

and Catholic churches was signified by the institution of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham in 2011.

This landscape is animated – the ‘significant soil’ is given ‘life’ – by regular and well-attended individual and group pilgrimages. And there are also protesters. Evangelical Protestants often can be found hurling abuse at the ‘idolators’. Yet even as they have such a lack of respect for the pilgrims the protesters show that Walsingham matters to them as much as it does to the devout. If it did not they would scarcely be objecting. They too have a need to be there. Walsingham is indeed ‘significant soil’.

This is a surface-level history of Walsingham. But as these two fascinating volumes make clear, the story is much more complex than this. In his own book Gary Waller provides an elegant and subtle analysis of how Walsingham is intimately connected with imaginations of England and Englishness. He does not however take the line of Peter Ackroyd’s *Albion*, in which England and Englishness are essentially connected and identified as intrinsic qualities (Ackroyd does not mention Walsingham). For Waller, England and Englishness are ‘invented traditions’ expressed in ritual, literature, art and constructions of cultural memory. He deftly shows how Walsingham is a site – a ‘significant soil’ – which is at once central to, and contested within, such inventions. Yet the strength of Waller’s book is that even as it displays some – maybe appropriate – scepticism about the historical veracity of the foundational stories of Richeldis, it does not deny the possibility of their containing glimpses of a truth. Waller explores the *mutation* of the imaginations about Walsingham, and he is alert enough not to take populist pot shots at such significant soil.

The collection Waller has edited with Dominic James should be approached differently. It is not about the mutation of foundational stories, so much as it is focused on the historical and contemporary multiplicity of meanings which have been, and are, invested in Walsingham. It is a collection about the lives of the significant soil. The chapters are wide-ranging. Each is engaging and thought-provoking, putting Walsingham in a broad context of literature, architecture, archaeology, history and anthropology. Yet these are not dry papers. Each of them, albeit in different ways, is focused on trying to understand what Walsingham meant to those who went there, and what it means to those who go there today. In other words, this collection manages to show that this significant soil might well have different, even conflicting, lives.

In the end perhaps these excellent books can be read as raising a cautionary note, albeit a note none of the authors write themselves. Walsingham is most certainly ‘significant soil’. But the challenge is to ensure that the different lives of such significance do not dilute the true significance. It is a soil of anticipations of, to use Eliot again, ‘The hint half guessed, the gift half understood’.

KEITH TESTER

**THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO C.S.LEWIS** edited by Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, pp xx + 326, £ 18.99 pbk*

This excellent book has made me realise how fortunate I was in reading C.S.Lewis’s books in the random order in which I was able to get them. I began with *Miracles*, went on to *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, after which came *The Great Divorce*, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Instead of seeing Lewis as a literary historian or a theologian or a philosopher or a children’s writer, I was introduced to what someone has called ‘The Christian World of C.S.Lewis’.

The editors of this book have divided the vast 'Christian World' of Lewis into twenty-one essays arranged under three sections: Scholar; Thinker, and Writer. I do not think it makes any difference in which order the essays are read, although I beg readers not to miss those in the Scholar section. Those interested in Lewis's theology would benefit enormously from seeing that searching intelligence illuminating works of literature. I particularly admire John V. Fleming's essay, 'Literary Critic'. In it he mentions something which applies to everything from Lewis's pen, from his literary criticism to his stories for children: 'C.S.Lewis the literary scholar commanded three powerful tools. The first was a remarkable erudition. He knew as much as it is possible to know from reading the primary sources in his field. Next, he had a supremely supple imagination and historical sympathy that allowed him to make surprising, illuminating connections among the numerous categories of his vast learning. Finally, he had to a remarkable degree that capacity defined by Pope as "true wit" – the power to put into felicitous language "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."' (p. 26).

The section on 'Scholar' is followed by one called 'Thinker' which includes ten essays, many on Lewis's theological works. One of the editors, Robert MacSwain, Assistant Professor of Theology at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, said: 'Academic theology can ill afford to disregard C.S.Lewis... In its commendable quest for disciplinary purity and intellectual integrity, academic theology is actually in great danger of sealing itself within a very small, self-enclosed echo chamber in which experts talk to other experts while losing all contact with the outside world. Meanwhile, Lewis continues to sell millions of books a year and to shape the religious faith of thousands.' (p. 4).

