

The Charles Williams Society

NEWSLETTER

No. 71, AUTUMN 1993



MEETINGS OF THE CHARLES WILLIAMS SOCIETY

26 February 1994: Rev Huw Mordecai will speak on "Charles Williams and the Occult".

11 June 1994: The Society will hold its Annual General Meeting in Pusey House, Oxford. Following this Anne Ridler will speak on "Charles Williams: the intelligence of Love". This will be an all-day meeting.

15 October 1994: Aidan Mackey will speak on the poetry of G K Chesterton.

The meetings in February and October will be held at Liddon House, 24 South Audley Street, London W1 starting at 2.30 pm.

LONDON READING GROUP

Sunday 10 April 1994: We will start to read Cranmer of Canterbury. We will meet at St Matthews Church Vestry, 27 St Petersburg Place, London W2 at 1pm.

OXFORD READING GROUP

For information please contact either Anne Scott (Oxford 53897) or Brenda Boughton (Oxford 515589).

CAMBRIDGE READING GROUP

For information please contact Geraldine and Richard Pinch, 5 Oxford Road, Cambridge CB4 3PH (Cambridge 311465).

LAKE MICHIGAN AREA READING GROUP

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

DALLAS CATHEDRAL READING GROUP

For details please contact Canon Roma King, 9823 Twin Creek Drive, Dallas, Texas 75228, USA.

COUNCIL MEETING (23 October 1993)

At a meeting of the Council on 23 October 1993 the Society's finances were discussed and final decisions made about the new subscription rates.

A sub-committee was appointed (Joan Northam - Convenor, Lepel Kornicka, Brian Horne and Adrian Thomas) to arrange ways to mark the 50th anniversary of Charles Williams' death in 1995.

Arrangements were reported, and final plans discussed, for Society meetings in 1994.

1993 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Reminders are enclosed in this Newsletter for those members who have not yet paid their subscription. Please note that as from 1 March 1994 when the new financial year starts, Newsletters will only be sent to those members whose subscriptions have been paid.

NEWS ABOUT BOOKS

Members may be interested to know of a bookshop (new and secondhand) and book-search service which includes Charles Williams in its list of "specials": Daeron's Books, 106 The High Street, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes MK8 8HL. Tel: 0908-262484.

SOCIETY REFERENCE LIBRARY

Brian Horne writes: "For more than fifteen years the reference library of the Society has been housed in the library of King's College, London, by the kind permission of the Librarian of King's

College. A few years later the George Macdonald Society's reference library was similarly given space by King's College library. Locating the libraries conveniently has become more and more difficult as the years have passed: the pressure on space in the library at King's College has increased every year. Recently, the only place that could be found for these two collections was in the office of the librarian himself. This has inevitably created problems. He has been unfailingly courteous and accommodating to members of the Society who have wished to consult the collection, but when he is using his own room it is impossible for him to be able to welcome readers from either of the Societies. I have, therefore, decided that, for the moment, the library of the Charles Williams Society should be moved out of the librarian's office and re-located in my own room in the College. This is not a solution to the problem of the placing of the reference collection, but because I am so involved in the work of the Society and understand the needs of those who wish to consult items in the collection, the process of reaching the collection will be made much easier. I am afraid I cannot offer to house the George Macdonald collection as well (even if the George Macdonald Society thought that was a good idea); my own shelves can barely accommodate the new arrivals."

MEMBERS' CORRESPONDENCE

Tim Beaumont wrote in October 1993 making the following comments on the talk given to the Society by Professor John Hibbs and reprinted in Newsletter 67 (Autumn 1992) on "Charles Williams and current economic thought": "The suggestion that Hayek and Williams have much in common is unacceptable to many of us who know that Williams combined a Conservative approach with an intensely radical one. Hayek's doctrine of exchange is about bargaining, Williams's is about giving."

Hayek in The Road to Serfdom has been convincingly described as "anti-democratic" and

quasi-dictatorial. Nothing is to stand in the way of the free market and no such fripperies as democratic votes are to be allowed to upset it. The unadulterated Free Market is unalterable and those who dislike it or suffer from it must learn to put up with it."

