

PROPHET OF FELICITY

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PROPHET OF FELICITY:  
A STUDY OF  
THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND  
OF THOMAS TRAFERNE

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## PREFACE

The following thesis is a preliminary examination of the writings of Thomas Traherne, designed to show the relationship between Traherne's own personal intuitions of the relationship between Man, God, and the Universe, and the use he made of external sources to fortify his arguments. It is really little more than an introduction to the works of a man who has been rather unjustly ignored since he was brought to light at the beginning of this century. In my examination I have used all the genuine Traherne material available to me, omitting a consideration of the Hexameron and Meditations and Devotions on the Life of Christ because of their dubious authenticity, in an attempt to provide a comprehensive introductory examination of Traherne's main themes, methods, and philosophy.

As standard texts I have used M. Bottrall's edition of Christian Ethicks, entitled The Way to Blessedness (London, 1962), and H. M. Margoliouth's two volume edition of Traherne's Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings (Oxford, 1958). Unless otherwise noted, all references to these works are to the texts as they appear in these editions. Where I have had the choice of using Thomas' original or Philip Traherne's versions of various poems, I have chosen the former. The poems, therefore, are cited thus: "The Apostacy", ll. 1-4; where the title is in quotation marks, followed by the line numbers. The same is true for the Thanksgivings. When the Centuries are quoted or cited, they are identified by the following: CM III, 42, ll. 1-5; the capital romans referring to the

Century, the arabics to the meditation and the line numbers as provided in the Margoliouth edition. When referring to the manuscripts, I have cited the passage according to either the pagination or foliation of the manuscript, depending on the individual case. The only elaboration of this principle is in the case of the "Commonplace Book", which was compiled in double columns on each page. In citations of it, the note reads: CPB 29<sup>V</sup>.2, where CPB is the common abbreviation for the title of the manuscript, the 29 the Bodleian foliation, and the number after the decimal, the column. Recto is understood unless verso is specified. Thus the example above refers to leaf 29 verso, column two of the manuscript.

Throughout the text and notes I have used several abbreviations for the various Traherne works. These include:

- ENB ..... The "Early Notebook" (Bodleian MS Lat. misc. f. 45).
- SM ..... "Select Meditations" (pp. 45-219<sup>V</sup> of the Osborn manuscript).
- DS ..... "Disquisition on the Soul" (pp. 246-264 of the Osborn manuscript).
- ML ..... "Meditation on Love" (pp. 266-270 of the Osborn manuscript).
- CM ..... Centuries of Meditations.
- CPB ..... The "Commonplace Book" (ff. 16<sup>V</sup>-96<sup>r</sup> of Bodleian MS Eng. poet. c. 42).
- CYB ..... The "Church's Year-Book" (Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 51).
- RF ..... Roman Forgeries.

CE ..... Christian Ethicks.

FNB ..... The "Ficino Notebook" (Burney MS 126).

Although the thesis that follows is original research, I owe a great debt of gratitude to a number of people, without whom the work would not be what it is. My first debt, as always, is to my parents, who provided me with not only the opportunity for a University education, but also with the encouragement to continue my studies at the graduate level. I am also indebted to Professor J. A. Carscallen, formerly of the University of Waterloo and now at Victoria University in Toronto, who first introduced me to Thomas Traherne; and to Professor A. W. Brink, of McMaster University, whose careful supervision enabled me to organize my research into a meaningful document. My thanks is also due to two Traherne scholars, Mr. J. A. Osborn, of Yale University, for the opportunity to examine the new Traherne manuscript now in his possession, and for permission to quote material from it; and to Miss Carol L. Marks, of Cornell University, for the chance to glean valuable material from various unpublished material she has prepared on the Traherne canon. I am particularly indebted to Miss Marks for lending me her unpublished B. Litt. thesis "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne" (Oxford, 1962), which provided me with information on the contents of the various Traherne manuscripts she examined at first hand. Finally I must thank Miss Jane Underhill for her careful attention and helpful suggestions while reading the various proofs of the thesis. For the blunders and misconceptions that remain, I alone am responsible.

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## INTRODUCTION

The one factor that distinguishes the metaphysical poets from their predecessors more than any other is their interest in the individual and his personal reaction to or involvement in the world around him. This is particularly true in the case of Traherne. Admitting his intense interest in his own individual personal and religious development in countless places throughout his writing, Traherne constructed a philosophical or theological system firmly based on his own particular experience of life. The intuitions of the infant combine with the experiences and reasonings of the adult in the production of the doctrine of felicity which permeates Traherne's writings. The final synthesis of this doctrine, as it is presented in Christian Ethicks, is greatly generalized; but underneath the forced objectivity of the work one sees the subjective framework of the "way to blessedness" which Traherne evolved from his own intuitions and study of the relationship between man, God and the universe.

Since his writing is admittedly based on his own individual experience, it stands to reason that the proper way to approach the study of his system is not from the point of view of the historian of ideas, looking for affinities with other thought systems, but instead from the point of view of the autobiographic critic who looks at the life of the man concerned to determine what events and experiences combined to produce the final result. Rather than make a detailed study of Traherne's



sources, it is more profitable (and I suggest more correct) to point out Traherne's development -- on his own -- of his ideas of the relationship between the individual, his world, and his Creator; and then to indicate how he turned to authorities, both ancient and modern, to gain support for his own individual contentions. Traherne was not a Platonist or an Aristotelian; he was not a Hermeticist or a Hortulian Saint: Traherne was an individual who found, in the works of ancient and modern writers, support for his own infant intuitions. Through diligent study and the use of "highest reason" he found that what he had intuited in his unlearned infancy was, in fact, the basic law of the universe; or, as he said himself, "I knew by Intuition those things which since my Apostacie, I Collected again, by the Highest Reason." (CM III,2, ll. 4-6)

With these facts in mind, the reader will understand why this thesis takes the point of view it does. In order to understand Traherne properly, and in order to find out why and how he arrived at his final conclusions, it is necessary to trace, as well as we can, his pattern of intellectual development. Although Traherne himself gives us some idea of this development in the autobiographical sections of the Third Century of Meditations, more concrete conclusions can be reached through a study of the various manuscripts which comprise the Traherne canon. By examining these manuscripts in their supposed chronological sequence, we are able to follow Traherne through his career from his days as an Oxford undergraduate to his final position as private chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgeman.<sup>1</sup> From such a study one derives a fairly concrete

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<sup>1</sup> For the dating of the canon, as well as a chronology of composition, see Appendix II.

idea of the way in which various forces came to bear on the writer who chose to present to the world as his masterwork an ethical treatise which, as its subtitle promises, unfolds "the Way to Blessedness."

## THE BEGINNINGS

Although Traherne provides us with many indefinite statements about his early life, little can be found that presents concrete documentation of his first fifteen years. No record of either his birth or baptism has yet been discovered. That he was a Hereford man, born of rather poor parents, can be seen from contemporary biographers: both Wood and Aubrey attest that he was born the son of a Hereford shoemaker.<sup>1</sup> The date of his birth remains unknown, although it is assumed, with some certainty, that he was born in the last quarter of 1637.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that Traherne's parents died while he was quite young, a fact apparently born out by the numerous references in his works to his impoverished infant state and his somewhat more richly endowed early youth. Apparently, when his parents died, Thomas and his brother went to live with their uncle, one Philip Traherne Sr., an innkeeper and sometime-mayor

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<sup>1</sup> The pertinent material from both Wood and Aubrey, along with all other concrete information that has been discovered, is included in the introduction to Thomas Traherne, Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings, ed. H. M. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1958), I, xxiii-xxxviii. In this section on the documented biographic material, Dr. Margoliouth includes all the information available up until 1958. Since that time there has been no substantial new find that sheds any further light on the actual dated facts in Traherne's life.

<sup>2</sup> The Brazenose College Register lists his age as fifteen when he enrolled on March 1, 1652/3. He was ordained deacon and priest on October 20, 1660. As Margoliouth points out (I, xxxvii), since the canonical age for deacons was twenty-three, and for priests twenty-four, Traherne must have reached the age of twenty-four some time around October 23, 1661.

of Hereford.<sup>3</sup> The references to both the inn and the mayor's robes in the poems "Poverty" and "Solitude" suggest a close relationship between Thomas and his rich uncle. The lack of reference to Thomas in the rolls of the Grammar School attached to Hereford Cathedral suggest to one critic that Thomas' early education was private.<sup>4</sup> This suggestion appears sound, but, again, is based on assumption. The first concrete date one arrives at in Traherne's biography is that of his entry into Brazenose College, as a commoner, on March 1, 1652/3. At this point begins a phase of Traherne's development that was destined to influence his thinking for the rest of his life, for the Oxford of this date was still dominated by the mediaeval scholastic system, and strait jacketed by a strict adherence to Aristotelian terminology and methodology.

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Unlike Cambridge, which was alive with Platonic and Neo-platonic thought in the sixteen-fifties, Oxford was still the stronghold of scholasticism. As the statutes for the period show, Oxford had changed little from what it had been several centuries before.<sup>5</sup> While Whichcote

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<sup>3</sup> As Dr. Margoliouth points out (I, xxxii), the well-to-do Philip Traherne Sr. (1566-1645) may have been responsible for the early education of both Thomas and his brother Philip.

