

The Charles Williams Society

NEWSLETTER

No. 36, WINTER 1984

MEETINGS OF THE CHARLES WILLIAMS SOCIETY

11 May 1985: A.G.M. (for Agenda see insert). Following the A.G.M., Dr Charles Huttar will speak on "The Place of Beatrice in CW's Romantic Theology". This is a change to the programme previously published but we are delighted to be able to take advantage of Dr Huttar's visit to London from America.

16 November 1985: Renee Haynes, writer and critic, will speak on "CW and the Affirmation of Images".

Meetings will be held at Liddon House, 24 South Audley Street, London W1, at 2.30pm.

LONDON READING GROUP

26 May 1985: We will meet at 1pm in St John's Parish Room, 2 Lansdowne Crescent, Notting Hill Gate, London W11 to continue reading the Taliessin poems.

OXFORD READING GROUP

For details contact either Anne Scott (Oxford 53897) or Brenda Boughton (55589).

LAKE MICHIGAN AREA READING GROUP

For details contact Charles Huttar, 188th W.11th St., Holland Michigan 49423 USA, telephone (616) 396 2260.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE SOCIETY

Your Council considers that there would be an advantage to the Society if it could be registered as an Educational Charity. The Chairman has submitted a copy of our Constitution to the Charity Commission with information about our activities and has been informed that subject to some amendments, our Constitution is acceptable for registration under the Charities Act 1960. The amendments required are set out in the Charity Commissioners letter of 8 January 1985 and are summarised as follows:

1. Our declared object "to promote interest in the life and encourage the keeping in print of the works of the author Charles Williams" is not acceptable for charitable purposes and should be amended "to advance the education of the public by the study of the works of Charles Williams". We can, however, retain the original wording in a sub-clause in furtherance of the 'declared object'.
2. The Council will be the Charity Trustees and as such cannot profit from their trust. Provisos are necessary to avoid the possibility of any member of the Council being appointed to a remunerated position in the Society.
3. Certain powers such as to borrow money must be subject to such consents as are necessary by law and no alteration to the Constitution shall be made that will cause the Society to cease to be a Charity in law.
4. Any assets left if the Society had to be wound up cannot be given to any Charitable purposes as the members think fit but should be handed over to any Charity with similar objects.

Your Council recommend acceptance of these amendments and a resolution to approve the amendments will be submitted to members at the Annual General Meeting on 11 May 1985. We hope that as many as possible will come to that meeting which will be followed by Dr Charles Huttar's talk.

CANON RAYMOND HOCKLEY'S TALK 10 NOVEMBER 1984

Canon Hockley has asked that the following post scriptum be added to his talk reproduced in Newsletter 35: "In my interpretation of the theology of Charles

Williams I have been much helped by two books of Alan Watts: namely Behold The Spirit (John Murray 1947) and Myth and Ritual in Christianity (Thames & Hudson 1953)."

SECOND-HAND C.W. BOOKS

Once again we have some second-hand C.W. books available for sale (plus cost of postage):

Arthurian Torso	£6
The Descent of the Dove (Faber)	£4.50
The Descent of the Dove (Religious Book Club)	£4
The Figure of Beatrice	£5
Queen Elizabeth I (with dust-jacket)	£4.50
The House of the Octopus (with dust-jacket)	£5
The Place of the Lion (Faber, with dust-jacket)	£2.50
The Place of the Lion (Gollancz) 2 copies	£1.50 each
Shadows of Ecstasy (Faber)	£2.50
War in Heaven (Faber)	£2.50
The Greater Trumps (Faber)	£2.50
Descent into Hell (Faber)	£2.50
All Hallows Eve (Faber)	£2.50

Paperbacks:

Witchcraft (Meridian Books, USA)	£1.50
Four Modern Verse Plays - including Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury (Penguin)	75p
Many Dimensions (Penguin) 2 copies	75p each
Shadows of Ecstasy (Faber)	75p
War in Heaven (Faber)	75p

There is also a hardback copy of Humphrey Carpenter's J.R.R. Tolkien: a biography in very poor condition (but would do for a researcher who needed it!) - say 25p but it is heavy so would be expensive to post.