This appears to be irreconcilable with respect for God the Father's Creation, which Capitalism is fast destroying, or the Work of the Holy Spirit who leads us into truth (not instructs us about absolute economic principles) and, as for what Jesus of Nazareth would have had to say about it, the imagination boggles.

We must not pray in aid the dead but I may surely be allowed to suggest that the Prophet of the Co-inherence would not have allied himself to a doctrine which says: "There is no such thing as Community, only individuals!".

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to:

Joy Stephenson, Bywell House, St Mary's Hill, South Ascot, Berkshire SL5 6AP,

Mrs Jessica Rose, 10 Kingston Road, Oxford OX2 6EF,

Mrs Wendy Robinson, The Forge, Hope Mansel, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5TL.

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Following the business of the Annual General Meeting on 5 June 1993 there were readings from two autobiographies, both of which contained references to Charles Williams. The extract from Eric Maskell's Saraband was included in the last Newsletter. With the publisher's permission we reproduce the extract from John Wain's autobiography Sprightly Running, pps 147 - 152, published by Macmillan.

"I find it very difficult, now, to recapture the mood that possessed me in those days. The only way I can do it is to evoke the memory of the people I admired, and think of the things for which I admired them. Lewis, Heath-Stubbs, Coghill: and, for a brief period over-arching them all, Charles Williams.

Williams! How many people have tried to describe this extraordinary man, and how his essence escapes them! If I try, and no doubt I shall add one more to the list of failures, the reason is that Williams figures so largely in my personal history. I was under his spell at a decisive point in my development. Indescribable as he was, there is nothing for it but to try. One reason why Williams is hard to describe is because, if one simply gives the essential facts about him, they would sound like a description of a detestable type of charlatan. Yet he was genuine. The facts go one way, the truth another.

Williams was born at Holloway, the son of a man whose work is described as 'foreign correspondence clerk in French and German to a firm of importers' - exactly that combination of modest lower-middle-class circumstances with a touch of bookishness and refinement that has produced so many English literary people, including some of the greatest. After the usual sketchy education which such families could then manage to give their sons (he attended University College, London but could not afford to complete the course) he tried a job or two and finally settled with the Oxford University Press in 1908. The Press gave him both a job and a way of life, bringing him into some sort of contact, however tangential, with the world of literature and scholarship. For a good many years Williams appears to have led the life of a typical minor man of letters; he lectured at the City Literary Institute, wrote not very distinguished poems and critical works, and generally seemed destined to lead an up-to-date version of the life his father had led; shaping, at most, to be a kind of twentieth-century Charles Lamb.

By one of the strange quirks of fate that make people's biographies perpetually surprising, he was lifted out of this rut by - of all things - the fact that one of his hobbies was theology. As a very young man he had belonged to a discussion group in St Albans known as the Theological Smokers; theology, being a grand and mysterious subject which can be studied without much prior knowledge and which encourages intellectual subtlety, is a favourite topic of young men of a certain type, and to this type Williams must have belonged very exactly. All his life his interest in theology persisted, and coloured most of what he wrote. By the 1930s he had acquired a certain reputation among his fellow-Anglicans as a writer who could deal with the concepts of theology in a fresh and unusual way. Then came the war, and the evacuation of the Oxford University Press from London to Oxford; and Williams had come into his true home at last. Among Oxford's literary Anglo-Catholics he already had at least one friend, in the person of Lewis, and he quickly made others. Soon, the war-time famine of teachers led to his being co-opted into the English School as a tutor and then as a lecturer. His lectures, like his personality, were different from anything Oxford had seen before; but they were not different in any deeply challenging or irritating way. On the contrary, they offered a very acceptable re-statement of things that many people that many people in Oxford were saying, but in a different idiom. Williams was Anglo-Catholic, traditionalist, royalist, with a taste for mythical theology. The prevailing Oxford attitude agreed with all these things. But Williams was, on the surface at any rate, refreshingly like an outsider. He had no 'Oxford manner'. His accent was that of his native Holloway; his delivery impassioned and torrential. His appearance was both sober and bardic, suggesting an epic poet who also worked as a bank teller.

