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The
**Charles
Williams**
Quarterly



No. 120

Autumn 2006

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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 magazine and may attend the Society's meetings which are held twice 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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Reading groups

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



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From the Editor

I have finally got around to printing Stephen Medcalf's paper, given at the October 2005 conference, on Owen Barfield and Charles Williams. I mention this here because at one point Stephen departed from his script to provide an *ad lib* elaboration on his reference to the 'two Jesus boys' myth. In going through the tape recording of the talk I thought that this should be included, but with a qualification. Therefore, as this part wasn't necessarily fully thought through, I have enclosed the paragraph in square brackets. Stephen has also added a short post-script to the paper.

For this autumn's day conference we shall be trying out a new central London venue and the day promises to be an interesting one on a relatively unexplored aspect of CW's work. Please do come along if you can.

Edward Gauntlett.

Society News & Notes

New Member

We extend a warm (though unfortunately belated) welcome to the following new member of the society:

John Knowles
6 Copper Beech Close, Dunnington,
York, YO19 5PY

Library Notes

The bequest of the late Anne Scott to the society has now been placed in the reference collection in the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford. We are extremely grateful to Anne's son, Andrew Plasom Scott for making the necessary arrangements for its transportation from his house in Cumbria to Oxford.

There are some very interesting items. Among the sixteen books there are some of the early collections of verse: *Divorce*, *Poems of Conformity* and *Windows of Night*; all originally belonging to Thelma Shuttleworth. *Collected Plays*, *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury*, *The Image of the City*, *Taliessin Through Logres*, *Descent of*

the Dove: all first editions. The copy of *Poetry at Present* also belonged to Thelma and, on one of blank pages at the beginning of the book, there is written a poem in Charles Williams's own handwriting entitled 'Of Love for TM 1929'. It begins: 'Invisible master of our days and nights'. One of the curiosities is: 'Modern Verse for Little Children' Chosen by Michal Williams'. There are two typescripts of talks on Charles Williams that were given by Anne herself: 'The background Thought of the Taliessin poems' and 'Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis : friend of friends'. A few, very fragile letters in Charles Williams's handwriting dating from 1941; typescripts of two Taliessin poems and a few occasional verses. There is a collection of letters between CW and Victor Gollancz, mostly about the publication of *Shadows of Ecstasy*, a review of *The Screwtape Letters* by CW for *Time and Tide* in 1942 under the pseudonym 'Snignozzle' and a number of photographs and sketches by Anne Spalding of friends. In addition something I have not seen before: a collection of assessments of CW in a supplement to *The Periodical* in July 1945.

We have also been presented with a copy of 'Issues (problems) in the His-

tory of Literature No 19 by Dr. Olga Markova. It is a Russian publication and contains her own translation of Charles Williams's amusing essay on his own work called 'Autocriticism' published originally in *Week End Review*, Nov 18, 1933.

As always we are extremely grateful to the Centre and especially Dr. Nicholas Crowe who looks after the collection. Both he and Dr John Feneley always receive anything to do with the society with the greatest courtesy and helpfulness and they would be delighted to welcome members to the Centre to use the collection; the only stipulation being that they get in touch with the Centre to let them know when they are coming so that a convenient time can be arranged.

Olga Makova

The society would like to extend its warmest congratulations to Olga Markova for being awarded a Doctorate in Literature and Philology last year in Moscow for her dissertation on 'The Evolution of Charles Williams's Drama'.

Charles Williams Society Meetings

- ◆ **Saturday 14 October 2006** at St Matthews, Gt Peter St, Westminster (quite near Victoria Station). Brian Horne will introduce Charles Williams as a biographer. Susannah Harris Wilson will lead a discussion and readings of Charles Williams's portrait of the Jacobean period. This meeting will incorporate the AGM. See separate notice at the back of this issue for full details.
- ◆ **Saturday 24 March 2007** (Oxford)
- ◆ **Saturday 13 October 2007** (London)

CHARLES WILLIAMS AND OWEN BARFIELD

BY

STEPHEN MEDCALF

I suppose that there are not many gatherings at which one can feel fairly confident that several people present have read the latest issue of the periodical "Seven": but a conference of the Charles Williams Society is certainly one of them. So I should say that although my paper overlaps with Stephen Dunning's with the same title in "Seven" and I owe to him one important thing, the review by Owen Barfield of *Descent into Hell* which I had not previously known of, I start from a quite different angle, cover somewhat different ground, and sometimes disagree with Dunning where we coincide.

My paper will begin with two examples of great similarities between the writings of Barfield and the writings of Williams which do not seem to be the result of influence either way; will offer as the reason for their special shared vision their common starting point in the experience of enjoying poetry, and will end by considering the way in which in their sole reviews of each other - Barfield's of *Descent into Hell* and Williams's of Barfield's *Romanticism comes of Age* - they each seem to be avoiding or misunderstanding the main point of the other. I will say now that each seems to regard the other, as I am more and more struck by each of the four most prolific Inklings - Barfield, Williams, C.S.Lewis and Tolkien - mutually feeling about each of the others, as C.S.Lewis describes Barfield in *Surprised by Joy* as "the Second Friend, the man who disagrees with you about everything. He is not so much the alter ego as the anti-self. Of course he shares your interests; otherwise he would not become your friend at all. But he has approached them all at a different angle."

I should put it rather that both Barfield and Williams seem surprised in their reviews that the other should on some points differ so much, given how much they have in common. But perhaps it is natural in individualists who, in the largely anti-Romantic twentieth century, passionately participated in Romanticism.

To begin, then, with similarity. In Charles Williams's second published novel, *Many Dimensions*, the Mayor of Rich says of Lord Arglay, the Lord Chief Justice, "I was greatly struck by an article of his I once read on the Nature of Law. A little abstract, perhaps, but very interesting; he defined law provisionally as 'the formal expression of increasing communal self-knowledge' and had an excursus comparing the variations in law with the variations in poetic diction from age to age, the aim being to discover the best plastic medium for expression in action."