If you would like any of these books please contact Gillian Lunn but please send no money until you receive them - the cost of postage can then be added. Her address is 26 Village Road, Finchley, London N3 1TL (tel. 346 6025).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscriptions fall due on 1 March and renewal forms are enclosed for your convenience. It is regretted that an increase has become necessary and have been fixed at £5 for single membership, £7.50p for joint membership and an additional £1 to either category for overseas members to cover the extra postage charges. The Hon. Treasurer has particularly requested that, because of the high charge levied by the banks to exchange other currencies into sterling, all cheques paid to the Society should be made out in sterling.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to:

- Bonnie Rogers, 131 Leland Street, Portland, Maine, USA
- Rev R Cant, 7 Fykes Close, St Olave's Road, York, YO3 6HZ
- Barbara J Zelenko, 210 Congress Street - 3A, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, USA
- Canon Raymond Hockley, 2 Minster Court, York, YO1 2JJ
- Susan Coupland, 189 The Causeway, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU31 4LN

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On 23 February 1985, Joan Wallis addresses the Society on "Charles Williams and the poets - Wordsworth". We are pleased to be able to reproduce the talk in this Newsletter.

"It was through attending Evening Classes on 'English Poetry' in the 1930s that I first heard Charles Williams lecture, and heard also his belief that great poetry is partly-created by what the poet has learned from others' poetry. There are many such 'references' to the work of Shakespeare and Milton in his own early writings and he came to include Wordsworth, and his later poetry was to be indebted to all three of them. Today, I want to consider some of his views on Wordsworth's poetry and thought and to show you the copy of The Prelude he gave me for my 21st birthday. Certain passages are marked in pencil as being of particular importance, and comments are made which range from poetical criticisms to where the gloss on p.136 which reads 'The mystery of human life' has been crossed through and he has written 'O God!' He included a note:

August 1935

'My dear Joan,

All good things! and I hope when you are fifty-one the markings and notes here will seem elementary. But for the moment they may serve, till you light for some other mind another candle. "Be strong, live happy and love". Adore whenever you can; be purged by laughter; be illuminated by vigil, be at war without malice; be at peace without dullness. And say "This also is, nor is this, Thou". Always, C.W.'

I shall refer to 3 books by Charles and quote from them passages which I consider illustrate his views on both Wordsworth's poetry, and on the nature of poetry. Many of them can be cross-referenced by those marked in my copy of The Prelude. The books I shall refer to are The English Poetic Mind OUP 1932, Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind OUP 1933, The New Book of English Verse, Gollancz 1935 (my own copy is inscribed 'CW 26 Octr / 35').

We are so used to referring to this long poem as The Prelude that it is only too easy to forget that this was the title given to it by his widow for its publication after Wordsworth's death in 1850. So, I would like to give you a brief reminder of how the poem came to take its present form. From correspondence with his friend and fellow poet, Coleridge, we know that Wordsworth wrote a poem of 978 lines called The Recluse in the late 1790s. It was never completed, but the intention was to preface it with another poem, which would serve as a prelude, and add to this pair yet another poem called The Excursion. There were to be also passages in prose. So, a trilogy was intended, the whole to be a philosophical survey of Man and Nature in Society. Within 2 years of writing Wordsworth had doubts about his ability to complete it and he concentrated on the autobiographical section which he referred to as 'a poem on my own earlier life' and which is known to us today as The Prelude. This he completed in 1805 but it was to be much revised by him all his working life. It was in 1809 that Coleridge referred to it as 'an unpublished poem on the Growth and Revolutions of an Individual Mind'. At Wordsworth's death it was 8000 lines in length and divided into 13 'Books'. As I said earlier, not only was it published after his death, but its title was chosen by his widow. Scholars have long accepted that there are 2 main versions of the poem, that of 1805 and that of 1850. In 1926 Ernest de Selincourt published The Prelude with parallel texts of the then-established 1850 text and the then-unfashionable text of 1805. My own copy is that of the 1850 text, and it was this text which Charles used in his writings on Wordsworth. It is entitled The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind and is a Dent publication of 1933.

