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The Charles Williams Society

Newsletter

No. 107 Summer 2003

The Charles Williams Society

The Society was founded in 1975, thirty years after Charles Williams's sudden death at the end of the Second World War. It exists to celebrate Charles Williams and to provide a forum for the exchange of views and information about his life and work.

Members of the Society receive a quarterly newsletter and may attend the Society's meetings which are held three times a year. Facilities for members also include a postal lending library and a reference library housed at The Centre for Medieval Studies in Oxford.

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For information about the **Oxford** reading group please contact Brenda Boughton, tel: 01865 515589.

The Charles Williams Society

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From the Editor

Some readers will have seen the notices of the death, on 16 June, of the poet Peter Redgrove. Like Williams, Redgrove was a prolific writer, publishing more than two dozen volumes of poetry, seven novels with occult overtones, volumes of short stories, numerous radio plays, and works of what he called psychology and spirituality. He was not a Christian, but, like Williams, he had an individual and highly developed approach to the spiritual, which he saw manifesting through physical life. Having read Natural Sciences at Cambridge and worked as an industrial chemist and scientific journalist he brought a trained eye to his observations of the physical world. Peter Redgrove's poetic persona, his Taliessin, was, therefore, a scientist who stretched the limits of inquiry: Faust. And for Redgrove the Earth-Spirit was feminine: Goethe's "Darkness that gave birth to Light, / The haughty Light that now with Mother Night / Disputes her ancient rank and space withal." The spiritual appeared for Redgrove in the everyday and archetypes manifested through the 'ordinary'; the divine was found in fluids. Redgrove's vision gave voice to "speech of so deep a carnality that it is simultaneously spirit." His last volume of poetry, *From the Virgil Caverns,* was concerned with recollections of a journey in the Underworld, and with the possibility of knowledge in and of death. I recommend it and all his works.

Vale, Frater.

Edward Gauntlett

Society News & Notes

The Williams's Grave

The work on Charles Williams's grave (which is more accurately described as the Williams's family gave) is now complete. A stone slab, to which the memorial tablets to Florence (Michal) Williams and to Michael Williams are fixed, extends from the headstone to the footstone. The natural setting remains as it has always been.

Some of those who attended the Society's all-day meeting at Oxford on 21 June visited the grave during the lunch-break and were well satisfied with what they saw. Bishop Kallistos offered a prayer beside the grave.

The stonework on the grave will be cleaned each year in the spring.

The Image of the City

As is the way of such things, the republication of *The Image of the City* has been delayed by a technical hitch. It will probably be available in September.

Inklings Weekend

We have received notification of the following event that may be of interest to members.

Faith, Faërie & Fantasy: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien & Charles Williams
Weekend course led by Ian Russell Lowell.

5-7 September 2003
Knuston Hall, Irchester, Northants. NN29 7EU
Tel.: 01933 312104 / Fax.: 01933 357596
E-mail: enquiries@knustonhall.org.uk
Website: www.knustonhall.org.uk

Joint Meeting

We have been invited to collaborate in a joint meeting with the George MacDonald Society. The theme for the day will probably be Lilith in the works of our respective authors and Saturday 30 October 2004 has been suggested as a possible date. Further details will be announced as they become finalized.

New Member

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of the Charles Williams Society:

Anthony and Szezana Fuller, St Georges Crescent, Aycliffe, Dover, Kent DA13 9EH

Charles Williams Society Meetings

- **Saturday 25 October 2003**
  The Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place at 12.30 pm and Revd. Dr. Richard Sturch will speak on 'Ideas about Imagery' at 2.30 pm in the Church Room, St Matthews Church, St Petersburgh Place, Bayswater, London W2 at 2.30 pm.

- **Saturday 21 February 2004**
  In the Church Room, St Matthews Church, St Petersburgh Place, Bayswater, London W2 at 2.30 pm. Speaker to be announced.

- **Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June 2004**
  Society Conference at The Royal Foundation of St. Katherine, London E14.

- **Saturday 30 October 2004**
  Venue and details to be announced.

THE ALL DAY MEETING OF THE SOCIETY ON 21 JUNE 2003 AT PUSEY HOUSE.

The sun shone pleasantly upon Oxford and the day was full of promise that only the vagaries of the railway network can mar, as Eileen Mable discovered.

We congregated at Pusey House and chatted over coffee until, at 11.15, Bishop Kallistos began his talk on *Heaven and Hell in Charles Williams*. The bishop cut an imposing and authoritative figure, and spoke eloquently and warmly. On a personal note, the first part of his talk concerned his own introduction to CW, while at school, and he told us how, while he should have been reading Aristophanes – which was open on his desk at the back of the class – he read *Many Dimensions* (or one of the other novels) – which was on his lap.

The nature of hell being one of separation and of exchange denied was explored, with particular reference to the experience of Wentworth in *Descent into Hell*. This was contrasted with Sartre's opinion of hell being other people. It was also noted, again with reference to Wentworth, that hell is a place with the door locked on the inside, its inhabitants freely choosing to remain. This must be allowed, given that we have free will and so must ourselves choose between heaven and hell. It opens the possibility that hell is, therefore, empty or will ultimately be so. Heaven, as is often the case, got less of a look in being so much more difficult to convey as an exciting place or state of being, unless, perhaps, one adopts the old notion of the blessed enjoying the view over the parapet of the damned being tortured below.

