
The partition of the book (parts 2, 3, and 4) is in harmony with the editor’s views concerning the composition and structure of the book of Deuteronomy (expressed in more detail in his commentary on Deuteronomy, WBC, vol. 6a). Although it is obvious that such a compilation as this cannot include every authority in the field, nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the works of several giants in OT scholarship (A. Alt, M. Noth, R. E. Clements, O. Eissfeldt, S. Mittmann, J. J. Stamm, S. R. Driver, G. E. Wright, and G. von Rad) have not been included. The book is further limited by the exclusion of John M. Wiebe’s article, “The Form, Setting and Meaning of the Song of Moses,” published in Studia et Theologica 17 (1989), where the literature in regard to Deut 32 is well represented, and an interesting structure for the chapter is skillfully proposed.

Regarding book design, a subject index would have been much appreciated. Nevertheless, the index of authorities and of scripture references is of great benefit to the reader. Christensen deserves praise for compiling this valuable material in a one-volume reference. The book will be valuable as a primary or supplementary resource for graduate students and scholars of Deuteronomy and of the Pentateuch in general.

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*Teaching for Moral Growth* represents a professional and courageous attempt to weave concepts from three major disciplines—theology, psychology, and education—into a single resource volume for teachers, parents, and pastors. Bonidell Clouse, Professor of Educational and School Psychology at Indiana State University, argues that these three disciplines find “common ground” in the field of moral values and uses contributions from each to build her toolbox for moral growth.

The book is divided into three sections of unequal length. Part I (59 pp.) traces three “Traditional Approaches to Moral Growth.” This section describes “The Role of Stories,” “A Biblical Approach,” and “Character Education,” sketching in broad strokes a historical overview of each approach as it has affected moral education.

Part II (287 pp.) presents “Psychological Approaches to Moral Growth.” The author supplies the reader with engaging summary sketches of four major schools of psychology: Freudian psychoanalysis, behaviorism, cognitive psychology, and humanist psychology. In each summary the author first presents brief readable biographies of the school’s chief proponents, then gives
a reasonably objective review of their interpretation of humans and how they learn. She then draws inferences regarding the specific school’s teachings on moral growth. Each summary sketch is followed by “Guidelines . . . for Teachers, Parents and Pastors,” in which the major learning premises are projected into strategies for teaching moral growth—spotlighting key concepts for Christian education use.

Part III (40 pp.) constitutes the conceptual core of the volume. Here the author compares and contrasts the various psychological schools with biblical teaching and contemporary Christian viewpoints. The section closes with a concise summary of the points made in the study and applies them to the knotty problems of moral education in today’s society.

As a religious educator, the reviewer found this book vaguely frustrating until he realized that it represents the personal resolution of a Christian scholar’s career pilgrimage through the mazes of educational psychology in search of tools for facilitating moral growth in children and youth. Viewed as such, the book becomes an effective and ambitious overview of a crisis issue—solidly anchored moral growth amid violence and social flux. The total impression of the study is one of a valiant attempt to create an effective condensation of a conceptual field too vast and complex for even four hundred pages. The designated readership of teachers, parents and pastors also probably sets too diverse a target for a single volume.

The tightly knit reasoning of the book can pose difficulty. For example, the author perceives the central theme of the Bible to be “. . . the greatness, magnitude, and righteousness of God. . . . One so holy that sin cannot be tolerated in any form. . . . It is a revelation that the distance between where we are and where God is, is so vast there is no way to reach Him, that He must come to us if we are to know what He is like” (31). Biblical illustrations from the book of Job, supplemented by other biblical passages, are then used to adduce strategies for moral and spiritual growth education.

If the reader, while not denying the presence of these Bible themes, views the central theme of the Bible differently, other educational conclusions would be reached. The reviewer, for instance, perceives Scripture rather to be the revelation of a holy God grieving over the alienation of relationship caused by the rebellion of mankind and the plan by which redemptive love strives to restore that broken relationship, closing the gap at incredible cost. As a result, the reviewer found himself projecting moral growth strategies other than the author suggests.

The reviews of major schools of psychological thought are objectively written. The biographical sketches of the main leaders in each field proved especially insightful and enjoyable reading. The conservative Christian educator, pastor, and parent, however, will find themselves among such strange ideological bedfellows as Sigmund Freud, Bruno Bettelheim, John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner, and John Locke. The author carefully cites the negative attitude these prominent figures took toward religion in general and Christianity in particular, but feels that these attitudes do not negate the usefulness of their psychological insights to moral growth. The reviewer is forced, however, to wonder how
systems which interpret human behavior in a matrix of thought rejecting both Christian religion and its Christ, sometimes bitterly, can effectively contribute to the growth of moral values in Christian education. The reader must, of course, make his own judgment.

The author seems to find cognitive (or Gestalt) learning psychology an especially rich mine of practical moral-growth tools. Significant time is devoted to the contributions of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, whose research seems to offer valuable insights and strategies for Christian moral-growth planning.

To Christian readers who feel that the term “Christian humanism” is an oxymoron, Clouse’s survey of humanist psychology’s contributions to moral-growth concepts and tools will be enlightening. The reviewer found this section to be refreshingly objective and convincingly fair. The traditional Christian shock-reflex toward “humanism” can well afford an unbiased review of the insights that literature from this school of psychology can supply.

The last section of the book represents the author’s final synthesis of her presentation into a single usable overview. To the extent they have followed the author’s arguments, inferences, and projections, readers will experience satisfaction with the presentation. To the extent the readers did not, they will probably experience restlessness and a sense of incomplete closure.

The book is engagingly written and a comprehensive attempt to review a field which Christians must confront in order to be relevant to society. The sense of frustration the reviewer felt early in the book was never fully resolved but, by the last page, it was balanced by a sense of stimulation gained through the author’s open willingness to tap all the resources presently available, examine them from a biblical perspective, and harness them together in a usable format.

The author may or may not have succeeded in her stated purpose. But her book throws a clear challenge to theologians, psychologists, and educators to review their comfortable premises and marshal the best contributions their disciplines offer to solve the problems that moral growth and values education present to contemporary Christianity. That challenge, once taken, may result in some warm debate, but we must thank Bonidell Clouse for laying out the issues and indicating solutions for developing sound moral-growth principles and strategies for Christian youth and the churches that serve them.

Andrews University  

Winston Ferris


John J. Collins’ *Daniel* utilizes the standard arrangement of a detailed introduction to the book followed by a verse-by-verse commentary. The commentary is characterized by translations with extensive textual notes. Some