I turn now to Charles' writings, and in the first of the group of essays called The English Poetic Mind, he is concerned with the nature of poetry, and uses Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth as the main examples to illustrate his views. In this lecture I shall not be concerned with the first-two mentioned poets,

but I do want to point out here Charles' conviction that Wordsworth should not be regarded in isolation, but in relation to the main stream of English poetry as illustrated by the work of Shakespeare and Milton. To him, all three poets had in common the necessity to express their intentions in poetic forms. Or rather, how poems developed out of the use of selected, emphasised and connected words, was the task they had in common. In conversation Charles enjoyed speculating about the personal lives of poets, but in his writings and his lectures there was no concern and no place for the 'biographical heresy'. In a later essay (in The Analysis of William) he does not so much ignore Wordsworth's love-affair in France with Annette, as estimate its importance to his poetry. He writes '... as (for all we know) Wordsworth was not ashamed of Annette. He made no particular secret of her. Certainly he did not put her into The Prelude; I have sometimes wondered whether he omitted her because he knew she was not really important to him. Perhaps he did not cease to be a great poet (if he did) because he was too capable of detachment from Annette; perhaps he never could have been attached to Annette because he was a great poet And the reason Wordsworth said nothing more about her may have been that there was nothing more to say. How extraordinary it would be if the poets were right in what they left out, as in what they put in!' In the Preface to the English Poetic Mind he begins by setting out, and numbering, his intentions and writes: 'The following essays are based on two convictions 1) that Troilus and Cressida is of a great deal more importance in a study of Shakespeare than has generally been allowed 2) that the central crisis of Troilus is in direct poetic relation to the culminating crisis in Wordsworth's account of his own history in The Prelude.' Here and now I select the reference to Wordsworth, but another whole lecture could be given on Charles' views on crisis in Shakespeare and Wordsworth. Several of the markings in my copy of The Prelude are where Charles selects crisis as it appears in the verse.

Chapter I is called 'A note on Great Poetry' and Charles singles out a passage in Book I (lines 149-57) which he regards as Wordsworth's definition of '3 things as necessary for the writing of poetry 1) the vital soul 2) general truths 3) external things - Forms, images'. The whole passage is marked out in my copy, and in the original reads:

And now it would content me to yield up	132
Those lofty hopes awhile, for present gifts	
Of humbler industry. But, oh, dear Friend!	
The Poet, gentle creature as he is,	135
Hath like the Lover, his unruly times;	
His fits when he is neither sick nor well,	
Though no distress be near him but his own	
Unmanageable thoughts: his mind, best pleased	
While she as duteous as the mother dove	140
Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,	
But like the innocent bird, hath goadings on	
That drive her as in trouble through the groves;	
With me is now such passion, to be blamed	
No otherwise than as it lasts too long.	145

When, as becomes a man who would prepare	
For such an arduous work, I through myself	
Make rigorous inquisition, the report	
Is often cheering; for I neither seem	
To lack that first great gift, the vital soul,	150
Nor general Truths, which are themselves a sort	
Of Elements and Agents, under-powers,	
Subordinate helpers of the living mind:	
Nor am I naked of external things,	
Forms, images, nor numerous other aids	155
Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil	
And needful to build up a Poet's praise.	

The preparation for becoming a poet, and the dedication of himself to this was, according to Charles, one of Wordsworth's main intentions in the writing of The Prelude. It is known that Wordsworth's father had set his young son portions of 'the best English poets' to learn by heart, and Wordsworth developed a knowledge of, and admiration for, Milton that remained with him all his life. Charles wrote: 'He (i.e. Wordsworth) is now dedicated; the poetic genius is conscious of its capacity and looking forward (as Milton did) to doing lasting work'. Charles himself revered Milton and his own capacity to quote long passages of his poetry at any time (and in any place) is well-recorded by his biographers. Both Wordsworth and Charles were indebted to Milton, and to Charles this debt was a strand in that indivisible web of how poetry comes to be written. Charles himself lifted out quotations and ideas from Wordsworth in writing his own poetry, and as Alice Mary Hadfield has pointed out, and I quote her, 'He often spoke of Wordsworth's lines " ... the human form / To me became an index of delight / of grace and honour". Without further comment I offer you the end papers of Taliessin Through Logres.

