perhaps this is no more than a reflection of the Early Church’s struggle to understand and express their belief that Jesus is the Christ.

The author himself best sums up his findings. ‘We find that the miracles of Jesus, and particularly his exorcisms and healings, were interpreted as being magical at an early date, that in the light of contemporary presuppositions it was inevitable that they should have been so interpreted and that the Gospels themselves witness to early stages of this interpretation’ (p.142).

This is a valuable book on a rather neglected area of New Testament study. It is to be hoped that others will continue to explore the avenues opened up by the author.

_Gerald P. Fitzgerald._


Since Harnack’s _Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte_ appeared in 1886-9 there have been many scholarly corrections both in points of detail and in broad interpretation. Yet no one has surpassed Harnack’s mastery of the historical sources or his ability at developing a synthesis covering a long period of time. His discussion simply cannot be ignored by any serious scholar. Indeed the terms of the debate about the historical development of Christian doctrine have not really been put more adequately by any scholar since, although men like Loofs, Seeberg, Tixeront, Werner have tried valiantly.

The first sign that a major new synthesis might emerge came with the publication of Jean Daniélou’s _The development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicea_ 2v. (1964-). Pelikan, however, has a much more ambitious design – to survey the development of Christine doctrine from 100 to the present. There is no comparable work. If the other four volumes retain the standard of the first, Pelikan will have placed the whole Christian community in his debt. Few others will have the stamina to cover such a wide range of material, let alone have the ability to deal with it so competently.

Two earlier works of Pelikan’s need to be seen as prolegomena to the present series: _Development of Christine Doctrine_ (1969) and _Historical Theology_ (1971). Pelikan believes that the historian must take into account in one sweeping sequence, the greater events and movements which have swayed the
destinies of man. Consequently his approach has to be assessed both at the level of detail and in its overall interpretation.

The book is divided into seven sections: Praeparatio Evangelica; Outside the mainstream; The Faith of the Church Catholic; The Mystery of the Trinity; The Person of the God-Man; Nature and Grace; the Orthodox consensus.

How is doctrine defined? Is it just the officially accepted creeds? Pelikan draws his net more widely. 'What the Church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches and confesses on the basis of the Word of God: This is Christian doctrine.' (p.1). He recognises that this includes moral teaching, though there was often a separation for teaching purposes. Doctrine is not identical with Christian thought and the opinions of individual theologians. Whereas some histories of dogma treated what was taught besides the normative dogmas as a commentary on the central beliefs, Pelikan treats creeds and dogma as an index to what the Church teaches and confesses. He draws on tradition, devotion, spirituality and worship to illuminate his argument.

He has tried to avoid treating the central tradition as if it has no history or is just the product of history where authentic growth and cancerous aberration seem to have no significant difference. 'The history of Christian doctrine is the most effective means available of exposing the artificial theories of continuity that have often assumed normative status in the churches, and at the same time it is an avenue into the authentic continuity of Christian believing, teaching and confessing.' (p.9).

Within these boundaries Pelikan succeeds brilliantly in casting fresh light on both the detail and the sweep of Christian doctrine. His style is clear, with occasional epigrams which sum up points very tellingly. He has drawn on strands of the tradition which have been forgotten because few are at home with Syriac or Coptic, and drawn on Orthodox histories which set matters in a very different light from the Western tradition.

Though Pelikan has deliberately chosen to interpret tradition without constant reference to its cultural setting his bibliography shows that this limitation has been deliberately chosen. The layout of the pages is a welcome change from either a clutter of notes at the bottom of the page or their banishment to the back of the book.

One of the great strengths of his exposition is the skilful way in which he shows the interconnection of doctrine and how the terms of doctrinal debates have been set by interaction of biblical and extra-biblical language. Concerned to listen to the orchestra as well as to the soloists, he is careful not to make the development of doctrine appear too neat and rational.

He points out that apocalyptic patterns of thought lasted much longer than is generally accepted and reminds us that the problems of the intellectual must not
be given too heavy a historical weighting over against the convictions of ordinary believers. One of the most interesting features is his recognition of the importance of popular beliefs and the account he gives of the way Christian beliefs gradually modified popular beliefs in the supernatural is a fascinating example of the value of seeing doctrine from 'below'.

Even more important he resists the temptation to schematize and thus ignore the rich texture of varied approaches to Christine doctrine. The account of salvation, for instance, is invaluable because of this. Likewise in his discussion of trinitarian thought and christology, Pelikan leads his readers surely through very complex evidence, showing how gradually the discussions clarified terms and assumptions without falling into the error of reading the evidence in light of the victors' views.

Pelikan never forgets the place of biblical ideas and exegesis in doctrinal development and his analysis of the way Arian liturgy went much further towards orthodoxy than their theology is a neat example of the way he can bring fresh evidence to bear on well worn ground. (pp.198-200) The chapter on Christology is illuminating for the way he brings out the inadequacy of the method used to resolve Trinitarian disputes when this has applied to Christological issues.

There is constant discussion of the interaction between Christianity and classical culture and classicists would find much food for thought in the early section on the Christian dispute with classical thought (pp.27-55), or in the discussion of the doctrine of man (pp.278ff.), as well as in the sections on the Trinitarian controversies and Augustine.

Altogether, the book is a masterly survey in which great learning is worn lightly and presented clearly. The publication of the second volume last year indicates that Professor Pelikan is working steadily on his project. If later volumes are as illuminating as the first, we can look forward with keen anticipation to the completion of the series for an overview of Christine doctrine which has hitherto been lacking.

Ian Breward.