I suppose that fits into the general themes of the novel, which does present a poetic response to law, and to Lord Arglay's character in relation to the whole pattern. But what is startling about it is that it could be said to sum up Barfield's contribution to *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*: "Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction." I did ask Barfield if he wrote the essay as appropriate for the collection: but he said he did not recollect any connection, and that he did not think that the essay was inspired by the passage in Charles Williams. In fact it seems to have been written earlier for St Catherine's Society at Oxford. And the resemblance worked out in detail is not as great as that of the general thesis. What Barfield argues is that law and language have a double reference to life: both a law and a word have to be fixed, otherwise there is no justice nor possibility of reliable communication. But both have to be capable of extension, otherwise there is no possibility of covering new cases, new facts except by entirely new legislation or the coining of entirely new words. What English common law has done is to extend itself by legal fictions. Barfield gives several examples of this: one will have to suffice. Law grew up on land and consequently prosecutions for, for example, murder were brought in the place where the murder occurred and the circumstances surrounding it were known. A murder that occurred at sea could only be fitted into this framework by deeming that the ship in which it occurred was situated at the first port where it touched land. So for convenience the fiction arose that all men of war were permanently situated - where? Where but in this very area where we are holding our conference, in the parish of Stepney. What makes this close to Lord Arglay's thesis insofar as it concerns law is that the change expressed in the legal fiction will reflect a change in social life - in the case of Stepney and the ships the simple one of the development of travel for trade or pilgrimage, but in other cases discussed by Barfield the nature of a human person in its relation to property and other subtle

matters. This could certainly be described, particularly the latter case, as “the formal expression of increasing self-knowledge” and the discovery of “the best plastic medium for expression in action.”

But a parallel process occurs quickly and intensely in metaphor, or more slowly and elusively in semantic change. To give an example used by Barfield in another book, *History in English Words*, which would touch on Charles Williams’s concerns, there is the word ‘lady’ which began, as etymology tells us, by meaning the provider of food in the household, ‘hlaefdige’, bread kneader (the separate elements survive as ‘loaf’ and ‘dough’), comes to express dominance in the household and elsewhere and finally draws into itself all the psychology, poetry and morals of courtly love and religious devotion, so that we have in the poem “I sing of a maiden” its last verse:

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she
Well may such a lady
God’s mother be.

And you will remember that Charles Williams, a little self-consciously perhaps and, therefore, perhaps in a way more like legislation than like common law, draws together the whole semantic history of the word and makes it the basis of an insight into economics in the way in which Bors sees Elayne in “Bors to Elayne: On the King’s Coins”:

What without coinage or with coinage can be saved?
O lady, your hand held the bread
And Christ the City spread in the extensor muscles of your
thumbs.

I digress a little from my initial comparison between Lord Arglay’s article and Owen Barfield’s – but the digression suggests what common fields of force Barfield and Williams shared, and further how these particular fields of courtly love, symbol and devotion, were intensified by their common friendship with C.S.Lewis and in particular by their common admiration for his book *The Alle-*

gory of Love.

A further element in these fields is that although there seems little likelihood that in the thirties Williams influenced Barfield, Barfield's two books *History in English Words* (1926) and *Poetic Diction* (1928) may well have been known to and have influenced Williams. I think this not so much because of *Many Dimensions* (1931) as because of his third published novel, *The Place of the Lion* (1931). It is possible to extract from this a history of humanity, which closely resembles that given by Barfield implicitly in these two books, and explicitly after Williams's death in *Saving the Appearances* (1957). In the beginning, according to Marcellus Victorinus of Bologna, the nine great qualities: Strength, Subtlety, Speed, Innocence, Balance, Beauty and so forth, existed as they still do as Celestials in the presence of God, and appeared on Earth as animals, especially the Lion, the Serpent, the Horse, the Lamb, the Eagle, the Butterfly, but in fact in all the animals and in a sense throughout creation. "Man" says Marcellus Victorinus "was but dust in their path, so awful and so fierce were they," – "the principles of the tiger and the flaming suns of space" comments Richardson the bookseller to Anthony Durrant. They were understood by Dionysius the Areopagite as the Nine Orders of Angels. But when God created man He gave him the right to dominion over these creatures on Earth. Now we shift myths to *Genesis* and see a vision of Anthony Durrant as Adam knowing and naming "the powers of which he was made." Adam names the beasts. "All music was the scattered echo of that voice, all poetry was the approach of the fallen understanding to that unfallen meaning. All things were named – all but man himself." Adam falls asleep and is divided in sleep into two beings, Adam the male and Eve the female. In the relation, the alterity of the two, is the knowledge of the true name and nature of man, in whose utterance is "the perpetual interchange of love." The principles are then recognised within man, and are increasingly found only there as the external world of nature is dominated, until in the end, we find in a conversation between Anthony Durrant and Mr Tighe, the animals will be found only in zoos and the qualities in their real power will be found only in us. But in the novel, as you will remember, because of the activity of an occultist, theosophist or mystic called Mr Berridge who is training himself to see the Celestials, and because of the accidental irruption onto his meditation of an escaped lioness, the powers, energies or spectres of the Celestials, as they exist in

nature, though not the Celestials themselves as they exist in heaven, become visible, independently of man, and increasingly physical as they draw nature back into themselves. The dissolution of this world is, however, reversed by Anthony Durrant; because of the combination in him of intelligence, friendship and love he is enabled to repeat the achievement of Adam, and at the personal level to rescue his friend Quentin Sabot and to persuade his beloved, Damaris Tighe, to love him.

I do not suppose that Williams took this entirely seriously any more than he took entirely seriously the mythological patterns of his other novels – as is clear from the fact that they are not entirely consistent with each other. Even in *The Greater Trumps*, which is to a large extent a rehandling of the pattern and themes of *The Place of the Lion*, one finds a quite different implied mythical history about the creation of the Tarot pack.

But Barfield presents us throughout his work with a history which he took wholly seriously, partly derived from his own meditation on the nature of language as revealed in the experience of poetry, partly from Rudolf Steiner. Humanity began, according to this history, unindividualised as it gradually descended into the physical universe. Poetry and language were originally spoken through this gradually self-individualising humanity from a nature outside itself. Somewhere in this process, though not identical with it, there occurred a fall. Because of the two processes humanity, as it became individualised, also became separated from nature, and was left only with the separated and abstract intellect, from which in ancient philosophy as it still exists in India there was a possibility of escape, but only by reversing the processes and returning to unindividualised humanity. But with the incarnation of Christ, the descent of the logos into humanity, inspiration, which had previously only been received from external nature, became experienced from within, as had already been prophesied by the Jews in their name for God: I AM. Because of this incarnation we have the power to restore a relation with nature in which, however, we shall not receive our meanings from nature but confer meaning on nature. I AM will create nature through us, as is already beginning to happen, but in the future state perfectly. This state will be that of final as opposed to original participation in the outer world. A disastrous blow was struck by the Church against this development in the tenth canon of the

Council of Constantinople in 869, which the Western Church calls the Eighth Oecumenical Council but which has never been recognised by the Eastern nor indeed by the Anglican Church, which recognises only seven Oecumenical Councils. This “anathematizes all who believe that the spirit is present in the human soul”, and prevents the study and meditation of the Dionysian teaching of the Divine Hierarchies.

