

the Jewish law as part of their legal apparatus. His essay does not offer any new insights into the issues he writes about. The following essay is by Sidnie White Crawford who writes on “The Use of the Pentateuch in the Temple Scroll and the Damascus Document in the Second Century B.C.E.” Crawford looks at how the manuscripts recovered at Qumran reflect the Pentateuch. He affirms that the exegetes at Qumran wrote their own hermeneutics on the Pentateuch. For example, the *Temple Scroll* is rewritten scripture which is embedded with interpretation. On the other hand, the *Damascus Document* claims its authority from exegeting the scriptures. Crawford sees the Qumranic documents to have been meant to fill in the gaps of information which may be lacking in the Torah.

James W. Watts writes the last essay in this section and in the book *The Pentateuch as Torah*. He addresses “The Torah as the Rhetoric of Priesthood.” As one might expect with such a topic, Watts argues that the priesthood manipulated the Torah in order to advance their political claims. They used the Torah which was regarded as divine scripture, to make more politico-religious and socio-cultural stipulations and policies. Further, Watts says that what the priesthood crafted accommodated Persian and Egyptian imperial interests.

The essays in *The Torah as the Pentateuch* evince scholarly quality. They are not only interdisciplinary but quite informative. I appreciate the citing of some archaeological resources to shed light on the development of the biblical text. Despite this, these essays thrive on the assumption that the Pentateuch was written in the Persian Period. The authors of this book need to distinguish between the original composition/writing of the pentateuchal Torah and the so-called authorization in the Persian period. While the purpose of this book was not to examine the provenance of the Pentateuch, it could have been helpful to review how recent scholarship sees some of the pentateuchal traditions such as the dating and socio-religious development of the text.

As it seems, the authors of this book were not so much persuaded to explore new trends of thought as to affirm what has been circulating in scholarship. However, *The Torah as the Pentateuch* stimulates thinking, keeps the debate alive, and is a good resource for pentateuchal studies.

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PATRICK MAZANI

Lilla, Mark. *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. 334 pp. Hardcover, \$26.00.

Mark Lilla is Professor of Humanities at Columbia University in New York. He is an intellectual historian and frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books.

Understanding how we got to where we are is an important step toward understanding our present situation and considering future directions. To help fill this need, Lilla has written a concise history of the development of Christian political theology by providing a semidetached introduction of the development of modern Western religious thought.

Beginning with the turmoil of sixteenth-century Europe, Lilla traces the leading thinkers of the Western tradition through Hobbs, Hume and Locke, Kant, Rousseau and beyond, concluding that two world wars caused a severe dissolution of rationalism. He underscores the fact that the twenty-first century began with a conflict between worldviews, specifically those of fundamentalists, who understood political theology to be derived from divinely revealed documents and who had little or no tolerance for other views, and those who espoused a liberal, rational, humanistic political theology that was tolerant of others and sought accommodation.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 signaled yet another significant shift in Western influence. Prior to this date, Westerners could still delude themselves into thinking that their rational worldview was sufficient, although the mass migration from East to West and South to North was forcing them to come to grips with the need for understanding the “other” (Islam in particular). September 11 brought the West face to face with its lack of understanding, vastly accelerating the pace of Western rationalistic dissolution. The need for understanding the “other” thus becomes expedient, especially for the West.

While Lilla avoids stating the obvious, he leads his readers to see the emptiness of a rational-liberal approach and the barrenness and futility of liberal political theology and its “stillborn god.” Is it one of the (unconscious?) aims of liberalism to so domesticate God that he becomes the god of the status quo or the god of one’s own political ambitions? Lilla believes this to be the case. He notes that the chief mechanism for reducing God to a theopolitical statement is a process of “reinterpreting biblical faith as an expression of human religious consciousness and social interaction rather than as a revelation from God” (300).

Lilla is intent on developing a thorough history of Western rational thought, although at times he seems to become lost in a literary and philosophical rabbit warren. The reason for this weakness is that he attempts to cover too much territory in such a small volume. In spite of this, he is able to communicate a large picture in a few words. Readers who desire more detail and elaboration will have to seek elsewhere.

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BRUCE CAMPBELL MOYER

MacCarty, Skip. *In Granite or Ingrained? What the Old and New Testaments Reveal about the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2007. 327 pp. Paper, \$19.99.

As an associate pastor for evangelism at Pioneer Memorial Church on the campus of Andrews University, Skip MacCarty offers a major contribution to the study of the biblical covenants and a practical help to all who need clarity on this central theme of the Bible. The author soon clears up his somewhat mystifying title when he speaks about “the granite of a stony heart” and an obedience to God that is “ingrained in the person’s very nature” (29). He then applies this biblical image to the two levels of Israel’s acceptance of the