At the lunch break we split up, some going to visit the Williams' grave and inspect the newly laid slab, others immediately adjourning to the pub. A fugitive whiff of hell was afforded to those who arrived at The Eagle and Child only to find it closed. However, the day was redeemed in the pleasant and somewhat more spacious Lamb and Flag on the other side of Saint Giles.

In the afternoon Stephen Medcalf read the true story, published last Christmas in *The Guardian Review*, of how he found a 3 hour old child abandoned in a phone box late at night. The crux of the story and the discussion that followed it was the working of divine providence. As Stephen indicated, if one denies the intervention of providence then the life of that child depended upon so many contingencies and accidents during the preceding day that contemplation of the staggering improbability of them all occurring opens up a terrifying abyss. The question arose as to whether, and to what extent, we could consciously open ourselves to be willing agents of providence.

Finally there was, as promised, a good tea. Our thanks go to Brenda Boughton and Lepel Kornicka for organizing a very fine spread that rounded the day off splendidly.

As intended, the more leisurely format of the day made it a great success, which everyone present enjoyed.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The following piece by Stephen Barber resulted as a by-product of his research into the Taliessin poems. When submitted it was intended by its author that it should form a separate supplement to the Newsletter. In that way it could be placed where it belongs: with members' copies of Charles Williams's poems.

To facilitate this I have arranged the pagination of this issue so that those who wish to do so may conveniently extract it.

PEOPLE AND PLACES IN THE TALIESSIN POEMS: A REGISTER AND GAZETTEER

By Stephen Barber.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The aim of these lists is to supply the background information assumed by the poems, but not to repeat what is in them. They are intended to be comprehensive for named people and places. The notes give only what is relevant to the poems. Sometimes this means stating the obvious, but this implies that the obvious meaning is the right one; of course I could be mistaken. The sources of this information are variously: general reference works; works in and on the Arthurian tradition in general, and in particular the *Mabinogion*[1] and Malory[2]; commentaries on Williams. Passages taken or adapted from Williams's own notes and other comments on the poems are in quotation marks without attribution; these sometimes give details not incorporated into poems, and are subject to the usual warning about poets interpreting themselves. They come from a variety of sources: the end-notes to *Taliessin through Logres*, the *Preface* to *The Region of the Summer Stars*; *The Figure of Arthur*[3]; essays and notes collected in *The Image of the City*; Williams's *Notes for C. S. Lewis*; and the oral explanations recorded by his friends, notably Lewis and Alice Mary Hadfield; and the *Notes* published by the Charles Williams Society. Although strictly speaking these enjoy descending levels of authority, in practice it seems simplest to run them together. A full annotated edition of the poems would identify every source separately but that seems unnecessarily elaborate for this purpose. Passages from Williams's other books are separately identified[4].

[1]Williams used Lady Charlotte Guest's translation, first published 1849, and frequently reprinted. I used the old Everyman edition of this (Dent, 1906). Guest includes one story, 'Taliesin', not included in more recent versions; Williams also drew on Guest's extensive notes.

[2]Williams read Malory in editions based on Caxton's text, with Caxton's chapter divisions and title *Le Morte Darthur*. Editions based on the Winchester manuscript and titled *The Works of Thomas Malory* were not published until after his death.

[3]Williams's book is referred to as FA; references to Lewis's commentary are noted as AT.

[4]Note the abbreviations DD for *The Descent of the Dove*, London (Faber), 1950 (first published Longmans 1939) and FB for *The Figure of Beatrice*, London (Faber), 1943.

PEOPLE IN THE TALIESSIN POEMS: A REGISTER OF NAMES

This is intended to be comprehensive for named people, but slaves and others whose names are not given, notably the Prophet of Islam, and the headless emperor of P'o-l'u, are not listed. Family relationships and other points assumed by the poems are given according to the Arthurian tradition in general and Malory in particular. A general comment by Williams is also helpful: 'The knights are capacities of man and modes of being (but also knights).'

Adam	by 'the Adam' Williams refers to both Adam and Eve.
Agravaine	third son of Lot and Morgause; with his brother Gawaine he exposes Lancelot's relationship with Guinevere and also murders Morgause and Lamorack.
Ala-ud-Din	a common name for rulers in various parts of Asia.
Archimedes	Greek mathematician and scientist of the third century B.C., particularly influential on Arabic work
Arthur	'Man loving himself and hating himself. The fatality, the curse, the result of the Dolorous Blow, has to work itself out through the King;' 'Arthur unknowingly committed incest with his sister Morgause, who became by him the mother of Mordred'.
Augustus	following the battle of Actium in 31 B.C Octavian became master of the Roman world, with the name of emperor; he took the title Augustus in 27 B.C.. He was responsible for commissioning the *Aeneid* from Virgil.
Balan	Balin's younger brother.
Balin	knight of the two swords; 'after the dolorous blow struck against King Pelles in Carbonek by Balin the Savage, Balin and Balan his brother killed each other unknowingly.'
Bedivere	brother to Kay; one of Arthur's original companions and also the last remaining