At least, that is how Barfield paraphrased it in 1965 in *Unancestral Voice*. I quote it here, along with other matter from his fully presented views, which are unlikely to have been known in that form to Williams, because I do not know whether Barfield in fact influenced the mythical history offered in *The Place of the Lion*, but want to stress how close the two histories are, including their use of the Dionysian pattern of the Nine Orders of Angels, the Nine Bright Shiners, after whom Anne Ridler, perhaps (almost certainly) influenced by Williams, called her second volume of poetry.

I will not further draw out in detail the resemblances between the novelist’s and the anthroposophist’s histories: I hope they have been clear enough. I do want, however, to point out a rather surprising contrast between them: that on one hand Williams’s history is the less Christian, since Barfield explicitly attributes the possibility of redemption to the incarnation in Christ of the Word, while Williams does not explicitly suggest any part played by Christ in what is, in effect, the salvation of the world by Anthony Durrant. On the other hand, ethically Williams’s account is the more fully Christian. Barfield speaks as if the crucial effect of the incarnation was epistemological; and indeed it was the observation that before the time of Christ inspiration was always spoken of as coming from outside, whereas from that time it and more than it is increasingly felt as coming from within, that brought Barfield to belief in Christianity and the Incarnation. As M.H. Abrams puts it in his great book on Romanticism, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, the image of consciousness as a mirror tends to be displaced by the image of a lamp. I do not doubt that Barfield thinks of aspects of love as involved in the change; but they are not central, as for Williams, in *The Place of the Lion*, love and friendship are. And if I may interpose a point of personal faith, it does seem to me that in history Barfield’s point is perfectly true, and that a radical shift of consciousness is revealed in the first chapter of St John’s Gospel; but that even

more crucial is the shift in apprehension of personality celebrated by Boris Pasternak in *Dr Zhivago*, which made slavery and the merely collective vision of society in the long run unacceptable. To put it another way, and to anticipate a later conclusion, Barfield's ideal of polarity has much in common, as Barfield remarks in his essay *Either: Or*, with Williams's ideal of coinherence – "cowinherence" as Nevill Coghill lovingly remembered his pronouncing it. Both too have relevance to the Incarnation; but coinherence is in all ways the richer, and ethically at least the profounder truth.

I am inclined to think that the making, in effect though tacitly, Anthony Durrant a figure of Christ as, more explicitly, Nancy is in *The Greater Trumps*, is a matter of literary tact, even if misplaced: a wish to make what is after all an entertainment, to which the reader is not asked to give more than imaginative belief, the widest possible audience. Nancy's revelation as Messiah – or "near enough" as Sybil says - is reserved for the last sentence in the novel; and even in *Descent into Hell* Christ's name is used as sparingly as possible, although it is plain if you are sensitive to the clues, that Pauline's delivery by substitution of John Struther from the fear of the fire is performed in virtue of the substitution in the Atonement, which only can deliver not only from the ills of the psychology but from sin, as again is explicitly said.

But what I most want to draw attention to in my comparison is what I think is the central and original point of resemblance between Barfield and Williams, of which the rest is explication: that is what Williams expresses by saying that all poetry is the approach of the fallen understanding to man's first and unfallen naming of the beasts. (The mode of expression is, by the way, very similar to Tolkien's in his poem "Mythopoeia" and in *The Hobbit*, which he expressly attributed to Barfield, and which, for any reader of "Seven" who is interested, I have discussed at length in an article called "The language learned of Elves".)

What Williams is expressing in a way which I conjecture is influenced by Barfield's *Poetic Diction*, is a phenomenon which you can discover by comparing that book with Williams's *The English Poetic Mind*, published in 1932, and with his novel *Shadows of Ecstasy* published in 1933, but drafted in 1926. It is their similar experiences of reading great poetry, which Barfield calls a "felt

change of consciousness” and Williams the “sensuous apprehension of our satisfied capacities for some experience.”

It is not, I think, the same as three experiences which other Inklings made much of: C.S.Lewis’s experience of a joy which is not satisfied though it is itself an intense pleasure; or what he calls “transposition” – the realisation that a phenomenon has a different meaning from what it normally has, as when Samuel Pepys felt “really sick” with pleasure at hearing wind music, as he had formerly been when in love with his wife; or again Tolkien’s experience of liberation from the ordinary bondage of life at the eucatastrophe of a fairy tale, or at any unexpected happy ending. These may be particular cases of it, particularly when they are excited by words. It is excited by poetry; and it is therefore not the same as, though it may be a particular case of, a phenomenon which is not necessarily related to words, the sensation of discovery when, as A.T.Ramsey used to say “the penny drops, the ice breaks and the light shines.”

It has perhaps been best described by A.E.Housman in his lecture ‘The Name and the Nature of Poetry.’ Singularly however he only describes it at its most intense, when it is accompanied by a physical symptom, as if a cold finger were rubbed down one’s spine, or when the hair on one’s flesh stands up. “I have learnt” he remarks, “not to think of poetry when shaving.” It would seem therefore to have been a common, a perhaps unavoidable, sensation with him all his life. And since one must identify such phenomena in one’s own personal experience, I will say that I think I recognise the physical phenomenon and remember clearly when I first experienced it, at about the age of thirteen, when I read Rudyard Kipling’s poem “Gertrude’s Prayer”, at the last lines of the first verse:

Ah! Jesu-moder, pity my oe paine:
Dayspring mishandled cometh not againe.

I do not think I have experienced it in its full external form for very many years, although I think I still experience at its fullest what Barfield and Williams are talking about in reading poetry, and still accompanied by what I would call a faint internal gasp of wonder or indeed a motion towards tears.

