

To obtain wide generalisations embracing world history it is necessary to treat of larger units than states. One has to treat of what Mr Toynbee calls societies or civilisations. These are really cultural units though their cultural extension may coincide with the extension of economic and political structures. England today forms part of the culture of Western Christendom but economically and politically is part of a world order. However, the further back we go in history the more we shall find that the cultural boundaries of Western Christendom were also its economic and political boundaries. We are therefore able to speak in a general sense of the society or civilisation of Western Europe, just as we can also speak of a society or civilisation of Orthodox Christendom, of Islam, of the Hindus, and of the Far East. These societies have remained fairly constant since the emergence of Western Christendom and may therefore, since they have a high degree of constancy and persistence, be treated as social units and compared with one another. There are fossilised survivals of similar societies of the past still in existence, such as the Jews and the Parsees, and there have been others, no longer in existence. Mr Toynbee distinguishes twenty-one societies of this kind in human history and his book is a comparative study of them.

It would take too much space even to state the conclusions reached by Mr Toynbee and adequate appreciation and criticism are out of the question. I can only make some very general comments. Most anthropologists and historians would find fault with both evidence and application of method, particularly with the last. The characteristics of these civilisations are not clearly defined and it is open to question whether they can be treated as societies at all. Culture and society are not the same thing. Also, Mr Toynbee gives the impression, so often given in philosophies of history, that he has reached his conclusions deductively and has then selected his evidence to support them. He speaks the language of science but he uses the tools of art. Moreover, his broad generalisations too often accord only with some of the facts and are only one of several possible interpretations of them. Sometimes he seems to force the unwilling material of history into the mould of his theories.

These faults are inevitable in a study of human civilisations. They are difficult enough to avoid in a detailed study in a restricted field. To write a book on such a scale that shortcomings are not only inevitable but certain to be glaring requires courage that most students lack. They lack also the strength of purpose and the perseverance to embark on, far less to complete, an undertaking of such magnitude as *A Study of History*. It may well come to be regarded as one of the great classics of English scholarship. E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD

VIRGIL'S MIND AT WORK. By R. W. Cruttwell. (Blackwell; 10s. 6d.)

There seems no doubt that Mr Cruttwell in this analysis of the symbolism of the Aeneid has discovered some important groups of symbolic associations the perception of which can enrich our under-

standing of the poem and which there is reason to believe were genuinely in Virgil's mind. His suggestions about the bee-and-laurel and hut-urn-beehive groups of images and the Vulcan-and-Vesta fire symbolism and their interlinking seem to the present reviewer (on the whole and with considerable reservations on points of detail) attractive and convincing. The business of hunting symbolic associations is, however, carried to such extreme lengths and pursued with such exaggerated subtlety that it makes the book extremely difficult to read and at times arouses serious misgivings. It is surely not legitimate to assume that every association which a reading of the *Aeneid* may suggest to a sensitive modern mind, stuffed with the learning of ancient mythographers and commentators and modern writers on comparative religion, must have been present—even subconsciously or unconsciously—in the mind of Virgil. Where Mr Cruttwell, as he very often does, produces solid evidence from Virgil or his contemporaries to show that a particular association or group of associations was likely to be present to Virgil's mind we can follow him, otherwise we must remain unconvinced. There is of course a very real and important sense in which we can say that everything which a great poem suggests to its readers of different types and cultures and successive generations becomes part of its 'meaning', which is thus not static but ever growing in depth, extent and complexity: and it is perfectly right when reading the poem to take this extension of meaning into account and to derive pleasure and profit from it. But we must not go on to assume that it was all in any way in the poet's mind when he wrote. There is much in Mr Cruttwell's book which may well have been in Virgil's mind; but there is also much which is not likely ever to have been in any minds except Mr Cruttwell's and perhaps Mr Jackson Knight's. Nevertheless a reading of the book is likely to be of value for any student of Virgil, for it is obviously a product of devotion, knowledge and sensitiveness to the qualities of Virgil's poetry.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. By Philip Hughes. Vol. 3: 1270-1517. (Sheed and Ward; 25s.)

The period covered by this work, which extends from the death of St Louis to the publication of the 97 theses of Luther, is one of the most complex and difficult in Church history. Of recent years some of the obscurities and indeed some of the cherished legends of history have been swept away by research scholars. It is, perhaps, the history of institutions and of thought movements that has benefited most, and perhaps some other elements in the late medieval picture require illumination before the whole period can be seen in true perspective. Be that as it may, Father Hughes has exploited what information we have to good effect and has in consequence given us one of the best pictures in English of the late middle ages. It is perhaps inevitable that little should be said of the attitude of the ordinary man towards the problems and movements which agitated the 14th and 15th cen-