	following the last battle; he was charged with flinging the sword Excalibur into the lake.
Blanchefleur	Percivale's sister and a princess; the pre-eminent example in the poems of substitution in Williams's sense; 'Blanchefleur died from a letting of blood to heal a sick lady' (Malory XVII. 11); in *The Region* she is known as Dindrane and Williams says she 'was called Blanchfleur [*sic*] in religion' ('The Calling of Taliessin' 376; cf. Lewis in *AT* 138)[1].
Bors	'the nephew of Lancelot and the companion of Galahad and Percivale' [in achieving the Grail]; 'the ordinary man, married, with children, the King's servant. But he is also the spiritual intellect concerned, as it must be, with earthly things.'
Brisen	daughter of Nimue; Space; Helayne's nurse.
Catullus	Roman poet, *floruit* 61-54 B.C.; rejected lover of Lesbia.
Ceridwen	Taliessin's mother; goddess of nature in Welsh mythology; she was preparing a cauldron of inspiration; her servant Gwion of Bach tasted three drops which gave him the ability to foretell the future; after a shape-changing pursuit she swallowed him but later he was reborn from her; she wrapped the infant in a leathern bag or coracle and cast him into the sea.
Charon	guardian of the underworld and ferryman of the dead in classical mythology (e.g. *Aeneid*, VI. 298ff.) and also in Dante's *Inferno*, III. 83ff..
Circe	in classical mythology Circe was a witch who turned her visitors into animals until overcome by Odysseus (Homer, *Odyssey*, X); her son is the enchanter Comus (revelry) who appears in Milton.
Coelius Vibenna	'a leader of the Etruscans when they once occupied Rome. They were said to be great

	in black magic; hence 'Etruscan spells'.'
Cradlemas	king of London before Arthur.
Cymodocea	one of the Nereids, the fifty sea-nymphs who were daughters of Nereus, mentioned in *Aeneid* V. 826. Her name means 'wave-receiver', or, as Hesiod puts it: she 'easily calms the waves upon the misty seas and the blasts of raging winds' (*Theogony*, 252, Loeb edition).
Deodatus	Pope; historically there were two popes named Adeodatus in the relevant period, but this pope is Williams's invention.
Dinadan	'Dinadan realizes that loss may be a greater possession than having; and Palomides, who would be incapable of believing believingly believes unbelievingly, by means of that more-than-irony.'
Dindrane	alternative name for Blanchefleur.
Dubric	archbishop of Caerleon and primate of England.
Elayne	Bors's wife; 'nor is it by chance that the name of Bors's wife in Malory is that of the Grail-princess without the rough breathing: Elayne and Helayne'.
Emperor	ruler of the empire from Byzantium; 'operative providence'; 'God-in-operation or God-as-known-by-man; Fate; operative force – as and according to the person concerned, but mostly here the God relation'; 'in the East there appeared the succession of almost pontiff-emperors in the new Rome' (DD, 74).
Elphin	he rescued the infant cast away by Ceridwen, named him Taliessin and cared for him.
Euclid	Greek mathematician of around 300 B.C. whose *Elements* was studied by the Arabs and remained a fundamental texbook of geometry into the modern era.
Galahad	son of Lancelot by Helayne; 'man's capacity for Christ, or – to avoid dogma – let us say, for divine things'; 'that in the

	human soul which finds Christ'; 'Arthur and Guinevere and Lancelot have all been talking about love, and this is the result, as it always is. We get Galahad instead of what we wanted'; 'He is flesh and blood in the union with the Flesh and the Blood' (DD, 117); also referred to as Merciful Childe, High Prince and Infant.
Gareth	fourth son of Lot and Morgause; he came to Arthur's court in disguise and was set to work in the kitchen.
Garlon	brother of Pelles; king of Castle Mortal; 'it was through the quarrel with him that Balin the Savage came to strike the dolorous blow at Pelles' with the sacred Lance; 'the Invisible Knight – who is Satan to us but the Holy Ghost to the supernatural powers'; appears unnamed in 'Taliessin at Lancelot's Mass', 23, and is identified in Williams's end note.
Gawaine	eldest son of Lot and Morgause; 'the kind of man who is very keen on the honour of his house and his own honour and proper dignity. He is a charming creature, so long as everyone looks up to him and gives way to him'; 'worldly honour run mad'; with his brother Agravaine he exposes Lancelot's relationship with Guinevere and also murders Morgause and Lamorack.
Guinevere	Arthur's queen; 'Arthur at first just thinks Guinevere would be a convenient adjunct of his royalty'.
Gwyddno	father of Elphin.
Helayne	daughter of Pelles and mother of Galahad by Lancelot; 'Galahad's mother who knew no images has to be subordinated to Lancelot, and Lancelot who was devoted to an image has to be cheated of it; and so a kind of grand substitution is worked out in the dark chamber – each becoming either on that plane, as the Seed is worked out on another'; 'mother of achievement'.

