this is not what we were all taught about 'gut hormones'; indeed, the clinical aspects of gut endocrinology summarised by Bloom and Polak appear here to be almost irrelevant, although this is unlikely to be the case in the long run. The virtue of the book is the picture which it conveys, both in outline and in detail, of the present state of research in this field, and the sense that we stand on the verge of discoveries that will transform our ideas about the regulation of the gut. Not all the contributors show the ability to discriminate between wood and trees, and some of the chapters are hard going for those who cannot understand the language of neurophysiology. All the contributors have made important contributions in this field, and if they do not always write clearly, there is a pervasive clarity of thought and ability to reason from data. Science owes much to Professor Gregory, who is scientific editor, and this volume substantially increases our debt.

As this was published as a number of the *British Medical Bulletin*, it is to be expected that it will be on library shelves, but because it is not easily read in a hurry and it is not expensive, it is a book to be bought by individuals. It is, after all, cheaper than a meal in a modest restaurant, and is a more rewarding way to spend an evening.

DAVID WINGATE

Ultrasonography of digestive diseases By Francis S Weill. (Pp. 516; illustrated; £54.75.) St Louis, Toronto, London: Mosby, 1982.

This is the second edition of an excellent textbook which, written in English, reflects 13 years of ultrasound experience in Besançon, France. It covers the liver, biliary tract, pancreas, spleen, and aorta as well as dealing with the recognition of