From comment. He himself has courteously send him careering round the world to inspect the problem. By birth and up-bringing, therefore, Toynbee was bred to govern, preach, or inform at a time when prophesy, for Toynbee is a prophet rather than historian, is the purpose of A Study of History. This brave work deals, in what Toynbee believes to be an empirical method, with the nature of civilizations, the reasons for their birth, the conditions of their growth, the prerequisites of their success or failure. The first three volumes deal with the genesis of civilizations (twenty-one of them according to Toynbee) and they contain the famous thesis that all civilizations are a response to a challenge.

The factual range of these books, their wealth of quotation from ancient and classical literature and the high-pointing of the text with a plethora of bibliographical data, should despise its historical prophet, Macaulay, should treat material progress with such scant respect, should dismiss the last four hundred years of the western world. Toynbee's panacea, however, is not more material progress but a fresh conversion to Christianity. Otherwise, he feels the disintegration of western civilization will end in total decay. And to bolster up that prophecy, Toynbee is a prophet rather than historian, is the purpose of A Study of History. This brave work deals, in what Toynbee believes to be an empirical method, with the nature of civilizations, the reasons for their birth, the conditions of their growth, the prerequisites of their success or failure. The first three volumes deal with the genesis of civilizations (twenty-one of them according to Toynbee) and they contain the famous thesis that all civilizations are a response to a challenge.

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