Chapter II is called 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind' and is in inverted commas, as it is a quotation from the full title of The Prelude, as printed. It begins 'There is in English poetry only one long study of the poetic mind. That study is 'the Prelude or the Growth of a Poet's Mind'. And so we realise that the titles of Charles' books The English Poetic Mind, and Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind, both derive from The Prelude. Charles continues, 'Wordsworth wrote The Prelude as a prelude, an account of his own preparation for what he was about to do; ~~it~~ was to invigorate him, to 'fix the wavering balance of his mind, to 'spur' him on. It is therefore largely an account of his own experiences and those experiences were for him 'Nature' and 'Man', which he pursues through the 13 books.

Charles selects certain themes in the poetry such as 'Powers and Power', which he argues were so often used by Wordsworth as applying to poets and poetry, and quotes five examples of this, which are also marked out in my copy and continues ' ... the continual use of the word power. It is in that power, which is poetry, that darkness makes abode; it is in poetry that forms and substances ... through the turnings intricate of verse / Present themselves as objects recognised / In flashes and with glory not their own.' His prose, and the poetry of Wordsworth are here very close to each other in the attempt to define characteristics of the poetic mind. Charles was to use these lines of verse many times in lecturing and talking on 'power in poetry'!

In my copy line 302 of Book I 'Fostered alike by beauty and by fear' has been underlined, and on p.13 of The Growth of a Poet's Mind he writes 'And fear is, in Wordsworth, an emotion absolutely necessary to the poet's development; he stresses it continually ... It is not a mere physical fear; it is indeed something which precludes this lesser terror'. He quotes examples in Book I such as 'Low breathings coming after me and sounds of indistinguishable motions, steps / Almost as silent as the turf they trod' and comments 'The poetic mind is aware of 'low breathings', 'sounds of indistinguishable motion' etc and 'These unknown modes of being ... work towards the two great ends of Liberty and Power'. This is summed up by a quotation and a comment:

'Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society.

'This is precisely the achievement of the great poets; in each of them discordant elements are united in one society by the inscrutable workmanship of their genius, and the society is the style.' (p.15)

The poet in Charles writes 'Any one who has ever written verse will recognise the justice of "... hope that can never die / Effort, and expectation and desire,

And something evermore about to be." The difference between the satisfactory and the unsatisfactory poet is in the last line.' So often in his prose we are aware of Charles as a poet learning his craft by his reading of others' poetry, and recognising how the great definitions are achieved.

In his 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads' 1802, Wordsworth had written 'Not that I mean to say that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation, have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a "purpose". If in this opinion I am mistaken I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, but tho' this is true, Poems, to which any value can be attached, were produced on any variety of subjects, but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are indeed the representations of all our past feelings.' So that not only in poetry but in prose also Wordsworth laboured to define the intentions of the poet, and indeed, later in this 'Preface', he argues that the language of Poetry and Prose are not always far apart. His long analysis of 'the poet' found a strongly sympathetic admirer in Charles Williams.

Chapter V of The English Poetic Mind is entitled 'Wordsworth' and has been included by Anne Ridler in her fine, and useful anthology Selected Writings chosen by Anne Ridler (1961 Oxford Paperbacks). Here, Charles establishes his belief that there are '3 great ranges' of poetry, which are Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth and in paragraph one writes: 'There are other poets of almost equal height, but they are only peaks compared with those 3 great ranges. There are other ranges, but they are not so high, and they are made up of many poets'. Keeping to this mountain-imagery he continues 'To ascend Wordsworth is to ascend a mountain around which there clings a perpetual mist. Often that mist disappears, or is blown apart, and then, the landscapes open below us, landscapes comparable to those we see from Milton or Shakespeare, landscapes of the mind of men. And then the mist gathers again and we are for awhile lost in it. It is this uncertainty gathering over the certainty, this intermission of sight, which is unique in Wordsworth among the 3 greatest poets.'

