

which Albert C. Moore holds out optimistic encouragement, even seeing Antarctica as a possible centre for international culture (and so for Religious Studies) in some distant future. Whatever may be said of Antarctica, this book is a timely and useful contribution to our understanding

of the role and development of contemporary religion, and becomes itself a significant addition to the Bibliography on religion in New Zealand which has been compiled at the back of this volume.

B. R. WILSON

**BIBLICAL GAMES: A Strategic Analysis of Stories in the Old Testament, by Steven J. Brams. The MIT Press, 1980.**

I made a mistake from the start over this book. I pigeon-holed it in the academic discipline of biblical scholarship, but this would be unfair to the book, not to speak of the reviewer. It belongs to the academic discipline of game theory, a discipline which began in 1944 with the publication of a book called *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Up to now game theory has mainly been applied to economics and political science, though an attempt was made to apply it to Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* in 1971.

Well, now we have it applied to the Old Testament, and I dare say with success. The Old Testament is full of games and Professor Brams tackles the best of them. Indeed he begins with the creation. But I cannot help feeling that the publication of this book will be of more benefit to game theory than to biblical scholarship; this I say without irony and the book was

well worth writing.

One hesitation: Brams works from the Jewish Publication Society of America translation into modern English. This is certainly a better translation into modern English than the two others that come to mind, but in the original Hebrew you find no end of punning and strained etymologies. In a purview of all the data these too should have been taken into account.

God comes out of this scientific analysis very badly. "He intrudes in people's lives with unerring regularity, wrecking amicable relationships. . . . In my opinion, this inimical behavior stems principally from His overweening concern for His reputation" (p 173). There are pages more of this. I cheerfully commend the section "Concluding Remarks on God" to all theologians and ironists.

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