

This has taught him that spiritual laws exist and can be discovered, having been declared by the greatest religious teachers; that obedience to them means suffering and self-abandonment, but also freedom, and that no other path leads away from chaos.

Mr Browne's sum of belief might be described as an H.C.F. of the truth deposited in various religious systems. Some of his Christian readers will content themselves with a label—Syncretism, Popular Esoterics, Yogi-bogi—and pass on. Others may find it possible to assimilate Mr Browne's terms of reference and learn from him. I myself found concentration on his meaning arduous, but liberally rewarded—*contemplata aliis tradit*.  
COLIN SUMMERFORD.

A STUDY OF HISTORY. By Arnold J. Toynbee. Abridgement of Volumes I-VI by D. C. Somervell. (Oxford University Press; 25s.)

This book is a model of what an abridgment should be and will be of great service to those who do not care to give time to reading Mr Toynbee's original six volumes. A short review cannot do justice to Mr Toynbee's erudition, style, and depth of analysis. It can only give an indication of what the author has attempted in his gigantic study of civilisations.

Mr Toynbee believes that historians should use the comparative method, the method used in all the natural sciences, and should endeavour, as natural scientists do, to reach conclusions which can be formulated as general laws. The ordinary historian neither does this nor wishes to do it. He is content to record facts, or events, in a temporal sequence and for this purpose he treats political states in isolation. This can only lead to partial understanding, and more likely to misunderstanding, of the causes of social change, which can only be brought to light by comparing the development of institutions in a series of such states. The particular will then be seen to be a special instance of the general. Thus the planting of colonies by Corinth and Chalcis, the creation of a military organisation by Sparta, and certain changes in the economic and political structure of Athens will be seen to be different ways of reacting to a common stimulus, the pressure of population on the means of subsistence.

Although he is dealing with static societies, it is precisely this kind of comparative study which the social anthropologist makes. The social anthropologist is able to use the comparative method because he has a very large number of societies to compare with one another and because primitive societies are easily isolated as social units; though Mr Toynbee underestimates the difficulties involved in treating even the most primitive societies as units. Indeed, the chief difficulty in all the social sciences is to isolate comparable units, and this preliminary task in the use of the comparative method has never been satisfactorily accomplished in historical studies of civilisation. Philosophies of history have never been very successful. Mr Toynbee knows this, of course, but has not been deterred by his knowledge from making a fresh attempt.

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-