All this sounds as if Williams, in blunt terms, 'put on an act'. And so he did. But it was a harmless, innocent kind of act: as an acute friend

remarked to me recently, it was very much the act Mr Polly might have put on, if he had found himself accepted as a man of learning and genius. It was not so much a way of imposing on people as a way of showing that he appreciated the welcome they gave him. And a welcome they certainly did give him, even if it was not wholly without an ironic element. His lectures were crowded out. Even I, who chose to be very supercilious about lectures, seldom missed one. Williams, on the platform, enjoyed himself so much that even the most obstinate sceptics in the audience finally capitulated and shared his enjoyment. You could not really laugh at him because he had, ultimately, so little self-importance. He ranted, and threw back his head, and clutched at the shoulders of his gown, and stamped up and down on the platform, but there was always the feeling that he was not doing it to impress us with his own importance, but rather with the importance of the material he was dealing with. His mood never seemed to fall below the level of blazing enthusiasm. Great poetry was something to be revelled in, to be rejoiced over, and Williams revelled and rejoiced up there before our eyes. When he quoted, which he did continually and from memory, he shouted the lines at the top of his voice like an operatic tenor tearing into an aria. It was not war, but it was magnificent.

Sometimes, now, I try to muster my remaining memories of what Williams actually said about the poems he lectured on. Mostly it has dissolved, and what I can recollect is usually undistinguished and in some cases fallacious and even silly. But his basic critical attitude came across very strongly, and it has influenced me and stood me in good stead. Williams was a lover and a praiser. If he announced a course for lectures on a poet, you knew you were in for a tremendous paean in praise of that poet. He never tried to point out the weaknesses or to cut his subject down to a more manageable scale. If he attempted a 'reevaluation', it was invariably a reevaluation 'upwards'. Naturally this all fitted in beautifully with my whole attitude at that time. Practically my whole

waking life was given either to reading the major English poets or to discussing them with my friends, and all those friends were people who shared my assumption that this was the most important subject we could possibly be talking about. That was the basic principle which allowed me to reconcile such opposite personalities: Meyerstein, for example, was indifferent to Williams - fortunately, no doubt, since if he had been aware of him at all he would probably have felt his usual jealousy and suspicion of anyone who had managed to strike a bargain with the dons. But Meyerstein, at least, would have assented to Williams's basic premise that great poetry was a triumph of the human spirit and should be approached with joy and gratitude. And I was content to range all the people who shared this attitude on one side, and the Philistine mass of humanity on the other, and throw in my lot with the former.

I am glad of this. Youths of twenty are waxily impressionable, and if I had been thrown into contact with the sort of teacher who prides himself on making his charges wary and suspicious, treating every author as a potential imposter who has to prove his genuineness in detail before he can be admitted to respectability, I have no doubt that I should have sneered and challenged with the best. I was already pharisaical enough; it would have been no great feat to import a holier-than-thou attitude into my literary judgements too. That this did not happen, that I remained deeply conscious of the debt that the rest of us owe to any man who has been through the furnace and emerged as an artist - even if not absolutely the greatest kind of artist - is as much Williams's doing as anyone's.

Williams was a good influence in other ways too. He was generous, free of malice, too much absorbed in contemplation of great writing and greater revelation to stoop to petty self-seeking - or he appeared to be, which amounted to the same thing.

Certainly I can testify that he was almost incredibly generous with his time and energy. Considering what he was doing - carrying on with his work at the Press, reviewing numerous books for Time and Tide, lecturing at least once a week in the English School, giving tutorials, and all the while pouring out poems and ambitious theological works - it was amazing that he so seldom refused to come and speak to the humblest undergraduate society. Talk seemed to flow from him, in whatever company he found himself, and even at the height of his fame he never withdrew his talk from less important audiences in order to lavish it on more important. I remember an evening when he came to address the St John's Essay Society, that same little club on whose behalf I had first called on Mayerstein. For a couple of hours he held forth on Malory's Morte d'Arthur, leaving us with a confused but strong impression of its majesty and beauty, and throwing himself into the exposition with such fervour that it might have been the chosen task of his lifetime to get this handful of callow, pipe-smoking undergraduates to read Malory. In a word, he gave himself to Oxford as unreservedly as Oxford gave itself to him.