This uneven and baffling aspect of The Prelude has been always a controversial subject with the critics. Charles offers his own account, and his conclusions are unlike any one else's. He writes that whereas Milton's style 'includes everything in its god-like capacity; if we protest and rebel we are hurled headlong from that ethereal sky' but - 'with Wordsworth the style is natural and has the dangers of Nature. It is diffused, we do not escape from it - or from nature - so easily as we think ... at its greatest this is his poetry. But there is not merely the rest of it, but the depressing rest of it.' He continues that 'generations of readers have protested against something in Wordsworth that sounds like poetry and is not poetry. Life, Wordsworth has told us, is 'energy of love'; what we need is the corresponding poetic energy'. This seems to me to be a just criticism of Wordsworth's uneven poetic performance, and Charles continues with these concepts of poetic energy with a lively account of a choice offered to us, the readers:

'That he wrote so much when that energy was lacking suggests that he did not recognize his want of it. On the other hand, he never completed the philosophical poem which he purposed, which the "Prelude" was to have precluded, of which the "Excursion" was to have been the second part, and the "Recluse" an extract from the first. The "Excursion"

itself is a poem from which poetic energy can be sensibly understood to depart. There are great and noble things in it, as there were scattered through all Wordsworth's later life; and it has a right to demand - what it is not always allowed - that it should be a poem of its own kind and not of ours. But when we have done our best, it remains true that though the "Excursion" has nobler poetry in it than "Don Juan" has, yet "Don Juan" is a better poem and more homogeneous poetry than the "Excursion". It would be a saint, a 'holy fool' of poetry, who would consent to keep the "Excursion" and lose "Don Juan". And his sanctity and his folly would be equal.'

I am not so much concerned here with the justice of Charles' judgement, as to point out how he as a poet estimates Wordsworth in relation to Byron, and how he does not belittle one poet at the expense of the other. Perhaps failure was inevitable? Wordsworth's subject (and I quote Charles) 'was his own experience' and in such new, unexplored territory in poetry there are not only uncertainties but unexplainable failures. Charles sums it up as 'he (i.e. Wordsworth) asserts what his genius meant, and was meant to do; he declares the failure of his genius to do it', but this is followed in the next sentence by 'Wordsworth is our third greatest poet, but even Wordsworth was never the poet he should have been.'

The chapter includes comments on those strange and lonely figures in The Prelude that are usually referred to as the 'solitaries'. Charles writes 'Wordsworth had one poetic habit in common with Milton - the habit of introducing solitary figures. But there is a difference between them: Milton's are active, Wordsworth's are passive; Milton's are in revolt, Wordsworth's are in - what are they in? and later 'They communicate a strange sensation of semi-mystical fear; they rise before us in that verse, as shapes partly of terror, partly of sympathy, wholly of mystery.'

There follows 6 examples. Of course other critics have attempted to explain these 'solitaries'. Later in the same chapter Charles makes a memorable comment on them 'and somehow - as in certain antique legends - the poet never asks quite the right question'. The example Charles most often referred to was that of the Arab (in Book V) escaping from the deluge and floods, carrying to safety geometry and poetry. In my copy of the poem $3\frac{1}{2}$ pages are marked and he adds the comment that the Arab is a solitary and that the stone (Euclid's Elements) and the shell (Poetry) 'are also two elements in poetry; the stone should accompany the shell.' Much of this chapter is concerned with the other 'solitaries' and their possible meanings. To Charles this was Wordsworth writing at the height of his powers and you will recall that the last line was 'Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!' After these complex, difficult matters the chapter ends 'But if we could be allowed to attribute will and intention to the English Muse, it might seem that she deliberately refrained from visiting her son until his central experience was ended, in order that we might have, for our delight that great song of solemn endurance and hope. It is a music which might have accompanied Adam and Eve as they passed from Eden at the close of Paradise Lost. Wordsworth had written of Coleridge: 'He was most wonderful in the power he possessed of throwing out in profusion grand central truths from which he evolved the most comprehensive systems', One might say the same of Charles Williams?

Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind followed in 1933. The 'Preface' opens with: 'The four corners of this book be at the following points 1) the use of the word Reason by Wordsworth in 'the Prelude' 2) the abandonment of the intellect by Keats in the 'Nightingale' and 'Urn' 3) the emphasis laid on Reason by Milton in 'Paradise Lost' 4) the schism in Reason studied by Shakespeare in the tragedies.' The Preface continues that a 'middle point' will be 'the definition of Beauty by Marlowe in 'Tamburlaine' and 'the imagination of it, by Keats in the same two odes', as yet another 'middle point'. I wish

here to single out the main Wordsworthian references only.