Lewis's most popular work of theology is *Mere Christianity* (1952) and the editors wisely chose Paul S. Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Oxford, to write the piece 'On Theology'. Professor Fiddes points out that one of Lewis's greatest strengths as a 'translator' of Christian doctrine into everyday language was his brilliant use of images. Lewis sometimes complained of his 'over-active imagination,' and writing about the use of imagery in *Mere Christianity*, Professor Fiddes put his finger on one of Lewis's weaknesses: 'The image has captured his imagination and shaped the doctrinal concept.' He is right. Once Lewis was enamoured of a mental picture he was reluctant to let it go.

Before mentioning the final section I voice one complaint. During his many years as a popular writer Lewis spent about two hours every day replying to letters. As the three volumes of his *Collected Letters* contain over 3500 pages, a sizeable portion of his work, I wonder why nothing was said of them.

Most of Lewis's readers regard his imaginative writings as his best work and the *Companion* does full justice to them. I particularly recommend Jerry L. Walls's essay on *The Great Divorce* (1945) and Allan Jacobs's on the *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950–57). Jacobs reminds us that Lewis's friend, J.R.R. Tolkien, did not like the Narnian stories – or at least *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which is the only one he read. No: he did not, but I believe he would be appalled if it were imagined he did not think *anyone* should read them. I have it on the authority of his grandson that Tolkien sent him copies of all seven Narnian stories as they were published.

Alan Jacobs quotes the important passage in which Lewis explained his reasons for embodying the Narnian stories in the form of fairy tales. 'Why did one find it so hard,' Lewis asked, 'to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. An obligation to feel can freeze feelings... But supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday School associations, one could make them for the first

time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons?' (p. 268).

In a reply to some American school children who asked if Aslan was an allegory, Lewis said: 'I did not say to myself "Let us represent Jesus as He really is in our world by a Lion in Narnia": I said "Let us suppose that there were a land like Narnia and that the Son of God, as He became a Man in our world, became a Lion there, and then imagine what would happen."' (*Collected Letters of C.S.Lewis*, III (2006), p. 480). While many contend that Satan is the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, no one is in doubt about who is the hero of the Narnian stories. It is Aslan – the greatest of Lewis's creations and everyone's favourite character.

It is fortunate children do not read obituaries because, as an employee of the Lewis Estate, I receive the letters they still write to Lewis about his stories. I have learned much from them, and I have placed most of the letters received from children since Lewis's death in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Nearly all those who write say Aslan is their favourite character. My favourite letter is from an eight-year old boy, 'Trip', in New Jersey. The teacher told the children Lewis had died, but they wrote anyway. 'Trip' began his letter, 'Dear Mr Lewis, I'm sorry you've died'.

So are we all, Trip, so are we all. But at least Mr Lewis's books are easy to find, and much light is shed on them by this *Cambridge Companion to C.S.Lewis*.

WALTER HOOPER

**OXFORD READINGS IN PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY (VOLUME I – TRINITY, INCARNATION, ATONEMENT; VOLUME II – PROVIDENCE, SCRIPTURE AND RESURRECTION) edited by Michael Rea, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, pp. vii + 368 and ix + 420, £92 (hbk)/£26 (pbk) per volume; £44 both volumes (pbk)**

What is most likely to draw attention to the two volumes of the *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology* is that they have 'philosophical theology' in the title. Philosophy of religion anthologies abound, but philosophical theology anthologies are much less common, and so these two volumes seem to promise something new.

Of course, it matters a great deal what is meant by 'philosophical theology'. Given the content of the recent *Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, which generated controversy by being to all intents and purposes a handbook of the philosophy of religion, it also matters how publishers understand the term. The discipline of the philosophy of religion has fairly clear boundaries, not least because of the curricula of standard undergraduate courses in the subject. This is much less true in the case of philosophical theology.

In terms of the philosophy/theology distinction, philosophy of religion would seem to be on the philosophy side of the distinction, but addresses the sorts of questions that arise in theology and religious practice. Similarly, it would seem that philosophical theology is theology with 'philosophical' as an adjective, and therefore on the theology side of the distinction. Since the distinction between philosophy and theology is itself not sharp, it would be unreasonable to expect a sharp distinction between philosophy of religion and philosophical theology. This does not, however, mean that the distinction is invalid or without use. The Thomist distinction between *sacra doctrina* and *philosophia* is one obvious starting point. In the post-Enlightenment context of the *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology*, the distinction proposed by Paul Tillich in the introduction to his *Systematic Theology* may be more typical of current understandings. Tillich