<sup>4</sup> K. W. Salter, Thomas Traherne: Mystic and Poet (London, 1964), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> For the statutes of the university I refer the reader to Strickland Gibson, ed., Statuta Antiqua Vniuersitatis Oxoniensis (Oxford, 1931). For studies of the curriculum at the two universities the reader should consult M. H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition (Oxford, 1959) and W. T. Costello, The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge (Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

had his Cambridge students reading Cicero, Plato and Plotinus, Burnet points out,<sup>6</sup> the Oxford dons relied on Aristotle and the schoolmen, oriental philology and the Church Fathers.<sup>7</sup> In the realm of geometry, Euclid remained the supreme authority, while in history, Justin was the author to which both Cambridge and Oxford turned.<sup>8</sup> In the study of ethics, and indeed the whole matter of method in the study of all other subjects, Aristotle, as modified by the schoolmen provided both text and approach. Systematic scholastic logic and strict Aristotelian terminology permeated the educational system.

That the whole matter of study at the university was a rather barren and lifeless thing is illustrated by both Traherne's notebook from the period, and his comments on the University in the Centuries. In a rather exuberant passage in the Third Century, Traherne praises the various subjects he studied at Oxford, pointing out the great delight he took in the study of the "Glorious Secrets, and Glorious Persons past Imagination" that appeared on the curriculum.<sup>9</sup> The pleasure in the matter studied contrasts markedly with the disgust at the manner in which the study was made. In the meditation immediately following the one cited

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert Burnet, History of My Own Time, ed. Osmund Airy, I (Oxford, 1897), 331, as cited in C. L. Marks, "Traherne and the Cambridge Platonists", being an unpublished article written in 1963, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> Burnet, I, 342, from Marks, ibid, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> W. T. Costello, The Scholastic Curriculum (Cambridge, 1958), p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> See the Centuries of Meditations, III, 36, ll.3-4.

above, Traherne criticizes his professors and tutors for defects in manner: although they presented excellent material, they taught "these things but as Aliena" (CM III, 37, 11.3-4). Where they should have been teaching the various subjects as means to a special end, such as Felicity, they taught them merely as things worthwhile in themselves. "And for lack of aiming at a Certain End, we Erred in the Manner." (CM III, 37, 11.6-7).

Of the numerous subjects listed in his catalogue of studies, in CM III, 36, we have Traherne's own notes on ethics, geometry and history, preserved in a manuscript erroneously attributed to Philip Traherne. Called "A Collection of Early Verse" by Miss Wade, and "Philip Traherne's Notebook" by Dr. Margoliouth, Thomas' "Early Notebook" contains summaries of history, ethics, and geometry, as well as extracts from Bacon's De Augmentis, several poems, and some miscellaneous entries by both Philip and Thomas, copied from as yet unidentified sources.<sup>10</sup> The notes on history, ethics, and geometry give us a good idea of the method of study to which Traherne had been subjected.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See G. I. Wade, Thomas Traherne (Princeton, 1944), pp.247-50, and H. M. Margoliouth, I, xx-xxii. For the reasons for terming it the "Early Notebook" and the justification for assigning the majority of the entries to Thomas, see Appendix I of this thesis. Hereafter this manuscript, Bodleian Lat. misc. f. 45, will be cited as ENB, the page references being to the original pagination of the manuscript.

<sup>11</sup> For information on the contents and significance of ENB, I am indebted to Miss Carol L. Marks, who was kind enough to lend me a copy of her dissertation "Studies in the Reading of Thomas Traherne", unpublished B. Litt. thesis (Oxford, 1962). To augment the material in the thesis, she also provided me with a draft copy of the introduction to her forthcoming edition of Traherne's Christian Ethicks. Hereafter in footnotes the two works will be cited as Marks, "Readings" (for the thesis), and Marks, "Introduction" (for the manuscript draft copy of the introduction, from which my notes were made).

Internal evidence, discussed later in this thesis, indicates that the extracts from Bacon, along with the poetry in the manuscript, were compiled or composed some time after Traherne received his B. A. The only notes in the volume which definitely date from his undergraduate days are the three epitomes, Totius Moralis Philosophiae Perfecta Epitome et concisa per Quaestiones et responsiones Tradita, (ENB, pp.7-21), Epitome Geometriae (ENB, pp.22-32), and Compendium Historicum ex Justino excerptum, (ENB, pp. 47-55). Of the latter two, little need be said. The epitome of Justin's history summarizes the first eighteen chapters of Marcus Junianus Justinus' third-century version of Trogus' Historia Philippicae, while the epitome of geometry summarizes remarks on plane and solid geometry from the textbook of the Aristotelian French monk Eustache de Saint-Paul. Each epitome demonstrates the mechanical method Traherne employed when he set about copying out and condensing the remarks of his authorities. The result is a formalized, stultified, scholastic summary.<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of the present thesis, however, the epitome Traherne made of Eustache de Saint-Paul's Ethica is of greatest importance.<sup>13</sup>

The study of ethics in the period was the study of Aristotle: since Descartes' followers had not yet codified his ethical system and Hobbes was being damned by all but his most ardent disciples, and since

<sup>12</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 21-2 and 26-30.

<sup>13</sup> Traherne made his epitome of Eustache from a continental edition of the Ethica, of which an edition appeared in London in 1658. See Marks, "Introduction", pp.xii and xvi.

Platonism and Neo-platonism had gained little ground as yet, the students of ethics were forced to turn to various Aristotelian and pseudo-Aristotelian ethical treatises, all of which were ultimately based on the Nichomachean Ethics. In the ethics epitome in ENB we find a summary of what Traherne felt were the most interesting statements on the subject found in the Ethica of Eustache de Saint-Paul. The compiling of summaries of the various ethical pointers found in the prominent authors appears to have been the usual method of studying ethics in the period. Traherne follows this procedure with Eustache, often displaying a good deal of individuality within the rather narrow scholastic confines in which he found himself.

In the first twelve pages of his summary, Traherne condenses the first 150 pages of Eustache, omitting the latter's final section on the vices.<sup>14</sup> The result is Aristotelianism in its purest form, for one of the main concerns of Eustache was to restore to the modern study of the subject the original validity and vitality of Aristotle. The Ethica follows a catechistic method in its propounding of Aristotle: a typically Aristotelian question is posed and then answered by an Aristotelian aphorism or summary. Often adapting freely, Traherne would sometimes accurately quote the question in the Ethica and then answer it either by a summary or an extrapolation of Eustache, or by the insertion of a quote

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<sup>14</sup> Here we see Traherne's individuality showing through. One will note that the omission of the discussion of vice is characteristic of Traherne. In the "To The Reader" of Christian Ethicks he comments that he is not going to speak much of vice because he is entirely taken up with the worth and beauty of virtue. Traherne's characteristically positive and optimistic nature, so prominent in his later study of ethics, is apparent even at this early date, within the stultifying scholastic confines of an academic summary of text-book material.



from some moral philosopher other than those mentioned by Eustache.<sup>15</sup>

The result is a summary much in line with Traherne's later interests. He deals lightly with Book VII of the Nichomachean Ethics (on continence and incontinence) and completely omits the discussion of friendship in Books VIII and IX. Pages 7-9 of the epitome deal with the problems of good, the end in life, and happiness, discussed by Aristotle in Book X; while pages 9-16 deal in turn with free will (pp. 10-13), ignorance (pp. 13-14) and the passions (pp. 15-16). Following this he gives a summary (pp. 17-21) of the various virtues, including in his list the same material that later appears in the discussion of the virtues in Christian Ethicks and "Select Meditations". After dealing with prudence and justice (pp. 16-19) he concludes his epitome of Eustache's summary of Aristotle with a greatly condensed discussion of the various moral virtues, stressing continence and tolerance (pp. 19-21). Traherne had learned his Aristotle well.<sup>16</sup>

The significance of this summary, and indeed the intense training in Aristotle, appears throughout Traherne's later work. Admittedly, the epitome does not provide a "source" for Christian Ethicks: it is a stultified academic summary. However, it does explain the later point of view. Anyone so well versed in Aristotelian ethics would find it hard to escape not only from the actual definitions, but also from the approach employed. Thus it is not surprising to find, in the later writings, both

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<sup>15</sup> Marks, "Introduction", pp. xvi-xviii.

<sup>16</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 13-14, and p. 20.

exact parallels with the ENB (the definition of felicity on pp. 8-9 of ENB appears in CM III, 68, 11.15-16, CPB 21<sup>r</sup> column 2, and in Christian Ethicks, p. 27) and similarities in reasoning (the justification of free will in the later works follows the arguments in ENB, pp. 10-13). Traherne was not an "Aristotelian". He disagreed fundamentally with Aristotle on many points. Yet one cannot help but see similarities with Aristotle in his terminology: Aristotelianism had a stranglehold on ethics in the period, and as any reader of Christian Ethicks will attest, it grasps so tightly at the throat of that work that it all but suffocates its humanistic brilliance. Traherne writes best when he is able to give free rein to his fascination with the joys of life. When he has to become didactic, he is unable to use his own ecstatic vocabulary and is forced to turn to his early academic training in Aristotle. The result is dull and dissatisfying to say the least. Thus, although it is of no literary value whatsoever, the epitome of ethics in ENB does explain one thing about Traherne: it was his early training in Aristotle that produced the stultified and suffocating scholasticism of the definitions that mar his otherwise free-flowing comments on virtue. Traherne's infancy provided him with intuitions of his immortal nature; his first period of study at Oxford provided him with the methodology he later employed in the classification of these experiences. What he needed most when he left Oxford, in the fall of 1656, was an opportunity to collect his thoughts on felicity and his earlier intuitions of his relationship with his Creator. For this purpose, it appears he entered into a period of secluded retirement, during which time he did much reading and thinking before once again returning to Oxford for his M. A., and then taking up

his duties as rector of Credenhill, a small parish four miles north-east of Hereford.<sup>17</sup>

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During the period between 1630 and 1650 many people in England became increasingly alarmed at the growing fragmentation of both the religious and political situations. The differences in religion that had appeared earlier in the century developed into open splits, so that the 1630's saw political and religious quarrels grow in number and importance until they finally burst into open violence in the spring of 1639 with the First Bishops' War. This state of affairs had one of two results on men of firm convictions and intellectual inclinations: a few chose to withdraw from the public realm, as Ferrar chose to do in 1625; while the larger part chose to leave their contemplative lives and become actively involved in the politico-religious turmoil, as Milton did. After the execution of the king and the establishment of the Commonwealth, however, the situation was reversed. Horrified by the lengths to which the revolution had gone, and distressed about either the political or religious consequences of the event, many of the intellectuals of the day chose to withdraw, either permanently or for a short while, into a secluded retirement. During this period of withdrawal they had a chance to settle their minds about the conflict which had so disrupted their lives.