Barfield, in *Poetic Diction*, seems to identify this phenomenon exclusively with

the recovery, by a consciousness that has become habituated to abstract expression and an alienated relation with the universe, of a primitive and concrete participation in nature, particularly revealed in a different relation between spirit and matter. On the positive side, I am sure he is right: the best example perhaps is the Hebrew phrase *ruach elohim* and the way in which in the first verses of *Genesis* this can be equally well translated by “the spirit of God”, “the breath of God”, or “a mighty wind.” But I do not think he is consistent in this with what he outlines in ‘Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction’. Empson criticises him for his nostalgia for a primitive unity in *The Structure of Complex Words*, but I think it is clear enough that the “felt change of consciousness” may also be evoked by something new and evolving. This indeed is why he also believed in “final participation”, although he was ready to confess when asked that we do not yet know what final participation will be like. And it is the coincidence between this scheme and Rudolf Steiner’s which made him an anthroposophist, which he seems to have remained from his first joining the Anthroposophical Society in 1924 until his death and the publication of his last article in *The Golden Blade* in 1999. In particular I think he found in the spiritual exercises recommended by Steiner for developing, to a large extent like Mr Berridge in *The Place of the Lion* the power of spiritual seeing, a way of extending the felt change of consciousness. What spiritual seeing he gained from it he never declares, unless it is in *Unancestral Voice* – which is offered in the form of fiction: in the last article in *The Golden Blade* he still seems to be entirely following, even with some professed lack of comprehension, Steiner’s authority for what happens to us after death, the entry into a state called “Duration” preparatory to reincarnation.

Williams’s understanding of what might happen in the development of the poetic faculty of enjoying our capacity for feeling is presented in his account of the poetic development of Milton, Wordsworth and Shakespeare in *The English Poetic Mind*, and in a more primitive form, which perhaps survives from its first draft, in *Shadows of Ecstasy*. In *The English Poetic Mind* a crucial stage in this development which seems to reflect what happened in Williams’s own experience of love for his wife, Florence or Michal, and for Phyllis Jones, is the experience, when the power of imagination is at its most intense, of an inner contradiction recounted by Wordsworth on his hearing of the English Government’s declaring war on the French Revolutionary State, by Milton in the experience of Satan on

Mount Niphates and of Samson at the beginning of *Samson Agonistes* and by Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* and the tragedies. When one is conscious of something that cannot possibly be happening, and yet is. Shakespeare alone, he argues, fully transcended this experience, and the life which results is what he describes, as Williams affirms not only in *The English Poetic Mind* and *Shadows of Ecstasy* but also in *Descent into Hell*, in the songs of Ariel:

Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough

That ought to correspond to Barfield's "final participation" and perhaps it does.

In *Shadows of Ecstasy* we find Nigel Considine proclaiming in almost anthroposophical language, the Second Evolution of Man, which is also a recovery lost by the abstract intellects of Europe of the ritual transmutations of energy still known in African culture. There are wonderful meditations in it on poetry, which Considine declares always to contain, like all great art, "contemporaneous death and new life". We begin with Shakespeare

I will encounter darkness as a bride
And hug it in mine arms

We hear a superb analysis of Milton's line

And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake

and are called to understand Wordsworth's

There darkness makes abode, and all the host
Of shadowy things work endless changes, there
As in a mansion like their proper home ...

Considine preaches the making of the shadows of ecstasy evoked by such lines into parts of ourselves, on which we feed. It seems likely that Williams is remembering his own motives in experimenting with the occult, and in joining (what he called) the Order of the Golden Dawn, as Barfield joined the Anthroposophical Society. But I am sure that he is describing an experience that for him is past (the occult part) and which he now regards as hugely attractive but false and delusive.

I think this partly because of the similarity between Nigel Considine's inducements and the seductions of Lily Sammile – Lilith the consort of Sammael – to a wholly self-centred delight in *Descent into Hell*, though of course that is a slightly later book. But *Shadows of Ecstasy* is also a very prescient book: the descriptions of his army committing suicide round Considine's car as they cry out "Death for the Deathless" now reminds me of passing in a coach past the stadium at Nuremberg, utterly unchanged as if Hitler might again step out on it. I read on the same day, in total contrast, of the rebellion against Hitler by Hans and Sophie Scholl. They went to their consequent execution, said the book I was reading, in the conviction that the Prince of this world is judged. That sentence – that fact – still induces in me the motion towards tears of which I have spoken. But it also reminds me of the moment in *Shadows of Ecstasy* when Isabel Ingram puts to Considine the claim of Christ: "Can you live truly till you have been quite defeated? You talk of living by your hurts, but perhaps you avoid the utter hurt that's destruction" to which, abandoning all his rhetoric about the new life and the second evolution of man, Considine, challenged on his own ground, finds nothing better to say than: "Why, have it as you will...But it isn't such submission and destruction that man desires."

I have to admit that at the end of the novel we find Isabel wondering "whether in his heart [her husband Roger] – and she also – secretly awaited" Considine's return from death. But that seems to reflect a fundamental crux in Christian living: whether or how, if one loves, one must experience the want of the person one loves even for what one knows to be false.

At any rate, whatever is implied in the attractiveness of Nigel Considine, it is certain that in the last years of his life Williams had come to regard the ecstasies of poetry, and the occult experiences which are related to them, as no more than the spiritual consolations and even the miracles which are given to mystics on the first stages of their spiritual way, and at the most only preparations, which one must not take as more than preparations, for that glory whose pattern, he tells us in *He Came Down from Heaven*, we must examine.

It is, I believe, a suspicion of shortcuts on the spiritual way that accounts for an oddity in the review of Owen Barfield's *Romanticism Comes of Age* which ap-

peared in 'The New English Weekly' on 10 May 1945, five days before Williams's own death. He devotes the first fifth of the review to praising the title for recognising that Romanticism has come of age, and to describing it as a defence of Romanticism as it has been developed in anthroposophy as "a pattern in those terms, of the growth of the human mind." Barfield, he says, attributes the tragedy of the English Romantics to a failure to ask "In what way is the imagination true?" while recognising that the imagination does bear a special relation to truth. By implication it is stated that Rudolf Steiner has asked and answered that question. The remaining four fifths of the review Williams devotes to a defence of Wordsworth's description of the growth of the mind, without further reference to Steiner, though with frequent returns to Barfield's statements.

Why Williams should do this to some extent depends on why Barfield should think that Steiner supplied Romanticism's wants. R.J.Reilly, in Shirley Sugarman's collection of essays on Barfield, *The Evolution of Consciousness*, suggests that it is because the early Romantics failed to deal satisfactorily with time, and consequently with Christianity. Astrid Diener, in her study of Barfield *The Role of Imagination in Culture and Society* suggests that it is because Barfield thought the Romantics insufficiently earthed in practicalities. Stephen Dunning rather offensively attributes Williams's imbalance in his review to a peevishness with Barfield for not mentioning either his own work on Wordsworth or, in an essay on Dante, *The Figure of Beatrice*. The latter part of his explanation is certainly untrue for, as Dunning has failed to notice, Barfield does include a very generous praise of *The Figure of Beatrice*; the part about Wordsworth seems to me unlikely.

