to do with the potential of various faith traditions to cultivate freedom, tolerance and respect.

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Hans W. Frei, *Reading Faithfully*, vol. 1, *Writings from the Archives: Theology and Hermeneutics*, and vol. 2, *Frei's Theological Background*, ed. Mike Higton and Mark Alan Bowald (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), pp. xx + 226 and pp. vi + 227. $28.00 each.

These two volumes are a very welcome set of largely unpublished selections from Frei's body of writings. The first volume includes letters as well as essays on hermeneutics and theology, extending from 1953 through 1987 (a year before his untimely death). The second volume includes six essays from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, three unpublished (on Lessing, Kant and Barth) and three published in relatively obscure books (two on H. R. Niebuhr and one on German theology). Each selection includes a helpful editorial paragraph on the date and substance of the selection. The editors rightly note that Frei 'is a very significant influence in contemporary theology, but that influence has little to do with the quantity of his publications' (p. xv) – two books and some articles during his lifetime (*The Identity of Jesus Christ* (Fortress, 1975) and *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (Yale, 1974)), two posthumous books (one a set of essays) – *Types of Christian Theology* (Yale, 1992) and *Theology and Narrative* (Oxford, 1993). Neophytes will want to begin with one of the books, using these letters and essays to shed further light. But I can also imagine carefully moving from some of these letters and essays back to the books, so interesting is this collection.

The letters and essays are helpfully framed by a foreword by George Hunsinger (vol. 1, pp. vii–xi) and an afterword by John Webster (vol. 1, pp. 205–20). Hunsinger recalls Frei's personal qualities (his kindness and generosity, 'not always unmixed with severity') along with his academic achievements as an always tentative historian, hermeneutician and theologian, 'finally perhaps even a bit troubled' – but focused on 'the singularity of Jesus' and the theological as well as non-theological resources needed to show this particularity (p. viii). John Webster's essay (republished from a 1999 commemoration of Frei life) helpfully proposes one way to approach Frei's contribution: 'to think of his corpus of writings as a series of essays in practical hermeneutics' (vol. 1, p. 205).

The thirteen letters include responses to theses (Nelson, Hilke and Murchiso), responses to the articles or manuscripts or talks of others (Hartt, Harvey, Placher (twice)), and responses to reviews of his own books (Comstock, Keck, Woolverton (twice), Hart, Nineham). The editors nicely set each in context, and there are theological tidbits in each. Some such fragments will surprise some. There is, for example, in and with his 'Barthian bias', the ongoing indebtedness to Austin Farrer's early metaphysics (including 'its affirmation of analogical predication and substance assertion', p. 42). Frei also worries that apologetical argument in general 'underestimates the moral toughness and integrity of the agnostic position and *pari passu* the towering quality and demandingness of the Christian vision' (p. 4) – two clues, perhaps, to issues that 'troubled' Frei. In terms of Van Harvey's work on the historian and the believer, Frei says 'I'm an at least half-alienated Christian but not at all an alienated theologian' (p. 26). But his letters can also provide gems of larger arguments – his letter to Hartt about the relationship between history and salvation history (all humanity and the people of God) or the sketch of theories of truth as secular parables of trinitarian perichoresis in one of the letters to Placher.

The editors divide the longer essays into Hermeneutics (part II, five essays, only one previously published) and Theology (part III, ten essays, only one previously published). The essays on Hermeneutics set *The Identity of Jesus Christ* and *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* in context, as well as responding to critics who saw Frei as espousing 'story theology' or evacuating the Gospels of historical reference. The essays on Theology are understandably more diverse. They begin and end with the earliest essays, one a 1953 Austin Farrer-like argument for theology in a Liberal Arts curriculum and the other a 1954 sermon on the importance of ordination for preserving historical continuity. But there are also essays on three of the Thirty-Nine Articles (chapters 7, 8, 9) as well as pieces sketching the kind of left of centre political theology (chapters 4, 5, 6) Frei was articulating at life's end for him.

The essays of volume 2 are equally important – indeed, given the attention that is already and rightly given Frei's work on biblical narrative and Karl Barth, perhaps even more important. That is, although Frei's *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* noted that distinctively 'modern' theology began in England at the turn from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, Frei's own story moves back and forth between England and Germany, with Germany increasingly dominating the story by book's end. And the half dozen essays of volume 2 further illuminate this reading. The essays on Lessing and Kant – we can only regret a missing or unwritten essay on Herder – are emblems of

Frei's deep and abiding concern with the thought and sensibility of the secular age at its most powerful and appealing. The two previously published essays on H. R. Niebuhr (the longest in volume 2), written in the late 1950s and not Frei's clearest writing, are a goldmine of insights on Frei's reading of nineteenth-century Protestant liberalism and Barth, along with Niebuhr.

Finally, besides a bibliography of texts cited in each volume, volume I also provides a convenient chronological listing of each item in both volumes (vol. 1, pp. xix–xx). These volumes will be indispensable for further study of Frei and (more importantly, I think he would say) the issues he resolved and left unresolved.

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Roger Wagner and Andrew Briggs, *The Penultimate Curiosity: How Science Swims in the Slipstream of Ultimate Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. xx +468. $25.

The sheer sweep of history that this book overviews is enough to take one's breath away. This beautifully illustrated book is no coffee table collection, but achieves something far more serious. And it does this by garnering encyclopedic details of historical events in the human historical record, going back even prior to the time when *Homo sapiens sapiens* roamed on this planet. One core argument in this book is that the scientific revolution happened in a heavily religious context. The reader has the impression that the authors in some way model the very quest that they are seeking, probing era after era of key events that led to particular scientific discoveries. The tidy categories of *religio* as inner devotion and *scientia* as intellectual enterprise are rather more complex than this.

The book begins with a breathtaking survey of palaeohistory, including a focus on cave art. The initial presupposition that Altamira paintings must have been done in the same century as the discoveries were made soon gave way to the realization that this work was far more ancient. The quest to know who we are as humans is illustrated through a combination of the history of archaeological studies, the history of early practices of participant observation among bush men and hunter gatherer societies, ethnobotany and what seemed to be distinctive burial practices. The authors probe further into the neuroscience of the mind and the cognitive science of religion in trying