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<sup>17</sup> For the records of Traherne's appointment to the living of Credenhill in December of 1657, his ordination as deacon and priest in October 1660, and his assumption of the duties of rector at Credenhill (along with valid proof that he did not take up the duties of rector until 1661) see Margoliouth, I, xxxiv-xxxv, and xxxv-xxxvii.

In a comprehensive study of the phenomenon, Maren-Sofie Røstvig discusses the retreat figure of the period under the title of the Hortulian Saint. The poet of retirement, of whom Marvell is one of the best examples during part of his career, withdrew into a rural setting, much as Horace did to the Sabine Farms, and wrote verse in praise of the quiet life of physical and intellectual contentment. The Hortulian Saint used this period of retirement to collect his various thoughts and to attempt to form a satisfactory notion of his relationship to the world of man and God around him.<sup>18</sup>

The advantages of such a life to a person in intellectual or religious turmoil is immediately evident. In an atmosphere such as that described in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" or "The Garden", the poet or philosopher would have the proper leisure and quiet surroundings necessary for a period of prolonged contemplation. The contemplative garden would serve as a place of intellectual gestation in which the poet could cultivate his thoughts in such a way as to make himself fit to later serve the world in the best manner. The retreat need not last long, but should allow the individual sufficient time to organize his thoughts and solidify his ideas. Once the contemplative felt he had gained sufficient intellectual or spiritual strength, he could return to an active life in the world. I suggest that it was in this type of situation that Traherne found himself at the end of his first period at Oxford. He had just been introduced to a whole new world of ideas ranging from the empirical facts

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<sup>18</sup> See Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man, 2nd ed. (New York, 1962), I, 121-225.

of the scientist to the abstract metaphysics of the philosopher, from the devout treatises of contemporary Christians to the pagan poetry of classical Rome. Being as yet too young to take up duties as rector, and, I suggest, feeling too intellectually and spiritually immature to engage in any definitely active life, Traherne would have welcomed the opportunity to spend some time in a quiet retired surrounding, setting his mind in order.

That Traherne did, in fact, spend a period of a year or more in secluded retirement is demonstrated by several facts. In the first place, there is a lapse of more than a year between the time he left Oxford with his B. A., in the fall of 1656, and the time he was appointed to the living of Credenhill on December 30, 1657. Secondly, it is known that he did not actually take up the duties of rector at Credenhill until 1661.<sup>19</sup> Although he must have spent some time gathering support for his appointment to the living in 1657, and also have been in Oxford for a while before receiving his M. A. in 1661, we have no documentary proof of his having done anything but study and think for a large part of the time between 1656 and 1661. That he was engaged in a period of retired contemplation is indicated by three separate remarks in his works. In the forty-sixth meditation of the Third Century he states:

When I came into the Country, and being seated among silent Trees, had all my Time in mine own Hands, I resolved to Spend it all, whatever it cost me, in Search of Happiness . . . .

(CM III, 46, 11.1-3).

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<sup>19</sup> Margoliouth, I, xxxvi-xxxvii.

A similar remark is passed in a passage a while later:

When I came into the Country, and saw I had all time in my own hands, having devoted it wholly to the study of Felicitie, I knew not where to begin or End . . . .

(CM III, 52, 11.1-3).

But the remark that provides concrete proof of my theory that Traherne entered into a period of scholarly retirement comes from the newly-discovered manuscript now in the possession of Mr. James M. Osborn at Yale University.<sup>20</sup> In meditation sixty-nine of the "Third Century" of "Select Meditations", Traherne comments that he spent a period of "some years" in "close Retirements" during which time he was completely alone. Since the "Select Meditations" were written, in all likelihood, not long after Traherne took up the task of rector at Credenhill, and because the passage itself has a retrospective tone about it, I feel there is little doubt that the period referred to here is the same one as is commented on in the published Centuries, and that the period occurred between 1656 and 1661.

Since the time between 1656 and the fall of 1657 would have been spent in gaining support for his appointment, and since the latter part of 1660 and part of 1661 was probably spent at Oxford working towards an M. A., we are left with the years 1658 to 1660 during which Traherne would have had "all my Time in my own hands". I suggest that he spent this time, as he says, in search of happiness, largely through reading and organizing

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<sup>20</sup> For the facts about the discovery, identification and contents of this manuscript, I refer the reader to Appendix I of this thesis.

his thoughts. As he comments in meditations fifty-three and fifty-four of the autobiographical Third Century, he spent much time in the contemplation of the common things, of nature's visible treasures (CM III, 53) and the "unspeakable Mysteries" of the "Common, but Invisible" wonders of religious faith, the ways of God, and the "Soul of Man" (CM III, 54). That a lot of this time was spent in a close reading of the Bible, particularly the Psalms, is evidenced by the retrospective narrative of the latter half of the Third Century. There is little doubt in my mind that it was during his period of retirement that he gained his greatest familiarity with the manner and matter of the Psalmist he so much resembles in the Thanksgivings and "Select Meditations" that were written shortly after this.

Aside from Traherne's vague autobiographic comments in the Centuries, we have some written record of the period of retirement, and the succeeding years at Credenhill, contained in the latter part of ENB. As I mentioned before, the only portions of this manuscript which definitely date from Traherne's undergraduate days are the three epitomes and miscellaneous scribblings that fill the first part of the notebook. Following these, on pp. 69-170, are a series of notes based largely on Bacon's De Augmentis, with interpolations from Edward Reynolds' Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man (1640) and several other unidentified works in both Latin and English. The date of composition of these extracts cannot be established exactly, but internal evidence suggests a time later than Traherne's undergraduate days and tends to support a date closer to the Credenhill period. The secretarial "r", used heavily in the earlier notes on ethics and geometry, is completely absent

from both the Baconian extracts and the poems referring to the Credenhill period.<sup>21</sup> The hand-writing in the Bacon section differs markedly from that of the earlier notes and is quite similar to that employed in the writing of the poems that definitely refer to the Credenhill period, thus leading one writer to suggest, in support of my contention, that the extracts from Bacon and Reynolds were made during a period of study between the time Traherne obtained his B. A. and the time he took up the living of Credenhill.<sup>22</sup>

Of greater importance than the exact dating of the entries, however, are the actual contents. Traherne's reasons for extracting comments from Reynolds are at once obvious, for the latter's treatise is concerned with emphasizing the dignity of man and his natural and commendable thirst for knowledge. That this would appeal to Traherne is evident from his later voluminous extracts from Pico's Oratio on the same subject. It is quite possible that the later reference to his interest in the "Soul of Man" at this time (CM III, 54, 1.2) may refer to his study of Reynolds. Traherne used the comments from Reynolds to support points of view taken by Bacon and considered important by Traherne. On page 140 of ENB he refers to Reynolds' statement about the need to unify all learning, using it to support Bacon's demand for a systematic study of ancient philosophers; Reynolds' idea of the relationship between the body and the soul is mentioned on page 143 as being similar to Bacon's ideas on the

<sup>21</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 47f.

<sup>22</sup> Marks, "Introduction", p. 8.



subject; and Bacon is again seconded by Reynolds on page 154, where Traherne points out that both of them agree about the way in which fancy serves the will or reason.<sup>23</sup>

Traherne's attitude to Bacon in the extracts is the same as the attitude he later took to Pico: he selects from his source only those things which interest him, which apply to points he wishes to make, or which prove his own ideas to be valid. His interest was theological rather than scientific, as can be seen from the fact that the remarks he excerpted applied more to matters from "the Book of God" than "the Book of Nature". As one writer has pointed out, Traherne turned to Bacon with interest, but viewed him through "clerical spectacles".<sup>24</sup>

Traherne started his excerpts from Bacon with the latter's praise of learning from the Second Book of De Augmentis Scientiarum, and followed it with the fable of the spider and the bee, a metaphor used later in his writings.<sup>25</sup> He then followed on through Bacon's work, excerpting copiously from the first three-fifths of Book I, including comments on Plato's theory of reminiscence (p. 72), the learning of kings (pp. 73-5), hypocrisy (p. 85),

<sup>23</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 42ff.