Henwg	reputed father of Taliessin in versions given in notes to Guest's *Mabinogion*.
Heracleitus	Greek philosopher of the pre-Socratic period (around 500 B.C.), famous for his obscurity.
Iseult	wife of Mark and lover of Tristram.
John	John saw *Revelation* on the island of Patmos.
Julius Cæsar	his two expeditions to Britain were in 55 and 54 B.C..
Kay	Arthur's steward; brother to Bedivere.
Lamorack	'brother of Percivale and Blanchefleur. He was the lover of the queen Morgause of Orkney, Arthur's sister. The two were killed by her sons, Gawaine and Agravaine, for the honour of the house of Orkney'; 'Lamorack's love affair is more a matter of terrible fate than Lancelot's'.
Lancelot	friend of Arthur; lover of Guinevere; 'eighth in succession from Christ (8 is the number of the Christhood), and of his blood; the strongest and greatest knight alive (person as distinguished from office); much more than Arthur concerned with love as a thing of dolour and labour and vision'. 'It is he who is mostly concerned with choosing necessity (which is the subject of all great poetry'.
Lesbia	Catullus's love.
Levi	among the Israelites the tribe of priests; in 'The Death of Palomides', Kabbalists.
Lleon of Lochlin	Guest's Taliesin says: 'I have been bard of the harp to Lleon of Lochlin' (*Mabinogion*, 274); Williams makes Taliessin a fighting man as well as a poet.
Lot	king of Orkney, husband of Morgause.
Manes	alternative form of Mani (216-276 A.D.), a Babylonian prophet; he preached a dualistic religion known as Manichaeism which Williams, following western tradit-ion, treats as a heretical form of Christianity; it had reached Spain by the

	fourth century; 'The new heresy of Manichaeism which was intruding from the East might indeed exclude matter and the world from its consideration. But the orthodox Faith, based on the union of very matter with very deity, could not do so' (DD, 45).
Mark	king of Cornwall, husband of Iseult and uncle of Tristram.
Mars	Roman god of war.
Mary-in-blessing	Virgin Mary.
Mary Magdalene	traditionally identified with the unnamed woman who anointed Christ's feet in *Luke* VII.
Merlin	magician who watches over Arthur's early life; son of Nimue; 'time and the high prophetic intelligence of the world 'brooding on things to come'.'
Mordred	son of Arthur and Morgause by incest who later led a rebellion against his father; 'entire egotism, Arthur's self-attention carried to the final degree.'
Morgause	Arthur's half-sister; wife of Lot of Orkney; mother of Gawaine, Gaheris, Agravaine, Gareth, and also by incest of Mordred; lover of Lamorack; later killed by Gaheris.
Nero	fifth Roman emperor; ruled 54-68 A.D..
Nestorius	patriarch of Constantinople (Byzantium) and heretic (fourth century); he 'declared that there were in Christ two beings united by a moral union and not one divine Person' (*Descent of the Dove*, 70); he also denied that the Virgin Mary was *theotokos* (mother of God) and *anthropotokos* (mother of man); his teaching was condemned at the Council of Ephesus, 431.
Nimue	'Nimue is holy undefiled Nature – Creation outside man'; 'the Nature of Creation as the mother of Merlin (Time) and Brisen (Space); the source of movement and distance. She is almost the same state represented by the Emperor's Court, but more

	vast, dim, and aboriginal;' 'mother of making'; Merlin and Brisen are twins: 'children of some high parthenogenetical birth of Nimue in Broceliande'.
Palomides	Saracen prince who joins Arthur's court; 'the knight who begins by believing in good and evil almost (as so many do) as two separate origins and powers. He is, like most of us, a dualist. He then becomes a Mahommedan and believes in one control. He then becomes a Christian and believes in reconciliation, transmutation, and Unity. Also he is especially man combating and overcoming sex (the Blatant Beast). He is in some sense an image and shadow of Galahad, for it is significant that he is baptized (after his conquest) on the day when Galahad comes to the King's hall.'
Paul	St Paul; his visit to Athens is recorded in *Acts* XVII.23; obliquely referred to in *Prelude* to *The Region*, 12; the cathedral in London is dedicated to him.
Pelles	king of Carbonek; keeper of the Grail and other hallows, notably the sacred spear or lance; the Wounded King; victim of the Dolorous Blow.
Pendragon	a title meaning a chief leader from *pen* (head) and *dragwn* (dragon, leader).
Percivale	brother of Blanchefleur; 'at once Taliessin in his highest degree, and a virginal lover (because he and Blanchefleur have no time for anything else); but also the spiritual intellect concerned with the significance of things and with the Quest'; 'the imagination of the other [world] and of the universe; he is the brother of Blanchefleur =substitution'.
Pheilippides	messenger who brought the news of the victory at Marathon to Athens and who died of exhaustion after doing so. (Pheidippides, who sought help by the Athenians from the Spartans before the bat-