It could not last; anyone looking at Williams could tell that he would never make old bones. But no one expected the end to come as quickly as it did. I never heard what he died of. He was simply snatched from our midst, so suddenly that a review he had written for the next week's Time and Tide appeared several days after his death. He was a war-time phenomenon, and his death occurred just as the war with Germany ended. 'A' parted even ... at the turning o' the tide.' It was the middle of the summer term, beautiful weather, with a stir of hopefulness in the air. I was walking from Longwall Street, where I lodged, towards St John's, and had just reached the Clarendon Building when a girl I knew by sight came pedalling fast and agitatedly on her bicycle round the corner from New College Lane. 'John', she called out, 'Charles Williams is dead.' She had never spoken to me before, and normally would have avoided using my

Christian name. But this was a general disaster, like an air-raid, and the touch of comradeship was right. I asked her for the details, but she knew nothing except that he was dead. In any case, she could not talk, she was only just not crying.

I walked on towards St John's. The war with Germany was over. Charles Williams was dead. And suddenly Oxford was a different place. There was still so much to enjoy, much to love and hate, much to get used to; but the war-time Oxford of my undergraduate days had disappeared. Its pulse had stopped with the pulse of Williams."

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Scene From A Mystery by Charles Williams, first published in The New Witness on 12 December 1919 and reproduced with the permission of David Higham Associates.

"The stage is formed by any wide platform. The persons presented enter in procession: a herald, the shepherds, the kings, Herod and Caiaphas, a thurifer, Joseph and Mary, Satan and Gabriel, lastly, vested in a crimson cope, our Lord Love. The herald and thurifer stand on either side of the stage. Love goes up to the raised seat at the back, on either side of him Gabriel and Satan on lower chairs, Mary in a chair at the side of the stage on the right side of Love; the shepherds with Joseph and the kings on stools at opposite front corners of the stage. Herod and Caiaphas opposite Mary. When Love takes his seat the trumpet sounds and the others also sit. After a silence Love speaks.

Love:

I am the master of all households, I
Am he who binds together man with maid,
The odour of sweet hallows, and the tie
Wherewith the joints of all the world are
stayed.

I am the banner of that fair city
'Twixt God and you set up republican,
The commonwealth long sighed-for, just and free,
Descending from the inner heavens on man.

Also I am Division, a sharp sword;
And whereso Beauty is led forth to die,
I am the steel that pierces her, the cord
That binds, the hands that catch and crucify.

I am the overthrow of mortal pride,
The cutting-off of gentle friends new-wed,
Yet I who slay am also I who died,
Yea, I am he who liveth and was dead.

O you my lovers, in whose hearts I burn,
Who know my lordliest names of Love and Death,
How to my heart of hearts ye first 'gan yearn
Is none among you but remembereth.

A little while consider now, my folk,
My publication to your eyes and ears,
As I to all men speak, to some men spoke,
And blest were they who heard, is he who hears.

Choose ye this even whether ye will see
The inner or the outer tale unroll,
If this Judaea seem and Galilee,
Or the profound depth of man's inmost soul!

For in his dereliction, by God's grace,
Immaculate that virgin soul abides,
And I am born of her in a dark place
To undergo the storm of angry tides.

See now how I am tempted of his skill,
Satan, the Adversary, that great god,
Whose name can none but I speak rightly till
Time, Space, and Growth draw to their period:

How Herod, Caiaphas, and Pilate, kings
of many peoples and within your hearts,
Each his own torment to my passion brings,
Till all but Courage out of me departs:

How on that night where I and all men thirst
Again I rise, the Dayspring and the Morn:
Sit and behold the mystery, and first
Witness, my folk, how I of man am born.
[He ceases, and Satan rises and moves forward.]