<sup>24</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Miss Marks is incorrect in assuming ("Readings", p. 34) that the fable of the spider and the bee is non-Baconian. As Miss K. Williams points out in Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (Lawrence, Kansas, 1958), p. 126f, the image is mentioned by Temple in his essay Of Poetry, used by Burnet in his Theoria Sacra (part of which is quoted in ENB by Philip, pp. 237-40), and also found in Bacon's Novum Organum. It is quite possible that Traherne had read the passage in the Novum Organum. His familiarity with the fable is seen in his adaptation of the image in "Walking", ll. 31-36.

and sundry comments on learning, but omitting the last two-fifths of Book I, in which Bacon deals with the errors and dignity of learning. He began his extracts from Book II with a praise of Queen Elizabeth's virginity, and then, after an interesting quotation from Bacon's Essays, went on to quote comments on the ignorance of superstitious attitudes, passages on ecclesiastical history, and remarks on poetry.<sup>26</sup> In Book III of De Augmentis Bacon dealt with philosophy and its objects: God, Nature, and Man. Traherne the cleric excerpted only those comments which interested him, including remarks on atheism, the effect of wicked men on public morals, the need for a systematic history of ancient philosophers, and the examples of God's holiness that are visible in His works (pp. 133-41). His interest began to wane when he reached Book III; but from Book IV he again excerpted voluminously from Bacon's discussion of the relationship between the body and the soul, omitting most of Bacon's scientific remarks and nearly all of his discussion of the human soul. Traherne's excerpts from Book V are of little significance, dealing with little other than a comment on imagination, experience, and sagacity. From Book VI he quoted only three short remarks from Bacon's discussion of grammar, handwriting, ciphers, logic, rhetoric, methods of education, and scholarly editions of classical authors. Although one would expect him to be interested in Bacon's statements on moral good, Traherne unaccountably omitted all of Books VII and VIII, on moral and civil knowledge, from

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<sup>26</sup> It is interesting that he misquotes Bacon's essay "Of Marriage and the Single Life", on p. 113. Traherne calls wives the "burdens of middle age". Bacon's statement is that they serve as "companions for middle age". Bacon, Selected Essays of Francis Bacon, ed. J. M. Patrick (New York, 1948), p. 13.

his notes. He then concluded his excerpts with two quotations from Book IX, the first (p. 167) being Bacon's metaphor of the divine compass which directs the ship of the church, and the second (pp. 169-70) Bacon's plea for peace among the Protestant factions in England.<sup>27</sup>

From the preceding summary, and a comparison of Traherne's extracts with the work from which they were taken, several interesting facts about the man emerge. In the first place one notices the eclectic nature of Traherne's mind: like the list of subjects in meditation thirty-six of the Third Century, a table of the contents of the extracts in the Baconian section of the ENB would show Traherne to be a man of wide interests, albeit with a clerical bias. One also notes Traherne's self-oriented nature: the material quoted is that which is of particular interest to him. Comments referring to literary or theological matters are quoted at length, while references to civil or political matters are all but omitted. Traherne's habit of adapting or altering the argument of his source is seen particularly well in his misquotation of Bacon's essay "Of Marriage and the Single Life", but is also apparent throughout the Baconian sections of ENB in the way in which he adapted the Baconian remarks to suit his own needs. More often than not he ignored Bacon's main point and quoted a subsidiary remark which interested him more. Often he simply made short notes on a section rather than copy out an exact quotation of the passage. The result is not an epitome of his source, as was the case with his notes on Eustache, but rather "a collection of

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<sup>27</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 34-41.

rather disconnected pieces of wisdom" centred around Bacon's work.<sup>28</sup>

Traherne's period of retirement, had it simply been spent in reading Bacon and Reynolds, would have provided him with a solid foundation on which to build later. But it appears, as I mentioned above, that he spent some time studying the Bible at this point too. His interest in Biblical scholarship is indicated by a series of extracts from an unidentified Latin work on religion. Comments from this work, including short extracts on heresy, Satan and wickedness, and a proof that God could not be the father of Sin, are found on pages 212-34 and 338-41 of ENB. Citations, in these sections, of various renaissance Biblical scholars date Traherne's source as fairly contemporary, while the reference to John Davenant as Bishop of Salisbury confirms that the book could not have been written before Davenant was appointed to that position in 1621.<sup>29</sup>

A second reference to Traherne's interest in the Bible at this time is found on page 191 of the manuscript. The poem "On the Bible" (Margoliouth, II, 205), judged on stylistic grounds, is demonstrative of Traherne's early efforts as verse. The strict, controlled verse form, the rigidity of the stanza, and the relative simplicity of the poem as a whole are all marks of a primary attempt. The contents show that air of reverence and awe with which Traherne greeted his rediscovery of the Bible, as demonstrated in the Third Century; while the restraint indicates that

<sup>28</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 48 and 48n.

he had not reached the degree of understanding of the value of the Bible that is later displayed in the ecstatic poem "The Bible" (Margoliouth, II, 106).

The ENB contains yet one more indication that Traherne, if he did not actually espouse it for a time, was at least sympathetic with the ideals and purpose of the contemplative life. This is his copying and translation of lines 342-52, 365-68, 380 and 390 of Seneca's Thyestes, on pages 374 and 375 of the manuscript. The whole chorus (ll. 336-403) is a praise of the rural life, and ends (ll. 391-403) with a passage translated by, among others, that central figure of the contemplative poetic tradition, Andrew Marvell.<sup>30</sup> The section translated by Traherne (Margoliouth, II, 210f) praises the contented world in which one lives if one's mind is at peace. Like Marvell, Traherne turned to Seneca for a concise statement of the virtue of the mind at peace and the intellectual value of the contemplative life. Although he later had many periods of doubt and indecision, I contend that when Traherne finally took up the task of rector at Credenhill, some time in 1661, he had already clarified in his mind the doctrine of felicity which forms the basis of all his subsequent literary effort.

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Life at Credenhill meant many things to Traherne; but, among others,

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<sup>30</sup> See Margoliouth, II, 406. For Marvell's translation of the final passage of the chorus, see Andrew Marvell, The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1951), I, 54f.

it meant the perfecting of himself as a priest by means of meditation, writing, and working with his parishioners. It also meant a close association with Mrs Susanna Hopton and her religious circle at Kington, a town some fifteen to twenty miles north-west of Hereford.<sup>31</sup> The combination of these two factors provided Traherne with a definite stimulus, both spiritual and intellectual. In connection with Mrs Hopton and her circle he was introduced to participation in the world of devotional literature and devotional living, while in connection with his parishioners he entered into a life centred on the practise of those principles of felicity he later codified in the fourth of his Centuries of Meditations.

To the Credenhill period we owe the first real fruits of Traherne's literary career. Two of these, which I will not discuss at all, are the

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<sup>31</sup> Susanna Hopton (1627-1709) was the wife of one Richard Hopton, a Royalist and, after the Restoration, Chief Justice of the Welsh Circuit. Born a member of the prominent Harvey family, Mrs Hopton always demonstrated a singularly devout nature. When the Royalists, and the Church of England, were defeated in 1648 she indicated her disgust with it all by joining the Roman Catholic Church. Shortly before the Restoration she married Richard Hopton, an ex-Parliamentarian officer who had turned Royalist. As a reward for Royalist activities, Richard Hopton received a large land grant in Herefordshire and his post-Restoration appointment as Chief Justice of the Welsh Circuit. Wade suggests, in her summary of the connection between Traherne and Mrs Hopton (pp. 79-88) that the two met during Traherne's second period at Oxford (ca. 1661), and that Traherne was instrumental in her renunciation of the Roman Catholic Church. After her return to the Church of England, Mrs Hopton was the centre of a small religious community at Kington.

For more information on Mrs Hopton and the life she led at Kington, I refer the reader to K. W. Salter, op. cit., pp. 16-17; Wade, pp. 79-88; and C. J. Stranks, Anglican Devotion (London, 1961), p. 100n.

For information on the connection between Traherne and Mrs Hopton, see Margoliouth's comments (I, xxxiv-xxxv), and my comments below on her connection with the Osborn manuscript.

Hexameron: or Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation and the Meditations and Devotions on the Life of Christ.<sup>32</sup> The other pieces that definitely date from this period include material ranging from some epitaphs for members of the Credenhill congregation found in the ENB to the newly-discovered "Select Meditations", while all other works in the Traherne canon except Roman Forgeries owe their existence to the experiences Traherne had during the eight years he served as the shepherd to the small but inspiring Herefordshire flock.

Following the Baconian extracts in ENB one finds some fifteen early attempts at verse or copies of poems that attracted Traherne's attention.<sup>33</sup> Of these poems, none has any real literary merit, although a few arouse some curiosity. The first two poems (ENB, p. 184) are simply couplets: the first points out, in the usual devout manner, that all things we have are gifts from God; while the latter complains about the wall of sin between ourselves and our Savior. The first is typical of Traherne's later insistence on the proper realization of one's possessions; the second represents a typically early side of the poet, the view of Traherne the sinner, which is seen very little in the other works, except in the

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<sup>32</sup> These two works were published by Nathaniel Spinckes in 1717 as the first two parts of A Collection of Meditations and Devotions in Three Parts, all of which were attributed to Mrs Hopton. For the story of the transmission of the manuscripts, and a brief discussion of these two works, see Wade, pp. 153-168, and Catharine A. Owen, "The Authorship of 'Meditations on the Six Days of the Creation' and 'Meditations and Devotions on the Life of Christ'," MLR, LVI (1961), pp. 1-12. For the poems from the Hexameron, see Margoliouth, II, 192-199.

<sup>33</sup> Most of these poems are found in Margoliouth, II, 204-211.