	tle, was later identified with this man, but Williams's spelling was an accepted variant.)
Phœbus	Apollo's title as sun-god (*phoibos* means radiant); Apollo was the god of music and poetry.
Rhea Silvia	Roman vestal virgin (priestess), descendant of Aeneas, raped by the god Mars and mother of the twins Romulus and Remus; she was imprisoned and they were exposed but saved by being suckled by a wolf; Romulus later became founder of Rome (*Aeneid* I. 275 and VII. 659).
Solomon	Israelite king.
Stephen	first martyr and dedicatee of the cathedral in Camelot.
Talaat ibn Kula	either Williams's invention or a free rendering of Thabit ibn Qurrah, an Arabic mathematician (836-901) who translated Greek mathematical works.
Taliessin	Arthur's poet; the name means Radiant Brow; 'the poetic imagination in this world'; Williams followed Tennyson[2] in spelling him with a second 's'; the historic Taliesin became incorporated into Arthurian legend as the story of 'Taliesin' in Guest's *Mabinogion*.
Tristram	nephew to Mark and lover of Iseult; 'also a great lover, but unlike Lancelot, he is out for his own hand. He is an individualist as against the State. Even his fidelity to Iseult and his leaving Iseult of the White Hands are largely dictated by his own ideas of what he wishes to be. His story is therefore of tragedy and death.'
Tydeg Voel	husband of Ceridwen; his name means 'the bald'.
Virgil	Roman poet (70-19 B.C.); author of the *Aeneid*; exemplar of great poetry; also Dante's guide through hell and purgatory, in which capacity he represents the best of secular wisdom, which, however, can in

	itself take us no further than limbo, despite his having being considered to have foretold Christ in *Eclogue* IV.
Zemarchus	Byzantine ambassador who concluded a silk trade treaty with a Turkish khan, so not primarily a trader.

PLACES IN THE TALIESSIN POEMS: A GAZETTEER

This is intended to be comprehensive, so it includes places with no special symbolic significance, e.g. Alp, Burma, as well as those important in the symbolic geography. Only some of the places (marked with an asterisk) have a function in the organic body on the map, but there are more than the map gives.

Actium	town in Epirus, Greece, near where Octavian (Augustus) decisively defeated Antony and Cleopatra in a sea battle, 31 B.C..
Almesbury	convent of white nuns which Blanchefleur (Dindrane) joins and where Galahad is brought up.
Alp	one of a mountain range in Switzerland and neighbouring countries.
Apennine	Italian mountain range; St Benedict founded twelve monasteries in the hills.
Ararat	resting place of Noah's ark; scene of first act of salvation; God's pledge to man.
Archangel	city on the White Sea in the far north.
Arimathea	town north west of Jerusalem (modern Ramathaim), original home of St. Joseph who begged Christ's body from Pilate and later brought the Holy Grail to Britain (*FA*, 70-2).
Athens	Greek philosophy.
Badon	hill site of battle where Arthur decisively defeated his enemies; variously identified: Williams prefers Liddington Hill near Badbury (*FA*, 8-10).
Broceliande	'south west of Logres; both a forest and a sea; in this sense it joins the sea of the antipodes which lies among its roots; mysti-

	cally the 'making' of things'.
Burma	country most vulnerable to invasion from P'o-l'u.
Byzantium*[3]	capital of the (Christian) Empire; built on the Golden Horn; 'the whole concentration of body and soul rather than any special member; the Throne is the place of eternity'; 'the navel or point of union in the Empire's capital'; 'not life, nor death, but meaning'; 'the central City of the Co-inherent and Incarnate' (DD,92).
Caerleon	'City of the Legions,' on the River Usk, where Archbishop Dubric crowned Arthur.
Camelot	Arthur's capital (identified by Malory with Winchester); 'place of the King's court and administration of man's daily life and work; the seat of life without direct revelation of joy, therefore of love in loss'.
Canterbury	see of the primate of England, though Dubric's cathedral is at Caerleon.
Cappadocia	province of Asia Minor, named in the New Testament, later the origin of the Cappadocian Fathers, of whom St Basil the Great established the monastic rule for the church in the east.
Carbonek	seat of King Pelles, the Wounded King; in Broceliande; 'castle of the Hallows; there are in its chapel the Grail and the Spear'; 'the seat of dedication, of the Church, of the attempt to know goodness more directly than through work or home or art, the seat of the Hallows and direct communication'.
Caspian	inland sea east of Caucasus.
Caucasia	mountainous region between the Black and Caspian Sea; 'buttocks; basic senses; direct sex; village society'; 'natural, uncomplicated joy and beauty, the basic manual work of the world, essential balance in the body and in all thought and life'.
Cordova	capital of Islamic Spain.
Cornwall	kingdom of Mark.