Reilly's and Diener's explanations may contribute to Barfield's own explicit explanation, that he believes in anthroposophy as an explanation of life, the result of a conversion which must have had, like all conversions, numerous concurrent reasons. Williams's imbalance I would attribute to his sharing with many other admirers of Barfield, including myself, a disbelief in anthroposophy and a suspicion that Barfield is reading his own beliefs into Steiner's, while adopting from Steiner precisely those points which, like the belief professed in *Unancestral Voice* in the two Jesus boys, seem to us silly.

[Do you want to know about the two Jesus boys? Steiner and Barfield maintain that the two accounts of the nativity of Christ – in Matthew and Luke – are both historical and both reflect a birth, but of different people who just happened to have the same name, born to people of the same names which, they remark, is not surprising because these are among the commonest names of Jews of their time. The boy born (I think) in Luke is said to be like everybody else the result of many previous incarnations and have a rich personality. The boy born to parents who lived in Bethlehem as opposed to merely visiting Bethlehem is said to be the logos itself and, according to Steiner and Barfield following him, the human Jesus gave up his self, his soul, to the cosmic Jesus at the coming to Jerusalem when his parents were surprised by the change in him. I may say, actually, it nearly destroyed Barfield's marriage because he got married while he was in the process of being converted to anthroposophy and didn't explain all this to his wife until after they were married. She being a devout and orthodox high church Anglican Christian was very shocked by the idea that her husband believed in this - I have to agree - very extraordinary tale about the two Jesus boys. And yet Barfield was one of the most intelligent people I've ever met or ever read.]

Yet our disbelief has to be qualified by an unease whether if we had read as much Steiner as Barfield has, which we frankly, from such trials as we have made, feel reluctant to do, and if we could only read him, as Barfield taught himself to do, in German, we might feel differently.

With such views, what could Williams do – particularly as he was probably under pressure to produce the review for 'The New English Weekly' on time? Without expressly denying the possibility of anthroposophy, he could outline an alternative way, namely one implicitly cold-shouldered by Barfield, which Williams thought the poetical gospel of one of the three greatest English poets, Wordsworth, in some such terms as these:

He (Wordsworth) celebrates what Barfield describes as the essential act of the imagination, the merging of subject with object, and in this the sinking of oneself in what Goethe called the prime phenomenon, rather than forming further thoughts about it. Like the early Greek thinkers, in Barfield's account, Wordsworth celebrates the becoming and the presentness of things. He distinguishes,

therefore, the “meddling intellect” from the “feeling intellect” and outlines the training of the feeling intellect – “the false starts, the emotional self-indulgences, the awful experience of complete inner contradiction, ... the decision of the will to believe and to pursue, ... purification and discipline.” Barfield speaks of our present restless jumping to and fro between “the sentient soul” and “the consciousness soul” and calls on us to find ourselves in the connection between them “the loving darkness of the intellectual soul.” Wordsworth describes the momentary vision of the intellectual soul in

the strength
Of usurpation, when the light of sense
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
There harbours...

And Williams suggests that Wordsworth’s solitaires, the Leech Gatherer, the Soldier, the Arab, the Beggar, the girl in Book XII of the *Prelude* are inhabitants, by implication symbols, of the Intellectual Soul. When Wordsworth asks the Leech Gatherer “How is it that you live, and what is it you do?” and is answered by “a voice like a river or a ritual” symbolically he asks the question which according to Barfield only Goethe and Coleridge asked, about how the imagination is true. If one really attempts to understand the question and the answer one will be developing the feeling intellect. In the feeling intellect “said Wordsworth ...

‘no humbler tenderness’
is wanting, but every tenderness is created from within, and by that
‘intellectual love’
necessary to imagination
For they are each in each, and cannot stand
Dividually...”

It is apparent, I think, that Williams not only thinks Wordsworth’s account of the development of the feeling intellect is true, but that it is a merit in it that demands an effort of poetic response. Stephen Dunning correctly, I think, contrasts the two by saying that Williams possesses “a decidedly ‘poetic’ – in contrast to Barfield’s

‘philosophic’ imagination.” But he evidently thinks that this gives the advantage to Barfield. I disagree: certainly both need the other, but if one has to choose, Williams’s path has the advantage because, as he says in *Descent of the Dove*, poetry can “survey Truth all round.” It begins by saying “Let us suppose” while philosophy, or at any rate, medieval scholastic philosophy of which he is speaking “would not deign to suppose.” Williams, like Sir Bernard Travers whom I hold to be the most attractive character in *Shadows of Ecstasy*, more attractive even than Roger and Isabel Ingram, and infinitely more so than Nigel Considine, was fundamentally and universally a sceptic. Barfield was a natural believer: it is why he stayed an anthroposophist to his dying day, while Williams abandoned (what he called) the Order of the Golden Dawn fairly early on. Both of course in their own somewhat different terms remained Christians.

But it is the singleness of his belief in anthroposophy that I think accounts for the oddity of Barfield’s review of the reprint of *Descent into Hell*, also in ‘The New English Weekly’, on April 21 1949. It is even odder, I think than Williams’s review of Barfield. Dunning thinks otherwise, and says that Williams “missed the point of” *Romanticism Comes of Age* while Barfield understood *Descent into Hell* “quite thoroughly – understood and partially demurred.” I think exactly the reverse, as I have already explained about Williams.