"Select Meditations". The third poem (ENB, p. 185) is a pair of sonnets. The amatory tone of the stanzas disturbed Margoliouth (see II, 404), as it would anyone familiar with Traherne and his lack of reference to romantic love. The mystery was finally solved when it was found that the two stanzas were actually a copy of sonnet III, stanza 2, and sonnet IX, stanza 1 of Quarles' Sion Sonets, first published in 1625.<sup>34</sup> The poem "To bee a Monarch" (ENB, p. 189) may or may not be a reference to Charles II. We know for a fact that the subject of the epitaph on page 211 of the manuscript died in January 1660/1, and thus we are safe in assuming that the poems that precede it in the manuscript were probably written some time before this.<sup>35</sup> The poem following the quatrain "To bee a Monarch", entitled "On the Bible" (ENB, p. 191) has been discussed above. Its position in the manuscript tends to date the poems which precede it as sometime before 1661. I tend to agree with Margoliouth's conjecture (II, 405) that the Latin elegy "Hic situs est Haeres Mundi" (ENB, p. 197) is not an epitaph for any person in particular but simply for man, whom Traherne continually calls the heir of the world. I see this poem as simply another indication of Traherne's growing philosophic interest in

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<sup>34</sup> Miss M. Crum, of the Bodleian staff, pointed out to Miss Marks that the poems were, in fact, written by Quarles, and that they were found on pp. 275 and 288 of the 1630 edition of the author. See Marks, "Readings", p. 2n.

<sup>35</sup> Since they follow the excerpts from Bacon in the manuscript, I feel reasonably safe in dating the first few poems during or shortly after the period of retirement. But whether these first few poems were written before Traherne took up permanent residence in Credenhill is open to debate. The handwriting is that of the later material, though, which removes the possibility of their having been composed before 1658. See also note 39 below: we know nothing definite about the order of composition of the poems.



the possession theme so prominent in the Poems and the Centuries. The deleted couplet "Sperne voluptates" (ENB, p. 198) is not reprinted by Margoliouth, and is mentioned only in passing in his notes (II, 405). It represents a minor theme in Traherne's early writings, a theme which soon is abandoned in favour of the positive theme of the embracing of true riches. The somewhat metaphysical "Rise noble soule" (ENB, p. 199-198) I judge to be original on the basis of the monogram initials "TT" that follow it. But it is atypical of Traherne's attitude to the soul, and probably represents another early attempt at imitation, something Traherne does not do at all well. The poor Latin version of Strode's "I saw fair Chloris" (ENB, p. 200), and the English version that follows it (ENB, p. 201), require no comment. They are followed (ENB, p. 202) by a copy of the Stet quicunque volet potens passage from Seneca's Thyestes (ll. 391-403). This passage was translated by Marvell, Cowley, and Sir Matthew Hale in a far better fashion than it was by Philip Traherne. Philip's version, which follows the Latin version, (see ENB, p. 203), was copied into the manuscript by Thomas probably for sentimental rather than literary reasons: the translation shows no literary merit.<sup>36</sup> When Traherne was appointed to the living of Credenhill, one of the men listed as a sponsor was one John Cholmeley, a prominent parishioner of Credenhill.<sup>37</sup> That the Anna Cholmeley, who is the subject of the epitaph on page 205 of ENB, is a relative of John's is a safe assumption; but my conservatism

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<sup>36</sup> See Margoliouth I, xxi; and II, 406.

<sup>37</sup> For a description of the memorial to him on the wall of the Credenhill church, see Margoliouth, II, 406.

will not allow me to call her, as Margoliouth does, John's daughter who died young (II, 405). With this poem we enter a part of the manuscript which probably was composed after Traherne took up the living of Credenhill. The "Momento Mori" that follows (ENB, p. 207) could well be the epitaph Traherne wrote for himself. In it we see what he was later to term the insatiable longing of the soul for God; and, in the last stanza, we note an insistence on spiritual rather than simply physical perception that appears with persistent regularity throughout the rest of his writing. "a [sic.] Serious and a Curious night-Meditation" presents an interesting side of Traherne seen later in poems like "On Leaping over the Moon", and also introduces the theme of death which, to my knowledge, never occurs again in Traherne's work from quite this point of view. The poem may have been influenced, in part, by the Puritan funeral elegaics of the earlier seventeenth century, but it is more interesting, with its curious mixture of wild imagination and thoughts of death, as a foreshadowing of the Romantic movement in the English literature of a century or so later.<sup>38</sup> The epitaph for "J:C" (ENB, p. 211) is certainly written for John Cholmeley, with whom Traherne was associated in connection with Credenhill. The only point worth noting about the poem is the date of composition, which must not have been too long after John Cholmeley's death on January 30, 1660/1.

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<sup>38</sup> Traherne demonstrates many interesting affinities with Romantic literature, of which this poem is just another example. His affinities with Blake have interested me for some time, while his connection with the aesthetics of the infinite have been pointed out well by Miss M. H. Nicolson in The Breaking of the Circle (New York, 1960), pp. 196-7 et passim; and Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory (Ithaca, 1958), p. 140 et passim.

This would seem to prove that all the entries that precede this poem were compiled before this date, although it does not follow that those which occur after the entry were not composed before then too, since Thomas may well have left a large number of blank pages between pages 171 and 212 before continuing with his notes on page 213.<sup>39</sup>

Of the value of the poems in ENB, little need be added to what has been mentioned above. The poems demonstrate Traherne's early attempts as verse, and, in most cases, show that he improved greatly before writing the poems for which he is best remembered. But it should be noticed that even in these early poems, three prominent themes occur: the need for a proper knowledge of possession, the insatiable nature of the soul's longing for God, and the insistence on the need for proper spiritual perception. Recognition of these three themes is essential to an understanding and appreciation of Traherne's later comments on the relationship between man, God, and the universe.

As was mentioned before, there were two types of reactions to the civil and ecclesiastical turmoil that followed the execution of Charles I.

<sup>39</sup> That Thomas reserved the section pp. 171-212 for verse, and that the verse need not have been composed in the order in which it occurs in the manuscript, is suggested by the fact that the section includes many blanks, including pp. 186-188, 190, 192-196, 204, 206, 208, 210, and 212, except for a short note on p. 212.

For information as to the contents of the poetry section of the manuscript, I have relied on Margoliouth's list of contents (I, xx-xxii), except where other sources have indicated a need for correction. In the latter case, the corrections have been credited in notes where reference to the passage in question occurs.

For the versions of the poems in this section, I have relied on the text as printed by Margoliouth, II, 204-211.

The more prominent reaction was a retreat into a secluded rural environment. This retreat was often a solitary one, but in some cases involved the withdrawal of a group of persons to a place where they formed a religious community along the lines of Ferrar's "Little Gidding".<sup>40</sup>

One such community was centred around Mrs Susanna Hopton at her home in Kington, where a religious "family" led a life according to rule while acting, in a charitable Christian manner, in the world around them. It is now accepted that Traherne was definitely connected with the group, and that he wrote a good deal of devotional material for the community, among which are included his "Select Meditations", "Disquisition on the Soul", "Church's Year-Book", the Thanksgivings, and the Centuries of Meditations. In a newly-discovered Traherne manuscript, which includes the first two selections listed above, one finds a clear indication of the nature of the connection between Traherne and the Kington community.

Other than the lengthy "Select Meditations", the Osborn manuscript contains four short pieces, of which only the latter two are by Traherne: the "Meditation" on love, and the "Disquisition on the Soul".<sup>41</sup> The first two miscellaneous pieces, "A Prayer for Ash Wednesday" and "A Meditation" are not written in the same hand as the rest of the manuscript, and lack all but the slightest trace of the style, so distinctively Trahernian,

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<sup>40</sup> For a study of some aspects of the religious societies of the period, see R. Barclay, The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth (London, 1876), and A. L. Maycock, Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding (London, 1938).

<sup>41</sup> For a full description of the discovery, identification of authorship, and description of the contents of this manuscript, see Appendix I.

that permeates the other writings. Who the author was is open to debate, but I suggest that it was none other than Susanna Hopton. It is notable that the two pieces in question occur between the text of the "Select Meditations" and the two pieces I definitely attribute to Traherne. Now, we are familiar with the practise of exchanging manuscripts: not only was it a common way of circulating material in the period, but it is also suggested by the "Presentation Quatrain" of the Centuries of Meditations, where we find that Traherne apparently received a blank manuscript book from Mrs Hopton, and that, once he had completed his meditations in it, he sent it back to her so that she could read over the material and then fill the remaining pages with meditations of her own (see Margoliouth, I, 2 and I, 234). That the Osborn manuscript was also exchanged between two people is suggested by two things: the difference in handwriting, and Traherne's statement at the beginning of the "Disquisition on the Soul":

Being a Lover of the world, & concerned  
with y<sup>e</sup> felicity of all persons, I am willing  
to gratify your desire in treating of the Soul:

(Osborn MS, p. 246.)

That Traherne was associated with Mrs Hopton at this time is indicated by the statement, in "Select Meditations" II. xxxviii, "And cannot I here on Earth so Lov my friends ! O my T. G. O my S. H. O my Brother", the "S. H." doubtlessly referring to Mrs Hopton. That Traherne was asked, by a friend, to write a short piece on the soul is suggested by the first quotation; that this friend was Susanna Hopton seems a reasonable assumption when one considers the nature of the material involved and the life Susanna was leading. I suggest that, once he had finished the "Select Meditations", Traherne sent the small manuscript volume to Mrs Hopton at

Kington. After reading the material, and adding the first two miscellaneous pieces, she returned the manuscript to Traherne with a request for a short note on the soul. Traherne complied, and filled the rest of the manuscript with the "Disquisition on the Soul" and the short "Meditation" on love.

