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## Review: The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, V 5: Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700)

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arouse patriot support for their regime, and, in Hill's opinion, Gorbachev is a pragmatist, not a liberal. Christians in that country are way about their future, and Western observers should be hesitant about hailing the dawn of a new age of freedom.

*The Puzzle of the Soviet Church* is a thoroughly interesting, timely book written in a generally lucid though somewhat redundant manner. The title should be *The Puzzle of the Church in the Soviet Union*, since "Soviet" and "Church" are antithetical terms and the former is an inappropriate adjective to describe the latter. Hill sometimes fails to observe the rule of grammar that nouns and pronouns must agree in number. He often refers to singular nouns such as "church," "council," and "congregation" as "they" rather than "it." He employs "impact" where he should use "influence" or "effect," and in this book "utilize" replaces "use" almost entirely. In other words, there is too much academic jargon in this work. Such criticisms are, however, small matters which do not impair the influence (not impact) of this helpful book. It would be a fine acquisition for church libraries.

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*The Christian Tradition: A History of Pre-Development of Doctrine*, vol. 5 in *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture* (since 1700), by Jaroslav Pelikan. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989. Pp. 361. \$29.95.

The history of Christian doctrine has been, from the first century, a study in the interaction and challenge of tensions, religious, philosophical, cultural and political. The modern period is not only no exception but, in Pelikan's opinion (and rightly so), is probably the epoch most reflective of this since the first century. Here, with the fifth volume of his series on *The Christian Tradition* completed, Pelikan puts to rest a project of well over twenty years. It is a project to set forth cogently the central doctrines of the Christian faith as they are understood, believed, given development, etc., in the face of challenges large and small in a multitude of contexts.

The fifth and last volume is concerned to give clarity to a number of central (and related) emphases in Christian doctrine as set both in developmental continuity with the past and within the "battlefronts" of modern doubt, unbelief, relativism and antagonism of various types in modern culture. Pelikan illustrates the deep modern dilemma that the Church of Jesus Christ (Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant) has had to face by a kind of comparative literary reflection at the outset of the volume. As Augustine's *City of God* was the preeminent literary statement of the central themes in the patristic "triumph of theology," and Dante's *Divine Comedy* was the poetic embodiment of the medieval understanding of nature and grace, so the classic statement of the relations between "Christian doctrine and modern culture" is Goethe's *Faust*. Dr. Faust, after questioning fruitlessly for wisdom, finds that as with the other faculties of the medieval university (philosophy, medicine,

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law) "Theology too" ("alas"), beautiful as is the object of such yearning, will not be effective for him. He says, "I hear the message all right; it is the faith that I lack." Faust then typifies the modern situation for Christian doctrine, unbelief.

Pelikan's concern that this volume be not a history of modern Theology (though prominent personages and their influence are obvious throughout) but of Christian doctrine. This meant that his choices for focus and discussion shifted, for example, from the Enlightenment in itself (rather than as influence) to Pietism, to the doctrinal interactions between the three major branches of Christendom, to issues of ecumenism, etc. Within and between these, the challenges of a new situation for the Church were encountered and met invariably with great difficulty. These efforts were only partially successful. But in fact, according to Pelikan's overall "message," Christian doctrine not only met the challenge, developed where necessary in continuity with past tradition, but advanced in the twentieth century (though not everyone would agree with Pelikan's assessment of "advance").

The sweep of Pelikan's discussion is obviously huge, but it is usually effective. With so many major "fronts" to cover, his method of analysis and exposition as reflected in the previous four volumes is a wonder. In a sense, Pelikan advances or makes haste slowly. Section by section, chapter by chapter, he moves forward in his discussion, then returns to see another critical framework of Christian doctrine as it faced powerful contextual challenges within the ongoing press of recent history. Pelikan thus seeks to see clearly and impartially the various segments of Christianity as they were and are in the face of often gigantic challenges. These may be both internal and increasingly external in such questions as Orthodoxy and the nature of dogma, the question of the essence of religion within historical manifestation (importantly as it relates to the uniqueness and centrality of Jesus), the new emphasis on the internal or "heart" emphasis (pneumatology) in Christian thought and apologetics, the renewed need to defend the entire Christian world-view (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), the new awareness of the historical "mediation" of all truth (question of relativity of all "truth") and with it the recognition of the "development" of doctrine, and finally to twentieth century's focus on Ecclesiology and the "sobornost" or universality of the Church.

This work by Jaroslav Pelikan, much like the volumes that preceded, is outstanding in a number of respects. As noted, he tries to give perspective to a massive and turbulent context which, given the objective, effectively touches the major trends, concerns, obstacles and areas of growth in modern Christendom. Pelikan is especially sensitive to how changing cultural moods and ideas variously (but definitely) affect the church and all Christian thought by way of reaction, response or adjustment. Again, Pelikan usually takes great pains to be fair, as often reflecting *against* his own Lutheran tradition as for it. He works to bring out the pros and cons on the various sides of an issue, both within and without the Church. To be more exact, Pelikan does not speak disparagingly of the evangelical traditions or of orthodoxy, often highlighting its consistency and strengths against opponents. Along this line, this book is quite helpful in giving perspective to the place and role of evangelicalism in its various branches, including fundamentalism, within the larger context of the Christian faith and various confessional positions. Pelikan's "side"-notes (as

opposed to "end" or "foot"-notes) are again a most important part of this work. As the reader observes areas of particular interest, the primary sources are to the left (Pelikan also includes ninety pages of primary sources, editions and collections). The work is usually quite readable though there are occasional paragraphs which no matter how frequently they were re-read, never quite became clear. The connections between chapters and overall continuity are an important aspect of this book, and Pelikan has been very conscious of the need to build this into the exposition in order to bring the reader through and not into the critical contexts. Finally, it must be said that for all of his concern for fairness and critical "apartness," Pelikan is clearly enthusiastic about the topic.

There are, though, a few points of concern with the book. The "side"-notes give reference or source and are not only helpful for further research but are important for checking the identity of the spokesman for the faith. Questionable authorities for the Church are often given more than their disproportionate emphasis. For example, should the conclusions of a Semler be given a near lion's share for the assessment of church doctrine in the eighteenth century? In this way authorities, such as a Semler, are used by Pelikan as "mouthpieces" for his more "liberal" Lutheran theological perspective. Yet this is not a major concern within the whole of the text. Finally (and this is hardly a criticism in the truest sense), a taste will often be "whetted" for a topic only to have Pelikan, because of the limitations of space, leave it for the development of the discussion. But this is in fact probably the great strength of the book.

This final volume of the series *The Christian Tradition* must be, like the previous volumes, highly recommended. The few drawbacks do not keep this volume and this series from a deserved mark of excellence. Pelikan has done a service to the whole church in this mammoth undertaking and has helped and will yet help many to understand other traditions within the larger Christian tradition. As a textbook of church doctrine there can be few peers.

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*Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, by Marvin R. Wilson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Dayton: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1989.

Words like "Judaism" and "Hebraic" have appeared in several titles from various publishers that traffic in the evangelical arena, especially the kinds of houses that attempt to target not only the layperson interested in serious study but also the seminary professor facing a textbook order form. This interest in Judaism has always been a part of evangelicalism in America, especially among interpreters who favor that undefined, unrestrained allegorical hermeneutic for the Old Testament. The interest in Judaism today, however, is becoming in a lesser form what the new age movement was to evangelical publishers two