Chapter II is called 'The Analysis of William' and opens:

'There are two ways of reading the "Prelude"; one is to read it as about Wordsworth, the other is to read it as about William. Wordsworth wrote a number of poems about persons with Christian names only; there are Lucy and Michael and Margaret and Leonard and Barbara and others. It seems possible to regard the "Prelude" as one of them. The point of the distinction between the two methods is not that one is superior to the other; neither is. But they define certain alternative tendencies. The reader who is more interested in Wordsworth as a personal poet and a psychological problem will tend to read it in one way; the reader who is more interested in the poetic effect of the poem the other. This will be passionately denied by all the Wordsworthians and treasured as a secret conviction by all the Williamites. It will be noticed from the last sentence that this chapter is definitely Williamite.'

I have mentioned earlier in this lecture Charles' attitude to the 'biographical heresy', but personally I find this method of naming the two attitudes to Wordsworth confusing. I am so used to thinking about a poet called Wordsworth that I cannot accept easily that 'William' is the same person. What I do recognise is the expression of one of Charles' central beliefs about the attitude of the reader to the poet, and his work, in the two sentences which follow shortly after that first paragraph. They are:

'A poem contains for itself nothing but what it does contain and nothing of what it contains exists, for poetry, outside the poem. Many poetic discoveries have been dragged out of their context and made to walk the world alone.'

This is followed by the comments on Wordsworth regarding Annette which I have quoted earlier. Charles continues by considering another concept in The Prelude, that is sublimity and writes 'Sublimity is a state in which passion is reason; in which we see into the life of things' (p.20). In Book II of my copy of The Prelude a passage is marked by him which reads:

'for I would walk alone, 302
Under the quiet stars, and at that time
Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
To breathe an elevated mood, by form 305
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
If the night blackened with a coming storm,
Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant winds. 310
Thence did I drink the visionary power;
And deem not profitless those fleeting moods
Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
That they are kindred to our purer mind
And intellectual life; but that the soul, 315

Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
Of possible sublimity, whereto
With growing faculties she doth aspire,
With faculties still growing, feeling still
That whatsoever point they gain, they yet
Have something to pursue.'

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These lines are printed (on p.21 of 'Analysis of William') in this chapter, and analysed under three headings:

'There are three things to be remarked here, because they were all repeated later on: (i) Visionary power is aroused by the distant winds; (ii) this, and such moods, are kindred to pure mind and intellectual life; (iii) they enable the soul to retain a sense of possible sublimity - possible, and not more than possible, because she remembers how but not what she felt; poetry cannot yet define the what. She feels that she can see into the life of things, but she does not. Passion is reason, but she does not yet see the rational harmony. The references were repeated when at the end of Book V William's view of poetry was described. A 'great Nature' exists in poetry.'

The reasoning becomes denser, gathering up the concepts of 'forms and substances', as Charles believed that Wordsworth used them. He returns to the fleeing Arab, and argues here that he 'was saving the Elements because it was the symbol of pure reason, and long afterwards, in the last Book, Wordsworth told us what William held Imagination to be -

'Absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood.'

This passage is underlined in my copy (p.243).

At the end of this essay he numbers the conclusions he has reached:

'"The Prelude" then asserts that exalted Reason is a part of the Imagination; by Reason it means either (i) an abstract pattern, such as Euclid or Archimedes produced, geometry or mathematics, the self-consistent, unemotional world of logical creation, or (ii) that world exalted in passion to sublimity. And by (ii) he meant the operation of a great mind on the forms and substances of the universe, composing and harmonizing them into a new nature within itself. In its effective state such a mind recognizes and unites both its own experiencing faculties and the things it experiences. Reason without passion and yet applied to the world is a deadly thing (the poem earlier describes William's effort to use it so). But when it is passion it sees into the life of things. It beholds them, as from Snowdon; it hears ascending a single voice, which, in his own image of his own experience, he beheld himself feeling.

'There is, certainly - for good or evil - a good deal of "sublimity" about all this. But if it is all true, how have the poets done it? Power we may accept. But in what sense has the exalted Reason been possessed by them? And what have they done about Beauty?'