That Mrs Hopton was the author of the first two miscellaneous pieces is suggested also by the nature of the material written. Susanna was a very devout woman, quite concerned with keeping all the church feasts and festivals, as the description of her life in the preface to A Collection of Meditations and Devotions in Three Parts indicates. One should also note that Traherne prepared the "Church's Year-Book" for her. In this work he argued for the keeping of the various feasts and festivals of the Christian Year. Thus it would be natural for Mrs Hopton to write a devotional piece for a particular Church Festival like Ash Wednesday. Similarly, as a writer of devotional literature, it would be quite possible for her to have written the short "Meditation" which I also attribute to her. That Mrs Hopton was the author of the first two miscellaneous pieces in the Osborn manuscript is apparently proven by these facts.

The other two short pieces in the volume were, with little doubt, written by Traherne. The second of these, simply called "A Meditation" in the manuscript, I have entitled "A Meditation on Love", to give the reader some idea of the contents, and to avoid confusing the piece with the "Meditation" by Mrs Hopton. The short work is concerned with emphasizing the need for a deiform life, using Christ rather than God as a model. During his Credenhill residence, Traherne also composed the Meditations

and Devotions on the Life of Christ.<sup>42</sup> In both this and the "Meditation on Love", he is concerned with the dignity of man and the life of Christ as a model for our lives. The close affinity in theme between the two pieces implies a close temporal relationship. I suggest that the "Meditation on Love" is a trial attempt at a later, more extended examination of the relationship between Christ and Man.<sup>43</sup> It is in its Christology that the "Meditation on Love" provides the greatest interest for students of Traherne.

The longer of the two miscellaneous pieces by Traherne is a scholarly argument designed to prove the infinity and excellence of the soul. The argument is arranged in the best scholastic fashion, with an introduction, a summary of the problem, an examination of the material, a statement of the question to be settled, and then a long rhetorical examination of all the amplifications and ramifications of the assumption that the soul is an infinite and eternal spiritual creature. The influence of Aristotle in both the method and the terminology is at once evident. The aim of the disquisition, on the whole, is to point out that the soul of man is a divine image, a deiform spiritual being, a copy of the Creator. Throughout the piece, Traherne draws numerous parallels between God and the soul, concluding that the soul was made to enjoy the

<sup>42</sup> See above, note 32, and the remarks on this work in Wade, p. 154 and pp. 158-164.

<sup>43</sup> It is significant to note that Traherne, in his later works, moves away from a focus on Christ to an interest in God. Except for the meditations on the Cross in the Centuries (especially CM I, 56-64), there is little explicit concentration on Christ in the works of Traherne's later years.

glory of God in the similitude of God, and that therefore it must be able to comprehend God. Since only like can comprehend like, he asserts, the soul must be like God. In fact, the similitude or

image of infinity [in the soul of man] is y<sup>e</sup>  
foundation of all other powers in y<sup>e</sup> soul of  
man: & so y<sup>e</sup> Ground of y<sup>e</sup> whole Image of God.

(Osborn MS, p. 264.)

Since the soul is the image of God, he points out, we should concern ourselves not with the body, but with the soul when looking for direction in life (Osborn MS, p. 260f). This point is significant: seen through his published writings, Traherne appears to be constantly insisting on the glory of the body, in itself, and the need to physically and materially enjoy the world. It is only when reading his comments on the nature of the soul and the proper way of enjoying the world, in the similitude of God, that one realizes the body is simply the means whereby the soul achieves its end of enjoying

y<sup>e</sup> Best of all possible Ends in y<sup>e</sup> best of  
all possible manners . . . .

(Osborn MS, p. 260.)

Traherne is not concerned with the body as an end in itself, although a superficial reading of the "Thanksgivings for the Body" might create the impression that he was. Rather, he sees the body as a God-given means to the glorification of the soul. Although the split between the body and the soul is not readily apparent in the other writings, I feel it is implicit in all he has to say in the Centuries, Poems, Thanksgivings, and Christian Ethicks. It is only in the earlier writings, like those contained in the Osborn manuscript, that he feels he has to make his point explicit. The



manuscript, in my opinion, represents the first serious and lengthy attempt Traherne made at codifying his ideas of the relationship between man, his world, and his Creator. For this reason it states explicitly ideas only implied in the later writings. In the "Disquisition on the Soul", we have explicit statements about the nature of the soul which, although they are central, are only implied in the later works.

The "Select Meditations" provide us with two significant facts. In the first place, one should note that the work is arranged in "centuries". Margoliouth conjectured that Traherne did not think of the "century" arrangement until he had completed the first one-hundred meditations of the published Centuries.<sup>44</sup> It is now clear that Traherne had this arrangement in mind long before he started the later work.

The second significant point revealed by the "Select Meditations" has to do with the dating of the manuscript. The surviving meditations of the "First Century" contain a great deal of praise of the King and the National Church, a fact which suggests that the rest of the manuscript could not have been composed much before 1662.<sup>45</sup> In the same section Traherne often refers to events and problems which suggest the immediately post-Restoration period. There is much mention of the wrong direction taken by the Dissenters, or "Sectaries" as Traherne calls them (SM, I, 85).

<sup>44</sup> Margoliouth, I, x-xi and I, 235.

<sup>45</sup> Due to age and mishandling, the first forty-four pages of the manuscript (containing meditations 1-80 and the first part of meditation 81 of the "First Century", along with what preliminary material might have existed) have been lost. See Appendix I.

The King is highly praised (SM, I, 82) and great attention is paid to the nation, both with respect to the stability of the state (SM, I, 83) and the re-establishment of the National Church it supports (SM, I, 85). There is also mention of a small country church (SM, III, 83) which Martz identifies, I think correctly, as Traherne's Credenhill church.<sup>46</sup> The reference, in this meditation, to the author's return to the area from university confirms the dating of the manuscript as early 1660s, while the lack of reference to London or Bridgeman indicates a date of composition no later than early 1669. From the mention of places and events in the manuscript, then, as well as the occurrence of passages which parallel sections of the Thanksgivings, one is quite safe in dating the composition of the work as some time between 1661 and 1669, and probably quite early in this period. In the manuscript one sees the codification of the ideas Traherne had solidified in his own mind during his period of "retirement".

The prime significance of the manuscript lies in the clarification it gives to Traherne's basic ideas, and hence the opportunity it presents to evaluate the way in which his mind developed. The "Meditation on Love" demonstrates a close attention to Christ as a guiding example. As I mentioned above, this attention to the Son of God is an early phenomenon which soon gives place to a wholehearted emphasis on deiformity with God as the model. An important fact demonstrated by the "Meditation on Love"

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<sup>46</sup> L. Martz, The Paradise Within (New Haven, 1964), p. 209f.

is Traherne's exceptional familiarity with the Bible. The whole meditation, based on a close knowledge of the actions of the Biblical Christ, provides yet another proof of my contention that, during his period of retirement, Traherne spent a great deal of his time studying and familiarizing himself with both the content and style of the Bible.

In the "Disquisition on the Soul", one finds a clarification of many points implied in the published writings. This is due, in part, to the manner of the presentation, for the whole passage is set out in an orderly, systematic, logical, and Aristotelian manner. The affinity of form with the later Roman Forgeries is strong. In both of these works we see Traherne the systematic theological scholar pointing out the significance and value of theological ideas by means of a scholastic argument. He makes explicit a lot of material only implied later on, because in this earlier work he has to make his philosophic point clear. The manuscript therefore presents a clear idea of Traherne's theory of the soul as a spiritual being, the image of God in man, the intellectual centre of man, the seat of the understanding, the faculty that enables man to encompass and inclose in himself all the secrets and knowledge of infinity and eternity.

Traherne's primary aim in the "Disquisition" is the demonstration of the infinite and eternal glorious nature of the soul:

Being a Lover of the world, & concerned with  
y<sup>e</sup> felicity of all persons, I am willing to  
gratify your desire in treating of the Soul: not  
out of any vain Humor to appear abroad; but from  
a Native desire y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Glory of God may be seen  
with many eyes, & every person filled with Bless-  
edness [.] For which cause with Humility not  
with Arrogance, modestly & not with presumption,

I desire by greatness of Reason alone, without  
any violence, to Demonstrat<sup>y</sup> excellency of y<sup>e</sup>  
sublimest creature: . . . .

(Osborn MS, p. 246.)

As part of this basic excellence of the soul, Traherne wants to prove that,  
in effect, the soul is

an infinite Sphere in a centre . . . illimited  
in Capacity here beneath & infinite in Know-  
ledge Love, &c. above y<sup>e</sup> Heavens.

(Osborn MS, p. 248.)

It is the intellectual soul that interests him, the soul with infinite understanding, infinite capability, and an insatiable desire to know. It is toward the intellectual soul that all God's love and knowledge are directed. The soul is "Like God in Essence . . . a Simple Being, Power or Act . . . ." (Osborn MS, p. 248), and thus able to comprehend the Deity. The soul is the end for which the world was made, and the only part of man capable of understanding that the world was in fact given to him as an individual. All the gifts of God focus on the soul. Thus all of man's actions are to be aimed at filling the soul with knowledge of the Divine Plan, (the purpose Traherne sets out for himself in CM I, 1), of making the soul the true pattern of the Deity, of bringing the soul to perceive its own deiform nature. For, as Traherne points out (Osborn MS, pp. 249-50), the soul is perfect when it is united with God.