As for Barfield, although he speaks enthusiastically of Williams’s novels in general – “He is not so much a man with a doctrine as a man with a gospel – good tidings of great joy, about which it is impossible to keep quiet. Impossible because of the joy” - and says that there are things in *Descent into Hell* “as good or better than anything in those I have read” does also say “it is not the best of his novels.” I should have said that it is commonly thought to be the best: Lois Miller in her *Bibliography* says as much. More specifically he alleges against it “I think the world is represented as coming to an end at the end of this book but, after reading it twice through, am not sure.” I have read it several more times than twice, and even after my reading last weekend, having read Barfield’s review, cannot see why one should think the world as coming to an end at the end of the book. It comes to an end for the egocentric Wentworth certainly, but that is because he severally and individually enters Hell. Perhaps Barfield simply means the suggestion by Peter Stanhope that one of the events in the Book of Revelation

may be happening – but then Stanhope explicitly says that there may be a short time or a thousand years before the end. That is a straightforward Christian view: Christians, I have heard it said, live in the time between the lightning of the first coming and the thunderclap of the second coming. There is, it is true, one phrase which seems to support a soft interpretation of Barfield's difficulty (that is not that the world has come to an end at the end of the book, but what he strictly actually does say, that the world is coming to an end) in the chapter on the Opening of Graves about "the world's last summer", but this perhaps could be regarded as someone's subjective view. I admit to its being odd.

More generally Barfield objects at length to Pauline's act of substitution on behalf of her dead ancestor: "when we are told that the joy, which Pauline sacrificed in order that it might be given to the martyr, was the joy which she had already missed in her childhood ... the solid ground of predication begins to fail beneath our feet. It may be true that 'In the place of the Omnipotence there is neither before nor after; there is only act'. But a narrative records events taking place in time."

Oddly enough, it is the stress on *Descent into Hell's* being a narrative that offers me a way of understanding the concept of God's eternity to which Barfield alludes. Novelists sometimes claim to have the whole story of their novel in their mind before beginning to write, including of course all the wishes and interacting acts of will of the characters. And this seems to me a workable image – though only an image – of the relation of God to the Universe. If so, the relations of Pauline and John Struther seem to me as perfectly explained in quasi reality as in the mind of their immediate creator, Charles Williams.

I think that Barfield's difficulties here may be due to his anthroposophy. Steiner's imagination is immensely dominated by time: indeed the importance of perhaps Steiner and certainly Barfield for our present time seems to me centrally to lie in their notion of the evolution in time of consciousness. They also believed in karma: and one can see how these stresses on sequential causation in time would diminish their willingness to contemplate eternity, in which nevertheless as you have heard Barfield believed.

Barfield and Williams met only five or six times, and never had opportunity for

private debate in this world. To quote Stephen Dunning in his more genial mood “One hopes that they find such an opportunity in the next.”

Post script.

I should have said more in this talk about Barfield’s belief in reincarnation. He makes it plain in his *Saving the Appearances* that he thinks reincarnation and Christ’s descent into hell to appear to the spirits there are alternative explanations of the redemption of people who lived before the Incarnation of Christ, and that he differs from Charles Williams in preferring reincarnation, because if the redemption involves the time before Christ, there is a difficult conceptual leap from time to eternity. This, of course, must apply to Williams’s novel, because there Pauline’s redemption of her ancestor, John Struther, through her own mental suffering is clearly a figure of Christ’s descent into hell. This helps to explain Barfield’s reluctance to accept the scheme of the novel.

BOOK REVIEW

DANTE. *THE POET, THE POLITICAL THINKER, THE MAN.*

BY BARBARA REYNOLDS.

PP. XIV + 466. LONDON AND NEW YORK: I. B. TAURUS, 2006. ISBN 10: 1 84511 161 3 AND 13: 978 1 84511 161 8. HARDBACK £50.

In a recent article for the *Times Literary Supplement* (23 June 2006) Mathew Traherne ended his review of *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* by Christian Moevs with the words: 'This important book is proof that we do not need to choose between placing Dante in his medieval context and seeking his importance for the present moment.' How does one account for the enduring fascination with the writings of this late medieval Florentine? In the last two years alone I have come across eight new books on Dante in English and two new translations of the *Divine Comedy*. These new studies range all the way from commentaries on the texts and analyses of his metaphysics to biographical portraits and historical essays. There has been, in addition, a re-publication of the first part of Dorothy L. Sayers's translation of the *Comedy* by Penguin Classics and an anthology of English translations, also by Penguin Classics, spanning six centuries entitled *Dante in English*. This contains a provocative introduction on Dante by one of the editors, Eric Griffiths, and notes on the numerous translators. I cannot even guess at the number of volumes that have appeared in other languages.

Barbara Reynolds supplies her own new book with two epigraphs, one of which is the formulation of William of Ockham: 'Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem'; his famous 'razor'. Presumably we are to understand this as the key to the author's method of interpretation, which is to say, that the simplest explanation will always be preferred; excellent in principle – and one which far more scholars should observe – but, if used inflexibly and applied too rigorously, one that can result in a glossing over of ambiguities and a too neat resolution of complexities. In the introduction Barbara Reynolds announces her intentions with admirable vigour and is not reticent about declaring what she thinks has been achieved: 'I believe that what I here present is a portrait of Dante, the poet, the political thinker

and the man, which has not been seen before. Almost every chapter contains new ideas and fresh insights, some of them radical, many controversial.' (p. xi) In particular she claims to have made two new discoveries which she presents as 'a fundamental challenge' to accepted readings.

Barbara Reynolds is one of the most distinguished scholars of Italian of our day: holder of a number of academic positions and honorary doctorates, the editor of the Cambridge Dictionary of Italian, translator of Ariosto and Dante, and a person of great learning which is often articulated not only with brilliance but also with clarity and stylistic elegance. Many, however, will have come to know her name initially as belonging to the person who successfully took up and brought to a magnificent conclusion the task Dorothy L. Sayers had set herself in the 1940s i.e. the translation for Penguin Books of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The intriguing story of Sayers's encounter with Dante, and Charles Williams's part in it, has been told by Barbara Reynolds herself in her delightful book, *The Passionate Intellect*. When Dorothy L. Sayers died in 1957 she had completed only twenty cantos of her translation of the last part of Dante's great poem. Barbara Reynolds took up where Sayers left off, translating the remaining thirteen cantos and providing both the notes on the text and the introduction to the final volume, *Paradise*. She recreated the poetic form of the Sayers translation, an English version of the *terza rima*, with such skill that the transition from the one translation to the other is imperceptible. Since then she has written extensively about Dorothy L. Sayers and edited four volumes of her letters; but, as I have said, it is primarily as an Italian scholar that she has spent her time and attained such academic distinction. In 1969 Penguin books published her translation of Dante's first work, *La Vita Nuova*, and it is not surprising that after a lifetime of teaching Dante she should want to publish the fruits of her labour and provide us with a major study of the late medieval genius.