So, the 'Analysis of William' ends with the question: 'And what have they done about Beauty?'. In Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind this is taken up in the following chapter called 'What is Beauty?' But I would like to repeat what I wrote earlier on Charles' definition of Beauty - 'and the imagination of it, by Keats, in the same two odes' as one of his 'middle points'. Because I was reminded of this, reading recently, two tutors writing for an Open University Course on 'Romantic Poetry' where one writes: 'From the early stages of his career the subject which seems most to concern and inspire (Keats) is poetry itself, its role in life, the writing of poetry, and of himself as a poet. In this he resembles such twentieth century poets as Yeats and Rilke and it is one of the things that distinguish him and them from such poets as Dante and Shakespeare'. True, but perhaps Wordsworth should also be included? (Roger Day on 'Endymion' quoted by P.N. Furbank, O,U, Unit on 'Keats' Course A362).

In 1935 Gollancz published The New Book of English Verse, of which Charles was the editor together with three associate editors. My own copy is inscribed 'CW 26 Octr / 1935'. In the 'Introduction' he writes on 'an accidental interest of my own. I have ... preferred to include verse which contained a certain critical comment. The criticism of poetry by poetry is never quite the same as criticism in prose, and English poetry has always possessed a high capacity for reflecting, and reflecting on itself.'

I hope by now this sounds to you a logical extension of what he had argued in the earlier books of essays? In this anthology of The New Book of English Verse 44 pages are allotted to Wordsworth of which 27 are passages from The Prelude. Many of them are those marked-out in my copy. (I should perhaps mention, here, that extracts from long poems were included in this book, as well as single, whole poems.) Included are lines from The Prelude which deal with Wordsworth's stay in Paris at the time of the French Revolution. (Book X, p. 182). In my own copy, these lines are marked but against:

' ... the tide retreats
But to return out of its hiding-place
In the great deep; all things have second birth';

He has written 'and so with poetry'.

To return to the 'Introduction', Charles writes 'Wordsworth had advanced through daffodils to the skeleton of Man's mind; it was that skeleton, the shadow of which lay over the Victorians'. I need not more than remind you that it was in 1936 that he created the Skeleton in his Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury. At the end of the volume he supplied 'Notes', and he explained how they were to be used: 'The following sentences are called "Notes", and that is all they are meant to be. They are not a full critical or biographical apparatus; they merely comment on a few possible

relationships, include a few extra lines, or make a few transient comments by the way.' Under 'Wordsworth' he wrote:

'I have put the "Prelude" extracts first because of their importance. In general they present either some poetic exploration or some form of that vision of an ominous Solitary that haunted Wordsworth. It was, in effect, himself he so often saw - the threat of the yet un-achieved greatness, the "visionary" (No.ii) which he felt in the storm, and again, more intimately, on entering London (No.viii). In No.v two elements of poetry are imaged in stone and shell; it was not his fault that his romantic disciples kept the shell and mislaid the stone. The "Prelude" is full of warnings against the very romanticism which Wordsworth has been made to preach, as Milton has been made to preach Satan, Browning cheerfulness, and Shakespeare whatever was at the moment needed. But indeed by the conclusion (No. xv) he did a little to invite it; he was overmuch preoccupied with himself rather than the thing.

The poems - even "Tintern Abbey" - are comments on passages in the "Prelude"; a too-exclusive attention to them has restored to him a romanticism he laboured to escape.' (p.804).

The references to Shakespeare and Milton, and stone and shell etc., seem familiar to us by now?

In 1943 he gave 8 lectures on Shakespeare and 8 on Wordsworth in the Taylorian Institution in Oxford, and a group of us paused to remember this, outside the Taylorian, during a 'Charles Williams in Oxford' walk, between sessions of the Day Conference on him on Saturday July 7, 1984. This is to me, how great architecture 'contains' voices and memories.

I would like to end by quoting a letter he wrote to me dated '1 June / 43': 'There are people I ought to write to, and why I should reply at once to you ... but perhaps you deserve it and ought to have it, - being in some transcendental way a not-too bad princess of Logres Dante (they tell me) will be out on 25th June. I have sent the poems to T. [Tambimutta] and hope he approves, and prints them. I think of writing on Wordsworth as a companion to Dante.'

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