Danube	the river marks the northern boundary of the Roman Empire.
Egypt	incorporated in the Empire after the battle of Actium; origin of Christian monasticism: 'The great and sacred labour in the imperial palace was balanced by the sacred and ascetic labour of the solitaries' (DD, 54).
Elburz*	Caucasian mountain (strictly the whole range) south of the Caspian Sea, whose peak is above the snow line but with forest at the foot; 'a Caucasian mountain; the grand type of the mingled lowness and height, fertility and chastity, verdure and snow of the visible body. It was also Prometheus' mountain; the bringing of fire for every purpose.'
Empire*	Christian Roman Empire with capital at Byzantium (Constantinople); 'all creation; unfallen man; a proper social order; the true physical body; the Empire is the pattern; Logres the experiment'; 'the frontier lay, uncertain and vibrating, south of the Pyrenees, along the coast of Africa, up the coast of Asia, inward around Asia Minor . . . and along the Caucasus to the Persian Sea' (DD, 92).
Gaul*	Roman province, larger than modern France and extending to the Rhine; 'fruitfulness; breasts; traditional organization; scholastic debates and doctrines; theology'.
Golden Horn*	site of Byzantium on the Bosphorus.
India	country next at risk from P'o-l'u after Burma.
Isle of the Sea	Britain.
Ispahan*	city of Persia (modern Esfahan); rectum; place of ejection; Moslem rejection of matter as holy; dualism; it became the Persian capital and a famous and beautiful city but not until the seventeenth cen-

	tury.
Jerusalem*	capital of the Holy Land; site of Christ's passion; the genitals; 'the womb, the origin of the Christian faith'.
Jura	mountain range and region of eastern France (Gaul).
Lateran*	basilica of the Pope on the Coelian hill in Rome; 'the Mother and Mistress of all churches' (DD, 190).
Logres*	King Arthur's Land (Welsh *Lloegr*); Britain regarded as a province (theme) of the Empire, awaiting the coming of the Grail; 'the head, or conscious direction and intelligence'. (The poems presume that Arthur regained Britain for the Empire, cf. *FA*, 83, but moved the capital to Camelot.)
Logres-in-the-Empire	Arthurian Britain fulfilling its proper function.
Lombardy	region of northern Italy; an independent kingdom in the sixth century A.D..
London	provincial capital in Roman times.
London-in-Logres	capital of Britain as Logres so Camelot ('Taliessin in the School of the Poets'1, and Lewis, *AT*, 197); manifestation of the City.
Lupercal*	cave of the she-wolf who suckled Romulus and Remus, at the foot of the Palatine hill in Rome, where the fertility festival known as Lupercalia was later celebrated (*Aeneid*, VIII. 343; Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, opening scenes).
Lutetia	Paris.
Marathon	site of the decisive battle at which the Athenians defeated the Persians in 490 B.C.
Mecca*	holiest of Moslem cities; given in the map but not mentioned in the poems.
Monsalvat	legendary castle in Spain.
Mons Coelia*	hill in Rome on which stands the Lateran, named from the Etruscan Cœlius Vibenna.
Monte Cassino	monastery between Rome and Naples founded in 529 by St. Benedict whose rule

	has dominated Western monasticism.
Nazareth	Christ's childhood home.
Narrow Seas	English Channel (DD, 47).
Omsk	Russian city, chosen for its remoteness.
Orkney	skull-stone, seat of Lot and Morgause.
Persia	home of Zoroastrianism, a dualistic religion.
P'o-l'u[4]	antipodean Byzantium, the 'opposite and infernal state'; 'Chinese name, of about the period, for the point of Java – the extreme point (nobody knew New Zealand then); the vision [of the Empire] reversed'; the desired opposite of every effort towards glory.
Portius Iccus	slip for Portus Iccius, modern Boulogne, from where Caesar sailed for Britain (*Bell. Gall*. 5. 2 and 5). The text should be emended.
Pyrenees*	mountain range dividing Moslem Spain from the Christian Empire.
Palatine*	the principal of the seven hills of Rome.
Rhine*	the river was the original boundary of Roman Gaul.
Rome*	paganism; law; empire; the hands; as seat of the Pope reference is usually to Lateran.
Sarras	island of the Trinity; also a city: 'the divine city'; 'beyond the seas of Broceliande'; everywhere by achievement and so not marked on the map.
Sinai	scene of the first law (the ten commandments) and promises.
Snowdon	mountain in Wales; setting of climax of Wordsworth's *Prelude,* XIV (1850 text).
Sophia*	Justinian's great church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Constantinople (Byzantium).
Tabennisi	site of the first monastery, north of Thebes in Egypt, founded by St. Pachomius in 320 (DD, 54).
Thames	river of London.
Thebaid	upper part of the Nile valley, named after

	its capital at Thebes and noted for the emergence of Christian monasticism in the third century. See Egypt.
Third Heaven	heaven of Venus (Dante, *Paradiso*, VIII); divine love.
Thule*	legendary island considered to mark the farthest point north.
Trebizond*	city on the Black Sea marking the boundary between Christian and Moslem Europe.
Verulam	St Alban's.
Vistula	Polish river and an important trade route.
Wales	Percivale's duchy.
Wye	river and valley in Wales where Taliessin grew up; also the location of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*.

[1]Williams's spelling is not consistent: it is Blanchefleur in *Taliessin through Logres* (seven occurrences), also in *The Image of the City*, 179; it is Blanchfleur once in *The Region of the Summer Stars*, as noted, and five times in the posthumous *Figure of Arthur*. The earlier form seems the better attested and also the more logical: the name derives from Chrétien's Blancheflor.

[2]'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song', 'The Holy Grail', 300.