The soul is capable of learning all because it is guided by the eye of the soul. In later works Traherne speaks of the infant eye or perceptive power of the soul. It is in this manuscript that we find the nature of that eye described. He clearly differentiates between the eye of the body, which sees the physical universe around it, and the eye of

the soul, which sees God. The world, seen aright, provides a means of leading the soul to God; for once the phenomenal world is seen aright, as a manifestation of the Deity, the eye of the soul is able to perceive the spiritual reality that lies behind the phenomenal world: the eye of the soul is able to see God.<sup>47</sup>

The identity of the soul and the understanding, the connection that points out Traherne's insistence on the basically intellectual nature of the soul, is explicitly stated in his concluding remarks in the "Disquisition":

Man's understanding . . . is a Hyper-substantial  
Spiritual Light, y<sup>e</sup> filleth Eternity . . . .  
It is a centre expanding its Rays throughout  
y<sup>e</sup> same, a sphere about it, or rather as  
it were immixed light, illuminated w<sup>th</sup> it.

(Osborn MS, p. 264.)

The "Disquisition" provides a detailed and exact description of material which appears throughout the "Select Meditations". These meditations themselves show two interesting trends: a development or expression of ideas characteristic of Traherne, and a primary attempt at codifying ideas used in later compositions. With reference to the latter point, one notes the use of material which appears again primarily in the Thanksgiving and Christian Ethicks.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The affinity with Blake's perceptive theory in this connection is obvious.

<sup>48</sup> Throughout the meditations there appear many themes and ideas which are repeated later in the Poems and Centuries; but these appear in a diffuse and immature form, compared with the exact verbal and thematic parallels that link the "Select Meditations" with both the early Thanksgivings and the posthumously-published Christian Ethicks.

From a reading of the first few extant meditations in the Osborn manuscript, one is made immediately aware of a definite affinity with themes and ideas found in "A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation". Meditation eighty-two of the "First Century", along with meditations eighty-three through eighty-seven, are concerned with the state of the Nation and the National Church. Meditation eighty-two mentions the problems of the new King and the difficulties arising from the fragmented state of religion at the time. Traherne is concerned with the lethargy and wrongdoing of the people and with the fear that they might ruin their new-found stability. It is in the next meditation that he quotes Isaiah I, 3, a line repeated directly in "A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation", (ll. 94-5). The theme of this eighty-third meditation is again one of concern for the nation. Traherne prays that God will not be too harsh on the ignorant people who seem to be disregarding the blessings He has bestowed on them. The first part of the eighty-fourth meditation points out the glory of the Established Church; while the eighty-fifth, along with the latter part of the eighty-fourth, derides those who oppose it. Throughout the entire section from meditations eighty-one through eighty-six, Traherne is concerned with pointing out the glory and the value of the restoration of King and National Church, and the folly of those factions which oppose it. The affinities between these ideas and those of the Thanksgivings are immediately apparent.

His praise of the soul in meditation eighty-three of the "First Century", and his praise of God's ways in meditations eighty-one and eighty-two, mirror comments later seen in the Thanksgivings for these two things; but it is in his discussion of the virtue, necessity, and goodness

of God's laws that we see a second extended parallel with material later found in the Thanksgivings. In the forty-sixth through fifty-fourth meditations of the "Second Century", he emphasizes his feeling that the laws of God are the one true guide to happiness, the one safe means of governing one's life and thought. Once more the parallel in mood and theme is exact, largely because of the Biblical influence on the style and vocabulary of the section, although in this case there are no direct verbal parallels.

When we come to our consideration of the parallels between the "Select Meditations" and Christian Ethicks, however, we are best able to see a continuity of theme and material in Traherne's works. What is found in the "Select Meditations" (and parts of the "Disquisition on the Soul") is a shorter consideration or definition of the virtues discussed at length in Christian Ethicks. Although the considerations are scattered throughout the work, for the most part, there is an extended treatment of the various virtues, each virtue being discussed individually, in meditations fifty-five through sixty-six of the "Fourth Century". There Traherne defines courage, humility, holiness, temperance, faith, wisdom, prudence and justice in the same manner as they were discussed in ENB, and later repeated in Christian Ethicks.<sup>49</sup> Throughout both the "Select Meditations" and Christian Ethicks, the prime virtue is righteousness:

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<sup>49</sup> The Aristotelian basis of Traherne's definitions of the virtues in the "Select Meditations" and Christian Ethicks is immediately obvious to anyone familiar with Aristotle. In fact Traherne's prime virtue of "righteousness" is based directly on Aristotle's definition of proportional justice in Book V of the Nichomachean Ethics. (Traherne himself sometimes defines justice and righteousness in the same manner).

the giving to all things their proper esteem. Traherne's insistence on the primacy of this Aristotelian-based virtue explains a lot of his basic thought; for, it is only through righteous vision, seeing things in their proper light, that we can attain a proper idea of the world. In both the "Select Meditations" and Christian Ethicks the virtue of righteousness serves to provide the key to proper action.<sup>50</sup>

What struck me more than the parallels with the later writings in the Osborn manuscript, however, was the definite support for a theory I have held for a long time. The manner in which Traherne expresses himself has long appeared to me to be that of the "prophet crying in the wilderness", of the one just man in a damned nation, of the prophet of God crying down doom on the society blind to the proper way of life. I could find little positive proof for my contentions other than a feeling that such an attitude, seen best in the earlier parts of the Centuries, might have come from Traherne's great familiarity with the Bible. But in the "Select Meditations" I found two things which tend to support my theory. Traherne cites the Bible as an authority at least twice as often as all other authorities combined: for him the Bible is the one true guide to life. His familiarity with the Scriptures leads him to assume the attitude of the writers of the Book. In numerous places we find parallels of phrasing,

It is in meditation sixty of the "Fourth Century" of "Select Meditations", in the section on temperance, that one finds the poem "All Musick, Sawces, Feasts, Delights and Pleasures" which helped prove Traherne's authorship of the Osborn manuscript. The poem occurs in exactly the same form in the chapter on Temperance in Christian Ethicks, ed. M. Bottrall (London, 1962), p. 188, and is quoted by Margoliouth, II, 186. This is yet another proof of the close relationship between the "Select Meditations" and Christian Ethicks.



for Traherne's prose style is that of Isaiah, Jeremiah and St John the Divine, and his verse form in the Thanksgivings is that of the Psalms. Also, in the text of the "Select Meditations", we find Traherne explicitly dedicating himself to the life of the Biblical prophet, to a life as a modern-day Isaiah. As he sees it, he will be the prophet who will pronounce God's judgement on a wicked contemporary world; he will be the prophet who will point out the follies of the age; he will be the prophet-priest-king who will show the people how to see aright.<sup>51</sup> It goes without saying that Traherne's knowledge of the Bible is extensive, and the demonstration of such a wide knowledge in so early a work tends to indicate that he gained this knowledge at an early date, most likely during his period of retirement.

One cannot read through the first of the published Centuries without being struck by the number of times the phrase "You never Enjoy the World aright . . . ." occurs. The emphasis on the need for proper perception, for spiritual vision, for seeing the world in its proper light, is paramount. The source for this attitude is clearly indicated by the material in the "Select Meditations". Quite early in the manuscript, Traherne dedicates himself to the life of the prophet who is going to redeem mankind. In meditation ninety of the "First Century", which is a poem entitled "Drie Barren Arguments", he states that the

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<sup>51</sup>. This attitude, though best seen in SM II, 11-22, is also apparent in SM I, 83-84, SM II, 75, SM III, 17 and SM III, 96. The same attitude appears later in the Poems and Centuries of Meditations, the best examples occurring in CM I, 31-36.

proper way to redeem the people is not by scholastic argument, that is, not in a negative manner, but rather by being positive and singing the praises of the Creator and speaking the truth of felicity. He ends with the comment:

In every Thing  
I will a world of praises to my King  
Infuse and Sacrifice. and [sic.] High preist be  
In every part of all Eternitie  
In every Creature, Centre, Sphere & Thing,  
I will Appear, and Altars Rear, a King  
A preist, an Angel be! and every where,  
Beyond y<sup>e</sup> bounds even of y<sup>e</sup> utmost sphere  
Again an Angel, king & preist appear.

("Select Meditations", I, 90.)

This dedication to the life of the priest-prophet is made explicit and personal in an autobiographical phase of the manuscript in meditations eleven and twelve of the "Second Century". There he rails at the people in the manner of Ecclesiastes, pointing out their blind searching after earthly vanities. This tone continues as he vows he will slay the dragons of vanity and evil that have made the world a wilderness of sin. In meditation fifteen, he devotes himself to a life as a modern-day Isaiah, and continues, in meditation sixteen, to point out that it will be a difficult job. But he re-affirms his determination in meditations seventeen and eighteen and then continues, in the guise of the prophet, to point out the damnation falling on those who fail to see the proper glory of the world around them. His task, as he sees it, is to make the people perceive aright: he is bound to the mission of making the people aware of the glories of the Creator that surround them. A phrase that would indeed characterize the vigorous attitude here would be that of "Prophet of Perception". Although some of this vigour dies off in the later writings,

and although the emphasis turns to the more general topic of felicitous living, the attitude of the prophet remains throughout Traherne's works. One need only think of the numerous uses of the phrase "to see aright" or the repetition of the expression "right apprehension" to realize that the prime purpose Traherne has in writing is to lead mankind to the felicitous life by pointing out the way to perceive -- with the eye of the soul -- the glories of God visible in the created universe. Traherne is able to perceive the glory because he sees with the eye of the prophet; and as he points out, this perception is deep, for

prophets See in Their Extasies, Those Things  
which no Eye of the Sence can Discern.