But she sets about it in somewhat curious way. Although her conclusions are, as she maintains, in many ways controversial, it is, paradoxically, not a book which conducts itself controversially; by which I mean that there is a noticeable exclusion of dialogue or argument with any other Dante experts. Boccaccio, Villani and other more or less contemporary witnesses are used extensively, but no modern scholars are introduced or directly engaged with in her presentation. There

are a few references to modern scholarship in the footnotes but only two scholars of the last few centuries are mentioned by name in her own text: T.S.Eliot, who is quoted briefly ('Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them; there is no third'), and Francesco D'Ovidio whose theories are mentioned, again briefly, in connection with the puzzle about the identity of Matilda in the Earthly Paradise. There is no reference, even, to her beloved Dorothy L. Sayers, except to say that the English translations used in her text are those of the first Penguin edition. This is quite deliberate: she wants to come to the text almost as though for the first time, seeing what is there rather than repeating what others have said they have seen there, and this gives the book a strange and interesting 'feel'. But the attempt at working, so to speak, in a vacuum, at ridding the mind of 'excess baggage', is both admirable and disingenuous. One cannot help admiring the confidence and, even, the audacity of the attempt - and, moreover, it has the salutary effect of compelling the reader to focus more closely on the texts - but it is also disingenuous because it is impossible. Whether she refers to them by name or not, she is, in fact, in constant dialogue with interpretations of Dante by scholars who have gone before her.

I have no doubt that the great value of this book will be in the ability of the author to illuminate the ways in which the poet composed his masterpieces. This is done with great brilliance. The detailed presentation of the historical and literary context of the man and his work so exactly places Dante in his world that we immediately grasp his intellectual and literary debt to, as well his distinction from, his predecessors and contemporaries. Her magisterial command of the language and literature of Italy is evident at every point of her interpretation of both the prose and the poetry; every analysis of Dante's texts shows how deep and extensive her understanding of the history, the development and the movement of Italian literature is. Time after time she shows the reader exactly how a poetic effect is achieved e.g. by indicating how long or short vowels are ordered in a line, how consonants clash, how accents and quantities are used, why a particular verb or noun is chosen. The poetic process of a particular genius is thus revealed; we *see* Dante the poet at work.

In view of her intimate engagement with the text of the *Comedy* it is a little surprising that so little is said about the words of that text at the point of two of the

most famous encounters in the narrative: the meeting with Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise in Canto XXX of *Purgatorio* and the meeting with Piccarda de' Donati in Canto III of *Paradiso*. In the first of these, the dramatic scene of the pilgrim's encounter with his beloved Beatrice, she greets him in a surprising way: 'Look on us well, we are, we are Beatrice'. (l. 73) Of this greeting Barbara Reynolds says: 'The use of the plural is startling and significant' not mentioning that there is a variant reading: 'Look well, I am, I am Beatrice', except in a footnote which reads 'Not all manuscripts have the plural but it is now usually accepted' (p. 451) It is true that nearly all commentators seem to be agreed on the regal quality of Beatrice's utterance but I wish more could have been said about the actual words of the text here as it has been a matter of debate for a long time. Perhaps her forthright assertion of the plural form without further discussion is part of her attempt at 'ridding the mind of excess baggage'; and perhaps, in any case, this point is, possibly, of little interest except to those who have a technical interest in textual matters. The second of these meetings, and the textual variants, is, however, of greater significance and involves more than textual quibbling. In the long and theologically complex conversation with Piccarda in the sphere of the moon in *Paradiso* III, the soul of the young woman utters the famous phrase 'His will is our peace', 'E la sua volontade e nostra pace'. (l. 85) Reynolds offers no comment on these lines except to note their 'simplicity and completeness'. The variant reading adds a preposition: 'In his will is our peace', 'E'n la sua volontade e nostra pace'. This is the version that is preferred by many of the best known translators and scholars. I happen to believe that Reynolds is right in choosing the former and that Dante is referring us to words from the epistle to the Ephesians. (Ch. 2 v 14) In her notes to the Penguin translation of 1962 she wrote quite extensively about this particular line and its meaning; I wish she had done so here too. There is a difference between the two statements that goes, as I have said, well beyond mere textual difference: two different theological, spiritual and psychological states are being delineated in these variants. More than twenty years ago Roger Scruton described the extraordinary effect of the poetry here: 'There is a condensation in this line . . . which illustrates the thoroughness with which Dante's thought impregnates his idiom. God wills our peace, and this is what pacifies and pleases us . . . More than that. His will and our peace are not two things but one. In obedience we find fulfilment, because obedience is the highest

expression of our freedom and so brings us closest to God. To disobey is to will disharmony and so sever the soul from love.’ (*Times Literary Supplement*, 26.10.80) This seems to me to show a real understanding of the way Dante achieved what he did, not only here, but in the whole of the *Comedy*; it gives us some idea of the profound union of imaginative power and technical skill; the ‘condensation’ of theology and feeling into poetic form.

To return to those two ‘discoveries’ claimed by Barbara Reynolds. The first concerns the riddling words of Virgil in the first canto which tells of a ‘hound’ coming to destroy the ‘wolf’, usually understood as the symbol of avarice. His prophecy ends with the line: ‘between Feltro and Feltro his birthplace shall be found’ or, as Barbara Reynolds would have it: ‘twixt felt and felt his naissance will be found’ (l.105). What does this mean? The conundrum which, as she says, has puzzled interpreters for seven centuries, is solved by her with the simplest of explanations – Ockham’s razor put to good use. Dismissing fanciful speculations she claims it is a reference to the technique of papermaking. ‘He (the righteous emperor) will declare and enforce the law as laid down in the Codex of Justinian, maintaining a balance with canon law as set down in the *Decretum* of Gratian, that is to say, *tra feltro a feltro*, between layers of felt which dry the paper on which writing will then be legible.’ (p. 120) I am persuaded by this simple, but ingenious, solution. The second discovery presents us with a no less ingenious solution to an equally puzzling and disputed question: the meaning of the mysterious words of Beatrice in the last canto of *Purgatorio* which foretell the coming of another apocalyptic figure and end with the words ‘un cinquecento diece e cinque’ (‘a five hundred ten and five’). (l. 42) Down the centuries many scholars have speculated about the identity of this figure. Reynolds thinks this a fruitless task and, referring us back to her solution of the *veltro* puzzle of Canto I of *Inferno*, proffers a simple explanation which relies upon numerology. Dante’s words and numbers do not require us to identify a specific person: what is being envisaged is an idealised figure of a ruler. Again I find this a convincing reading. ‘Failure to recognize its simplicity, and once again, as in the case of the *veltro*, the assumption that Dante is referring to a specific person, have obscured its meaning for centuries in a wilderness of tangled comment.’ (p. 316)