[3]Strictly speaking, the name Byzantium is an anachronism, as the city was called Constantinople from 330, when Constantine inaugurated his new capital, to the Turkish conquest of 1453, as Williams would have known from Gibbon. But Byzantium, as well as being 'surely one of the most magically resonant place-names in all history' (John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium*) is easier for verse, and had become established in the nineteenth century for the city and Byzantine for the later eastern empire. Williams decided to use the name Byzantium before reading Yeats's two Byzantium poems (*Image of the City*, 181).

[4]Williams's spelling is not consistent: in *Taliessin through Logres* he gives it as P'o-lu twice and P'o-Lu once; in *The Region* it occurs five times as P'o-l'u; it is also P'o-l'u in the non-Arthurian *The House of the Octopus*; his Notes have P'o-Lu. I have listed the more commonly used form, which is also the later one.

Four Christian Fantasists: A Study of the Fantastic Writings of George MacDonald, Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien.

By Richard Sturch. Zurich and Berne, Walking Tree publishers. £11.00

Reviewed by Stephen Barber

Sturch begins by distinguishing fantasy fiction from science fiction, and then picks out these writers as specifically Christian fantasists. What they also have in common is a link with Lewis: three of them were his friends, and MacDonald was his mentor, both as a Christian teacher and as a creator of myth. Sturch does not deal with their theological ideas directly, nor is he concerned with the literary value of their works: his aim is to explore the common elements in their writing. I shall concentrate on what he says about Williams.

Unlike the others, Williams sets his novels in our world, with the partial exception of *All Hallows' Eve*. He does introduce symbolic figures into his plays, such as the Skeleton in *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury* and the Accuser in *Judgement at Chelmsford*, who may be summed up as representing Necessity, who is not God, but a method of God's working. They seem at first to be sinister but turn out to be agents of good - a concept characteristic of Williams. Prester John in *War in Heaven* is a similar figure. But in his novels Williams prefers to bring things into this world from beyond it, of angelical, magical or divine origin. In *The Place of the Lion* these are the angelicals: the Platonic archetypes of strength, beauty, subtlety and intellect as embodied in the Lion, Butterfly, Serpent and Eagle. Being from out of this world, their manifestation tends to this world's destruction, until they are returned to their proper place by the hero, Anthony Durrant, asserting the power of Adam over the beasts. The angelicals represent powers: the human characters who wish to use them get destroyed; the proper response is to adore them or restore them.

This kind of writing is not allegory, though it is often wrongly called so. Williams did occasionally write allegories, as in some of his plays. But he tends to

prefer what Sturch calls Personifications, who are people who, while remaining human beings, represent particular qualities. The characters in the Taliessin poems are of this kind, and Williams said of them: 'The knights are capacities of man and modes of being (but also knights).' So Arthur is 'Man loving himself and hating himself' and Taliessin is 'the poetic imagination in this world' (my examples, rather than Sturch's). A third stage is that of the Image, for which Williams paraphrases Coleridge to say '(i) it must exist in itself, (ii) it must derive from something greater than itself, (iii) it must represent in itself that greatness from which it derives'. Examples are the idea of straightness in 'The Departure of Dindrane' and others of the poems, and several of the symbols in the novels can be seen in this way, such as the cup of the Last Supper in *War in Heaven*, the stone in the crown of Solomon in *Many Dimensions*, and the ideas of sorcery in *All Hallows' Eve*. The most developed example is that of the Tarots in *The Greater Trumps*, both the golden figures as a whole, their dance, and some of the individual cards or figures, notably the Fool.

The next stage of symbolism is Myth. Lewis considered that the power of myths does not necessarily lie in any particular literary version - he instances Balder the Beautiful - but in the story itself. This is a view close to that of Jung or Northrop Frye, that these stories, or elements of them, embody archetypes of the imagination and that both literary works and popular fiction derive their power from this source. Sturch considers that we do not find Myth in this sense in Williams: 'He remains too much in control of his images; he is thinking about them too much, and we are aware of this. Myths, I suspect, are not made in the intellect, even in an intellect as unconventional as was Williams's.'

The final stage of symbolism is that of the sacraments. He cites a poem by Williams in which, unable to attend church, he makes the sign of the cross above his wife's breakfast. More generally, he was, of course, an exponent of the Way of the Affirmation of Images, set out in his prose and also in the last dialogue between Durrant and Richardson in *The Place of the Lion*. The difference between the church's sacraments, such as the Lord's Supper, and, say, Beatrice, is that the former 'is a means of union as well as of understanding.' 'The sacraments, like the Incarnation itself, are creations within the creation, with their own particular powers. They are not things the fantasist can use as he will; he can at best de-

scribe them in action.'

Williams's ideas of coinherence, substitution and exchange appear in the novels, for example with Damaris Tighe in *The Place of the Lion* and Pauline Anstruther in *Descent into Hell*. Temptation and choice were always important issues, very clearly with Wentworth in *Descent into Hell*, who has three opportunities and each time chooses wrongly: when a rival historian is knighted, when a girl prefers someone else, and when he relinquishes his professional integrity in a matter of the correctness of some military uniforms. (This last corresponds to the point at which Virgil rescues Dante.) Power is a recurrent theme, with *War in Heaven* providing the most complex example, because the Holy Graal, the instrument of power, is sought for so many reasons.

