

*But Is It All True? The Bible and the Questions of Truth.* Alan G. Padgett and Patrick R. Keifert, editors. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, pages 175, np.

When I tell you that the contributors are David Bartlette (Yale), Ellen Charry (Princeton), Stephen Davis (Claremont McKenna College), Patrick R. Keifert (Luther Seminary), Ben C. Ollenburger (Mennonite Biblical Seminary), Dennis T. Olson (Princeton), Alan Padgett (Luther Seminary), Mark Wallace (Swarthmore College), and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Yale), you will understand that this is not a traditional conservative's view of biblical truthfulness. Some of the essays are persuasive and convincing. Others are weak and misleading.

Lilly funded the colloquium from which this set of papers was taken. Carl F. H. Henry's defense of orthodox commitments to propositional revelation is the world in which I live. All of these contributors challenge this point of view. Olson claims that truth means growing into deeper relationship with God. Wolterstorff says that truth should be understood in the sense of measuring up to a standard. Ollenburger presses the case that truthfulness means faithfulness. I don't mind including all of these ideas into a more comprehensive biblical notion of truth. But Wallace sees meaning as created in the dynamic act of reading a text (as interplay between text and reader), thus introducing a radical subjectivity. He argues that since God is love, we must use love as the test and eliminate all biblical passages that do not conform to love. (Never have I seen such a blatant liberalism in a book supposedly emphasizing truth.)

For Davis, the Bible is true because God speaks to us from the text, and we submit to its teachings. Padgett wants truth to be a mediated disclosure of being. Bartlett explains why truth is located in Christ and in the history behind the text. (How anyone can hope to know the "truth" behind the text is a mystery to me.) Keifert claims that the truth of the Bible is grounded in the

activity of God (especially promise). And Charry finds truth in theological education, where one comes to know God in a variety of ways.

As I say, in some cases I can supplement the propositional view with some of these ideas, but I cannot substitute any of these for the propositional view. God's truth is expressed in words. Christ is the Word of God. Truth must harmonize with reality or it could never be known. Once subjectivised, we end up swimming in a very large pond.

Yes, all of it is true, but not for the reasons given here. Thy word is truth. So says Jesus Himself. Don't lose that anchor when you learn from these scholars.

L. Russ Bush