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Review: Growing Deep in the Christian Life

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The book would be beneficial to the layperson and to pastors who would like to learn to preach doctrinal sermons. These sermons are rich with illustrations and bits of personal history from Criswell's life. Much can be learned about sermon style through this book. However, if one is looking for a theological treatment of soteriology, he or she should look elsewhere. Editor Paige Patterson says that "this volume contains no ivory-tower theology" (p. 11).

The organization that Criswell gives to his sermon enhances its readability. He usually makes subheadings within the chapter for each sermon point. For example, in the sermon, "The Sin unto Death," there are three points: Death of the Body, Death of Opportunity, and Death of the Soul. This is an excellent sermon, and like the others in the book, it is thoroughly biblical.

There are other enticing sermons in the collection. "The Covenants of Salvation" distinguishes the Gospel from the Law and touches on covenant theology. "The Two Words of Repentance" expounds upon faith and repentance. "The Declaration of Justification" applies to the person but not to his or her works. "Once Saved Always Safe" offers five reasons for eternal security. Lastly, "Election: God's Sovereign Purpose Achieved" handles the delicate tension between God's sovereign choice and the human power of choice that is based upon being in God's image.

It would be possible to point out certain weaknesses in the book, but a book of sermons should not be subjected to the same type of analysis as a full scale work on theology. The book lacks continuity because it is a group of sermons and sermons written are never as moving as sermons preached. Yet, all things considered this is an outstanding volume by one of the great Baptist preachers of the 20th century. Pastors, students and laypersons alike will all profit from meditation on these important soteriological themes.

BILL VINSON
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Growing Deep in the Christian Life, by Charles R. Swindoll. Portland: Multnomah, 1986. Pp. 431. \$14.95.

It almost seems like every time we turn around, another book by Chuck Swindoll has been published. The pastor of the First Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, California, and well-known radio Bible teacher, has been prolific in producing devotional and practical works for over a decade.

Growing Deep in the Christian Life represents something of a departure, however, even though it is written in the same warm, down-to-earth Swindoll style. The difference might not be obvious initially to the average reader, though. The title and cover design are quite similar to Swindoll's recent devotional best-seller, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*. But, this is not a devotional sequel. It's a book on doctrine, an introduction of sorts to theology, with Swindoll's self-proclaimed purpose to make theology "interesting", not "dull" (Introduction, pp. 9-14). It's also a book that the author has long

wanted to write, but which he had been "reluctant" to do, because of a "growing fear of just pumping out another thick, boring book on doctrine that looks good but reads bad" (p. 10).

Obviously, what Swindoll is saying is something of an indictment of theologians, who tend to write in an arid academic style and are thus read chiefly by other theologians. Even pastors who desire to dig deeper are discouraged from doing so frequently because there is little in such "ivory tower" theology that is suggestive for pulpit or pew, much less daily living.

This book, which began as a sermon series, clearly shows that theology can be preached in such a way as to maintain that fine balance between truth and practicality . . . and be anything but dull. As usual, Swindoll's colorful wording and profuse illustrations bring the subject matter alive. And, although its selectivity and order of development make this closer to a primer than a standard theological work, it certainly will provide the "roots" for a fascinating beginning study or review of theology, which is desperately needed in most evangelical circles today.

Growing Deep in the Christians Life is highly recommended to a wide audience. It should be read by those who are new Christians or who have not been exposed much to theology before, most definitely. They desperately need its content to anchor their lives and decisions. But, it is also needed by those who have been bored by, or even "innoculated against," theology in the past, sometimes by its stated defenders. The theologian's craft is an honorable one, but a particularly difficult one in this age when the light-weight entertainment desires of the surrounding culture have deeply affected the church. Swindoll's book suggests stimulating possibilities for getting beyond such a content-culture impasse for both theological teacher and student alike.

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Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology, by Richard A. Muller. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985. Pp. 340. \$12.95.

Richard Muller, Professor of Historical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, has produced a volume that will fill a great void in the theological world. The Greek and Latin heritage of the church has left contemporary readers with numerous terms that are generally unfamiliar to specialist and non-specialist alike. This outstanding reference tool contains definitions of theological terms, phrases and doctrines alphabetized according to the Greek or Latin words.

One must not think that this volume is helpful only for those interested in 17th century Protestant Scholastic theology. Readers of Karl Barth, Otto Weber and Carl Henry realize that these classical terms have been appropriated into their theological systems, especially is this true of Barth. But for those who have attempted to find their way through the maze of the elaborate