Satan:

That which is in me none but Love shall know,
Who am to you a tempter and a foe,
An accusation, an adversity.
Hell and the thrones thereof are given to me,
And all their fieriest malice I control,
I sit between it and each mortal soul;
By me Beelzebub steals forth the bread
Of satisfaction from man's heart, I lead
Into temptation daily, nor at all
Deliver you from evils where ye fall:
But what I am the Youngest Day shall show
When I bear witness of your deeds below.
Hark, from beneath me rises a great cry.

All:

O Lord our Love, have mercy, lest we die!

Love:

Is not this then my earth which I have made?
And these mankind whom I have brought to be,
And in their cities mightily have stayed?
Except I fail, they shall not fail from me!
[He rises. Gabriel comes forward.]

Run swiftly, O my angel, O you strong
Prophets and fast forestallers of my day,
You heavenly motions, though the time be long,
Cry that salvation hastens on its way.
[He remains standing. Gabriel going about the
stage, meets Satan.]

Satan:

O Gabriel, what dost thou in man's house?

Gabriel:

My God hath heard his vain continuous vows,
And is content to help him; there is found

Virginity within him, and his wound
Shall therefore be of Love healed utterly.

Satan:

Yea, if this Love break also under me?

Gabriel:

O Satan, men are given thee for a prey,
Tempt therefore Man while it is called thy day,
But me thou canst not stay nor hinder now.

[He comes before Mary.]

Hail full of grace! the Lord is with thee, thou
Art blessed among women, and from thee
A Child shall rise up to great mastery
Over all kingdoms.

Mary:

How shall this thing be,
Seeing I have none other love but Love?

Gabriel:

Therefore the Highest doth already move
Within thy body secretly, none else
Shall work the wonder that this message tells:
That holy thing which comes among mankind
Shall be Love's self; already through Earth's mind
Doth he his title, which is Jesus, win,
For he shall save his people from their sin.
Farewell!

Mary:

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
Be it to me according to thy word!

Love:

Behold, this is God's Mother, this is She
Wherein all generations shall be blest,
After much piercing, with my victory,
And an inviolable house of rest.

Infinite laws of Time and Space agree
To form each Bethlehem that takes my birth:

O you twice-born, rejoice this night to see
How I take hold on your redeemed earth.

But, as my mother is a housekeeper,
So shall a master-craftsman teach my youth
The furnishings of Time, a carpenter,
A just man and a wise, desiring truth.

Gabriel:

Joseph!

Joseph:

Who calls?

Gabriel:

I bid thee to thy place
In a most holy fellowship of grace.
That man be saved and all things yet be well,
Out of a clear soul comes Immanuel.
His guardian and his mother's shalt you be,
As intellect is wed to sanctity.

[He brings Joseph to Mary.]

Joseph:

Ah lady, what is this that comes to me?

Mary:

Ah fair sweet friend, I am given into thy guard
To be thy business and best reward;
Either to tend on either. O strong mind,
O shelter which my child and I shall find
In justice, till the planets bid and he
Change that into his new epiphany,
I lay my hands in thine, and all my powers
I shake into this foremost of the hours!

[The trumpet sounds, and Love comes down between
Mary and Joseph, where he remains for the rest of
the scene. A silence follows.]

Love:

Now, Gabriel my herald, prophecy
To scanted shepherds of new food and fire,
To mages how their spiritual sky
Is lit to guide them to their hearts' desire.

First Shepherd:

Brothers, my master took but yesterday
To wrap his furred limbs my old cloak away.
Cold is the night and heavy is the rain.

Second Shepherd:

Brothers, he sent me to the fields again,
Weary with many toils, to mind his sheep.
O for an hour of food and fire and sleep!

Third Shepherd:

Brothers, my head was broken by his staff,
And as I ran I heard the highpriest laugh.
Who is this tyranny that tramples us?

First Shepherd:

Herod the king.