One of Barbara Reynolds’s chief purposes in writing the book is to draw atten-

tion to Dante as a political figure. I agree that too often this aspect of his work has been neglected and I welcome this attempt to enlarge the portrait of the man by emphasising his significance as a politician and political thinker. It is obvious from his ferocious denunciations of corruption in Church and State that he felt passionately about social and political issues. Dante's political sympathies were well-known in his own day; it is obvious from *De Monarchia* as well as *Il Convivio* that he was a full-blooded imperialist. Reynolds's solution to the enigma of Beatrice's prophecy seems to be linked to a conviction that Dante's main purpose in writing the *Comedy* was political. She says as much in her introduction: 'His chief aim in writing the *Commedia* (as it was to have been in *Il Convivio*) was to promote this belief (the acceptance throughout Europe of the supreme secular authority of the Emperor)' (p. xiii). I am in no doubt that the separation of Church and State and the acceptance of imperial rule was profoundly desired by Dante, but I am equally sure that the propagation of this view was not the *chief* aim in the writing of the *Comedy*. She then continues 'He held that mankind was created for happiness and that the highest joy was to be found in the use of reason and the pursuit of truth'. If this were true, Dante would be an Aristotelian not a Christian, and there would be no need of Beatrice as a symbol of faith or revelation. He certainly believed that man was made for happiness, so did Thomas Aquinas – as did Aristotle. Where Thomas, and Dante, differ from Aristotle is that they believed this happiness could only be obtained, finally and ultimately, not in 'the pursuit of truth' but in the *achievement* of truth i.e. in the beatific vision. In her introduction to the Penguin *Paradiso* Reynolds recognised this when she wrote: 'Of all the poets of fulfilment, Dante alone has had astonishing courage to take us into heaven and keep us there for thirty three long cantos. . . .' and 'It is in *Paradiso* that we find affirmed with the utmost clarity and consistency the fundamental Christian proposition that the journey to God is the journey to reality. To know all things in God is to know them as they really are' (p. 16)

To try to turn Dante, primarily, into a political thinker, and to suggest that his *Comedy* arises primarily out of political motivation, would be to diminish him. Perhaps he did, as Barbra Reynolds suggests, see himself as making an important contribution to political debate, but his legacy as a political thinker is, at best, ambiguous and I doubt that he would have such enduring fascination if we ap-

proached him from this angle. It is true that his argument for the separation of Church and State was radical in his own era and has continuing relevance but it is not propounded with any great analytical depth (*De Monarchia* was left unfinished) and his central political concept of, and hope for, the totally benevolent despot, while historically interesting, cannot but seem hopelessly idealistic and naïve to us – almost risible. (We are, moreover, inescapably haunted by Lord Acton's famous dictum about absolute power) There may be a certain poignancy here for, of course, we do not read him primarily for his political philosophy, his impractical concept of empire, whatever historical interest that may have. This exposition of Dante, full of knowledge and insight, in fact gives us a portrait of the man who was a supreme poet: a revealer of the human heart and mind, able to expound in unforgettable language the great truths of human life: hopes and fears, despairs and joys, faith and salvation. And it manages to show us how he became that poet. Not that this explains his genius, that remains inexplicable; but like the great teacher that she is, Barbara Reynolds has helped us to understand more fully why it is that we continually return to this medieval poem not only for what it teaches us about Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but for what it reveals to us about ourselves.

Brian Horne

THE CHARLES WILLIAMS SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2006

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH ROOMS, WESTMINSTER, SW1

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Report on the year's activities by the Hon. Secretary
3. Report by the Hon. Librarian
4. Presentation of the Accounts by the Hon. the Treasurer
5. Report by the Newsletter Editor
6. Report by the Membership Secretary
7. Report by the Hon. Chairman
8. Election of Council Members under paragraph 5 of the Constitution
9. Any other business.

Brian Horne
Hon. Chairman

CHARLES WILLIAMS DAY CONFERENCE 14 OCTOBER 2006
AT
THE PARISH ROOMS ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH,
GREAT PETER STREET, LONDON SW1

10.30. a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Charles Williams and Biography

10.30 a.m. – 11.00 a.m. Coffee

11.00 a.m. – 12.45 p.m. Brian Horne: *Charles Williams as Biographer*. Charles Williams wrote seven biographies but these are very little known and this aspect of his work is seldom discussed. Brian Horne will try to discover the distinctive marks of Williams's approach to the writing of biography and see what similarities there are between his writing in this genre of literature and that of his far better known works of poetry, fiction and theology.

12.45 p.m. – 2.15 p.m. Lunch. This cannot be provided by the conference centre but members are welcome to bring packed lunches. Tea and coffee will be provided and, if the weather is fine, there is a pleasant garden which can be used.

2.15 p.m. **Annual General Meeting**

3.00 p.m. Susannah Harris Wilson, who has been working on John Donne and the literature of the Jacobean period, will introduce a discussion and readings of Charles Williams's portrait of the period - with special reference to James I and Francis Bacon.

St. Matthews's Church is on the corner of Great Peter Street and St. Ann's Street, Westminster just south of Victoria Street and Westminster Abbey. The entrance to the parish rooms is via the door in St. Ann's Street.



TEMENOS ACADEMY

is delighted to announce

The Call of the Desert: Reflections on the Ascetic Rationale of Christian Monasticism

a lecture by

Nicholas Buxton

Thursday 5th October 2006

Answering a call seems to be something that people have felt the need to do across all cultures and in all ages - including the present. Monastic life is specifically designed to recreate an 'artificial desert' in the enclosure of the cloister. To this day, monasticism presents a radically counter-cultural challenge to secular mores: the key Benedictine principles of stability, conversion, and obedience, hold up a mirror to modern life, and offer us a fitting template for spiritual transformation.

NICHOLAS BUXTON is training for the priesthood of the Church of England. He has recently completed a Ph.D on the doctrine of Emptiness in Buddhism and has published articles in both academic journals and the national press.

Venue: The Lincoln Centre, 18 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2 (Holborn Underground)

Doors open at 6.15pm, Lecture begins promptly at 7pm

ADMISSION £5 or £3.50 conc

Further information and reservations

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Editorial Policy

The Charles Williams Quarterly and the Society's Website 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 Quarterly 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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