In his last chapter Sturch introduces Rudolf Otto's account of the numinous, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which can be evoked by fearful or horrible images for the *tremendum* and magical or miraculous ones for the *fascinans*. Williams made a good deal of use of both of these: the Lion and the other angelicals in *The Place of the Lion* are clear examples. Other sources of the numinous include the uncomprehended, both in language and in symbols: consider the almost systematic elusiveness of the Fool in *The Greater Trumps*, the City, the rain, the rose in *All Hallows' Eve*, and much of *Descent into Hell*.

I could wish that Sturch had pushed his theoretical discussion further, in particular linking up his discussion of allegory and symbolism with that of Lewis and other literary critics. And I think he is wrong about the way the allegory works in the *Inferno*. But there are more insights than I have been able to quote, and readers of Williams will find much to interest them here, and more if they also read his other Christian fantasists.

As this book is not published in the UK, it is worth noting that it is available from Daerons Books in Milton Keynes (01908 266199, or on the web).

Letters to the Editor

Looking into the Abyss

Dear Mr. Gauntlett,

Recently I have been at an International Literary Conference in Polotsk, Belorus, where I gave a talk on the interpretation of Biblical history in Charles Williams's play *Seed of Adam*. When I finished my lecture I got many good questions, but I was taken aback by one of them. A young post-graduate student asked me whether I am not afraid of looking into the abyss together with the author I study. I was greatly surprised by her remark. Then she has clarified her idea and added that she never knew Charles Williams was a Christian dramatist and poet, familiar with T.S. Eliot and D.L. Sayers; on the contrary, she thought he was a dark master of several supernatural thrillers and occultist.

On the one hand, I was glad to have represented another facet of Williams's talent to my public, but, on the other hand, this reaction to Williams's novels was quite understandable for me. Two of them, *War in Heaven* and *Many Dimensions,* have been recently reprinted together under one cover in a horror literature series. Now they are put onto the shelves of our bookshops along with H.P. Lovecraft and other 'masters of horror'. The cover of this book is white with stains of blood on it. Naturally and unavoidably, such an unpleasant cover and the author, hidden under it, can hardly arouse any positive emotions in a reader who prefers Christian fiction, say, in C.S. Lewis's vein. And it is not merely a book publishing problem, but a problem of understanding, interpretation, and representation of the writer. (Arthur Machen, for instance, who has been translated into Russian, was represented in a pretty attractive (for many readers) Celtic style; C.S. Lewis's works have been published in 8 volumes with good academic commentaries.)

As is seen from the current publications in The CW Society Newsletter, Williams has enormous relevance today. We can read him in the terms of Christianity, esoterism, or even economics and everyone will find in his writings something close to their own interests. Williams's texts are multilayered and, therefore, they can be read in various ways. And this is a trap, especially for foreign readers ac-

quainted with Williams's works (four novels in my case) only in translation. (There is no need to remind how much depends here upon an interpreter.) As a result, we have a disoriented reader, lost in a maze with an unknown author, where Ariadne's thread turns into a tightrope and our poor reader becomes a rope-walker. There is nothing for it, but to keep balance.

With warm-hearted greetings from Russia,

Olga Markova

King Cradlemas Again

Dear Ed,

I am grateful to Richard Sturch for pointing out (Newsletter #105 p 22) that Williams used the form Cradlemas both before and after 'The Calling of Arthur'. I have come across another piece of evidence that strengthens the case for retaining this form of the name. Although Malory uses the form Cradelment in I. xiv, two chapters earlier, at I.xii, he used the form Cradelmas (*sic*, Caxton's text edited Pollard), presumably for the same character. This must surely have been what stuck in Williams's mind, though it is curious that neither Lewis nor he remembered it when Lewis queried it. Perhaps Williams remembered of felt that he must have had some reason for using this form, which is why he did not ask Lewis to change it.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Barber

AN APPEAL FROM THE EDITOR

The next issue of the Newsletter is due in September. This will contain details of the next meeting, which is the Annual General Meeting taking place in October.

However, as things stand at present it will not contain any articles, because there is nothing in stock.

I would, therefore, like to appeal to members to submit pieces for consideration. The issue will be sent for printing during the last week of August at the latest, so any submissions should be sent as early as possible.

Thank you.

Edward Gauntlett.

Editorial Policy

The Charles Williams Society's Newsletter and Web site have two functions. Firstly, to publish material about the life and work of Charles Williams. Secondly, to publish details of the activities of the Society.

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. If you wish to submit a contribution, please take note of the following:

- Submissions should be sent to the Editor, preferably on floppy disc; otherwise by email attachment to: Edward.Gauntlett@down21.freeuk.com.
- Submissions on paper should be typed double spaced and single-sided.
- All quotations should be clearly referenced, and a list of sources included.
- Submissions of just a few hundred words may be hand written.
- The Editor reserves the right to decide whether to publish a submission. Usually the main article in any issue will be a paper previously read before the Society; in most cases such papers will be published as received, with little or no editorial input. Other submissions may be edited.

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