Second Shepherd:

Yea, some have called him thus.
Others, Possession.

Third Shepherd:

Others, Lust-in-man.
It is a sickness which since Earth began,
Works in our bones and does our health destroy.

Gabriel:

Fear not, I bring good tidings of great joy:
By you to all distressed folk on earth
Be spread the news of your Redeemer's birth,
Who shall break all lusts and all lords thereof.
This day the saviour of the people, Love,
Is born, and helpless in a swaddling cloth
At Bethlehem he waits to seal your troth.
Peace upon earth and unto men goodwill!

First Shepherd:

Hark, through the frozen darkness of out ill
Did not Hope's voice call to us suddenly?

Second Shepherd:

Of food and shelter and security?

Third Shepherd:

A time for dreaming and a time to see?

First Shepherd:

O body, thou shalt have thy fill of bread!

Second Shepherd:

O swollen feet, ye shall lie still in bed!

Third Shepherd:

O mouth, thou yet shalt have thy love to kiss
And song within thee! O what hope is this!

First Shepherd:

Brothers, to Bethlehem behoves us go:
Perchance this young child shall lift up the low!

Second Shepherd:

O if the tyranny of rich men cease!

Third Shepherd:

And all we miserable folk find peace!

First Shepherd:

Mother, a word hath dropped out of the sky,
And we are come to follow it, but I
Have naught except this leather belt to bring.

Second Shepherd:

Mother, this crust is all my offering;
And even Joseph could not break this bread.

Mary:

In a little ye shall have white loaves instead;
No man for our sake shall forbear to eat,
But I will grind him flour from heavenly wheat.

Third Shepherd:

But I am bare of that and bare of all.
My head is caked with blood; my heart -

Mary:

This shawl
Shall keep thy wound from cold in the night wind.

Third Shepherd:

O Mother, pray for me, for I have sinned
And am utterly outcast! behold my deeds
Have wronged my poor flesh worse than all its needs

Love:

But I this day am risen to heal all flesh
Who sensibly shall feel me and adore.
I will catch the soul of man within its mesh:
Depart, sweet sons, forgiven; sin no more.

Gabriel:

O you true kings, from whom all kings began,
Masters of knowledge, potencies in man,
Shapers and principles of his high town,
Draw near, behold the true long-exiled Crown.

Gaspar:

Brothers, the great Republic is come down
From those far heavens where long it faintly
gleamed.

Melchior:

Brothers, the beauty that man dreamed he dreamed
Is come to dwell with him, is flesh and blood.

Balthasar:

Brothers, man's soul is grown to motherhood,
And who is born thereof but only Love?

Gaspar:

Now fades the sign and star which, high above
Our lamps of vigil, to direct us shone.

Melchior:

Now all our watches and our ways are done.
And now no more our faith shall lead us on.

Balthasar:

Lo, in the soul's house we stand to speak.

Herod:

O kings, what wonder are ye come to seek?

Balthasar:

The Crown which all anointed kings must share
If they be found of worship anywhere,
The perfect government and right thereof,
The mastery of all things which is Love.

Herod:

O kings, such rule is found not upon earth.

Balthasar:

O Herod, we are witness of its birth.

Herod:

O Caiaphas my brother, what is this?
I and Religion, wedding with a kiss,
Each at the other's need swore to avail,
And shall she turn from me?

Caiaphas:

There is a tale,
Believed by women and by broken men,
That of man's body shall be born again
Justice, Love's name, in some small Bethlehem;
Wherefore be wise and parley yet with them.

Herod:

O kings, such marvel is not known to me,
Who have known many loves and wars; if ye
Find this new ruler, this young innocence,
This heart of hearts, come when ye turn from thence
That also I may yield him up my crown.

Gabriel:

O wise and humble men of heart, kneel down:
Within a shed of clay, mortal and low,
God the first stone of his delight shall show.

Joseph:

O blessed one, O Mary, here are they
Whom I have seen long since upon their way,
The wise instructors of each heart and mind:
O sages, this is Wisdom which ye find.

Gaspar:

My kingdom, Mother, lies among mankind
Wherever moves in them one general mind,
In law or labour. I am he who builds
Hordes into nations, bargainers to guilds:
All seats of judgement are my embassies;
Making of roads and planting roots and trees
I teach to men: all who forget their ease
To quench the fires of fever in thick streets,
Masters and sailors of all merchant fleets
That twist a delicate thread of knowledge through
Far lands, oft broken, always knit anew,
Manu and Numa and he too whom I
Talked with, beside thee, upon Sinai, -
These are my folk, and from all these I bring
This gold, their common wealth and offering.

Mary:

Blessed and hallow'd be man's law in man.

Melchior:

In me the glory of great verse began, -
Of such my kingdom is; its provinces
Are halls alive with music, galleries
Of sculpture; colour everywhere is mine.
The pure perfection of unsullied line,
And architecture. His vast tragedy
By me man understands, and speaks by me
Exalted words that touch eternity.
I, eagerest of all his powers, await,
Mother, this high conclusion of his fate,
Banded with my swift servants, on whose part
Behold the frank-incense of passionate art;
Best gift, save one, of all their tragic clan.

Mary:

Blessed and hallow'd be man's art in man.

Balthasar:

Hail, O my mother: I am Balthasar
Whose head is crowned with sorrow, death, and war,
Who have both wreaked and suffered many harms.
I am the trumpet, I am man in arms.
I am battle rending a dark house of sin,
I am the dark night of the soul within,
I am vengeance, penitence, and sacrifice;
And I, and some few else, at our blood's price,
Have bought, and bring thy son, these grains of
myrrh.
for he shall join us in our sepulchre.

Mary:

Blessed and hallow'd be man's war in man.

Love:

Children, long since ye saw the heavenly plan
Of Mansoul; I am with you in your pain,
As I am with your poorest artisan;
I am the Lamb i the foundation slain.

By you my viceroys will I bring to be
In men that image of my perfect town
Which is the home of my eternity;
But ye, take heed your purpose drops not down.

Ye shall grow old, but if your thought regard
My innocence no longer, O wise kings,
If law on his own precedent set ward,
And War be waged for aught but the last things.

I will destroy you wholly, I will turn
Your laws and battles on themselves to feed,
Till anarchy shall all about you burn.
Farewell, sweet sons, remember and give heed.

[The shepherds and kings part from Love with great
ceremony, and pass round the stage on their return.
Meanwhile Satan speaks.]

Satan:

Now will I try this Lord Love first with death,
To see how many little ones draw breath
Within this town of birth, and if he dare
Leave them to die, while he flee elsewhere.
Lo, Herod, who is all men's lust for power
O'er men, broods fearfully lest some great hour
Make all his kingship empty quite and vain;
Shall then those innocents by him be slain
Within his heart? or dare he cease to reign?
King!

Herod:

Aye.

Satan:

What if men stand up and break free
From digging, fishing, town-building for thee?
Hear'st thou no rumour of enfranchisement?

Herod:

How may I save my life from such advent?

Satan:

Didst thou not slay what ruth and pity rose
Within thee once? Like innocents were those
To these young children where, if anywhere,
Revolt shall rise to take away thy chair.

Herod:

Therefore now will I bring on them a sword
Lest any but this world shall be men's lord;
And, being the mightiest in that world, even I
Lose their hard labour and their loyalty.

Love:

Now will I also get myself away
Far from the Israel to whom I come,
For the world's kings are risen in array
Fain to destroy this infant Christendom.

Can I not see, my people, in your hearts
How much of Herod brings great wrath and guile
Against me and my mother, who departs
To hide me from your sins a little while?

Lest ye in truth should sin and sinning die,
I will go forth, but will again return,
And will be mighty in you bye and bye
Till ye the gospel of my manhood learn.

But you, O little children, you will I
Leave, terribly unmoved for all your pain,
To suffer bloodshed with all men that die;
All lovely things shall pass ere I be slain.

[The trumpet sounds and the persons of the mystery
move out in procession as they entered.]”

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