("Select Meditations", II, 75.)

I need not go into a detailed examination of the exact statements Traherne makes about the nature of God or the need for Love, since his ideas in the "Select Meditations" are substantially the same as those in the later works. Suffice it to say that he insists on two prime things: the paramount importance of love (the New Testament caritas), and the necessity of living in the similitude of the God of Love. In fact, deformity based on the assumption that God is Love forms the keynote of Traherne's attitude to all things. The one difference that does exist between the type of life praised in the earlier work and the way of life outlined in the later, is the insistence on the need for good works in the former. When writing the "Select Meditations", Traherne had just emerged from a year or more of secluded retirement. That he disliked life alone is easily seen from the poem "Solitude" and the prose rendering of the same experience (CM III, 23). Thus it was natural for him to desire company and a social life. The involvement with the Credenhill

parish and the society at Kington would strengthen the desire to live a life of felicity within the world. Thus it is not hard to understand why, throughout the "Select Meditations", the life of good works is emphasized. This attitude changed, as our study of the later works will show, when Traherne drifted away from a concentration on good works and instead placed his emphasis on good thoughts as the proper way to God.

It is not in his discussion of good works but in his study of the soul and the world that we find the true philosophic import of the "Select Meditations". Anyone familiar with Traherne remembers his two central descriptions of the soul as "container and contained" and "centre and sphere": the soul appears as the central point in the universe, and also as being able to enclose and encompass all. The soul is the centre of the world because it is the point at which God directs all His attention. It is the "contained" because it is surrounded on all sides by the benefits God bestows on it. Similarly it is also the "circumference" or "container" of the universe because of its power to expand to infinity and eternity, to encompass all time and space within itself.<sup>52</sup> These ideas, implied in all Traherne says about the soul in his later writings, are clearly set forth as precepts in the Osborn manuscript. In the "Disquisition on the Soul", when dealing with the deformity of the soul, Traherne points out

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<sup>52</sup> Although the best explanation of this image of "container and contained" for the soul comes in "Silence", ll. 81-86 (Margoliouth, II, 44-50), examples of it can be found also in stanza 5 of "Misapprehension", CM II, 72, 76, 83, 84; CM IV, 73, 82, 100; and CM V, 2 and 8. It is later compared with a similar idea from The Divine Pymander, quoted in CPB f.23<sup>v</sup>, and repeated in CE, p. 246ff. For the significance of these later uses, see Part II and Part III of this thesis.

that the soul, like God, is infinite in capacity (pp. 249-250), infinite in understanding (p. 252), and infinite in extent (p. 256f), thus able to be both centre and circumference of the world. This idea is dealt with in more detail in the "Select Meditations", which also include a larger consideration of the perceptive power of the soul. Whereas the soul is described as basically a spiritual being in the "Disquisition", in the "Select Meditations" it is seen as an intellectual being capable not only of containing, but also of comprehending or understanding all. This comprehension is accomplished by means of the eye of the soul.

All God's glory is directed at the soul. Thus the prophet attempting to convert the masses must appeal to their souls and not their bodies. In order to do this, he has two tasks: he must make clear to them the nature of the soul and secondly must elucidate the significance of the created universe. In the published writings Traherne's attitude to the natural world is not too clear: one is never sure whether he is praising or damning the created universe. His attitude to the world becomes clear when one understands the nature of the soul, as it is described in the "Select Meditations". There he explains that the soul is a mirror of the Deity, like God in all its attributes, ultimately spiritual in orientation, and able to comprehend the Creator ("Select Meditations", I, 91).<sup>53</sup> Thus

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<sup>53</sup> The image of the soul as the mirror of God is seen throughout the later works in the "Thanksgivings for God's Attributes", ll. 129-132 (Margoliouth, II, 315), CM IV, 84 and 86, "The Amendment", l. 34 (Margoliouth, II, 156), "The Circulation", l. 3 (Margoliouth, II, 152), "Sight", ll. 49-51 (Margoliouth, II, 134), and "Thoughts IV", ll. 95-96 (Margoliouth, II, 182). The relation of this to the "container and contained" image is obvious.

it is easy to see why Traherne equates the soul and the understanding: the soul knows or understands God because it is able to see and contain Him fully. Throughout his work Traherne uses the words soul and understanding interchangeably. The soul is an intellectual spirit, capable of perceiving, or being in, all places at all times.

Each of us is two men, he says: there is the worldly man, confined to the earth and able to see only with the physical eye, and there is the heavenly man who is free to perceive all with the eye of the soul ("Select Meditations", II, 92). The main characteristic of the spiritual or heavenly man is that he is all eye, capable of perceiving (not just seeing, but perceiving and apprehending the spiritual reality behind) the infinite. It is to this perceptive faculty in the spiritual man that all God's glory is directed, and by which all God's glory can be apprehended.

Just as for vision we need an object, an organ, and light, so for spiritual perception we require an object (the glory of God in the world), an organ (the spiritual apperceptive power), and light. The light or illumination of the intellectual soul, the third property that makes it capable of seeing aright, is the knowledge of the goodness of God. God gives us the power to see Him, if we will only use it ("Select Meditations", III, 16).

Thus Traherne defines the soul as an infinite and eternal intellectual power, capable of understanding all things. It is the focus of God's attention, and the force which guides action in the world. Since the soul is the point of attention, the world must be subservient to it. Way, then, did God create the world? One of the solutions Traherne offers to the problem is seen in his assertion that the world is a physical means

to a spiritual end: God created the universe to show forth His glory, and thus draw us to Him. The task of the inward eye is to apprehend or apperceive the universe, see the spiritual significance of the material world.

As one writer has put it, Traherne

believed that a man who had come to set a right value on creation, by seeing even the smallest blade of grass as a symbol of God's divine love was . . . /able to/ delight in the beauties of Felicity. But the nature he writes of is apocalyptic -- it is nature seen with the eyes of knowledge. Jewels, crowns and sceptres -- brilliant symbols of eternity -- are the material of his imagery . . . .<sup>54</sup>

That the world is to be perceived in a spiritual manner is made clear in the "Disquisition", where he emphasizes the fact that he is dealing with the spiritual, and not the corporeal world in his discussion of the soul (Osborn MS, pp. 247-248). This statement follows shortly after his declaration that the mercy of God is clearly visible to

one y<sup>t</sup> clearly knows y<sup>e</sup> works of God to be most excellent, and made for y<sup>e</sup> sake of Souls . . . .

(Osborn MS, p. 247.)

That the world was made to be spiritually perceived for the betterment of our souls is a theme present throughout the "Select Meditations". Commenting on the world in an early part of the work, he states:

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<sup>54</sup> Angela Russell, "A Study of Thomas Traherne's Christian Ethicks and Its Relation to the Background of Caroline Piety," unpublished B. Litt. thesis (Oxford, 1955), pp. 96-97.

y<sup>e</sup> world is an Hous wherein I am placed in  
Communion with God so to enjoy y<sup>m</sup> /that  
is, God's attributes/.

("Select Meditations", II, 3.)

That we are placed in the world to better our souls and to commune with  
God is further supported by the statement in a later meditation:

Communion with God is y<sup>e</sup> End of y<sup>e</sup> Creation.  
And he y<sup>t</sup> sees it Surmounteth y<sup>e</sup> world and  
Dwells in Heaven.

("Select Meditations", II, 87.)

The whole world is created to minister to us, he states in meditation  
ninety-one of the "Second Century" of "Select Meditations", but we must  
realize that it is created to minister to our souls, not just our bodies.  
Thus we must train the eye of the soul to perceive the treasures of God  
that abound in the world. The material universe, to Traherne, serves  
mainly a psychagogic function: it draws the soul to God by manifesting  
His goodness. In realizing the manifestation of God in the world, the  
soul sees that it was created as the centre of the world and was thus  
made the possessor of all the wonders that surround it.

The centrality of the theme of possession in Traherne's later works  
is intimately connected with his view of the world. Once the world is  
seen as a gift from God, and once one realizes that the individual soul  
is the centre of the world, the idea that the soul possesses the entire  
universe follows logically and automatically. Although the possession  
theme finds its greatest expression in the poems on infancy, in both the  
"Disquisition" and the "Select Meditations" we see the continuation of  
the development of the possession theme from its first Biblical-based



statement in the epitaph "Hic situs est Haeres Mundi" (ENB, p. 197).<sup>55</sup>

In the "Disquisition" he points out that one of the consequences of the infinity of the soul is that the soul becomes the end of the world, the point at which all God's goodness is aimed (Osborn MS, p. 249f). This statement is clarified and completed by his later comment which emphasizes the need for us to realize that we do possess the world:

Much less doth this become y<sup>e</sup> Infinite & Eternal  
Magesty of Heaven and Earth who hath us made  
Temples in y<sup>e</sup> greatness of our Souls, & friends  
& brides meet to Inherit all Things, w<sup>ch</sup> univer-  
sal Inheritance being unknown, the only use of  
this infinity in y<sup>e</sup> Soul is abolished . . . .

(Osborn MS, p. 257f.)

A statement in the "Select Meditations" serves to summarize Traherne's early view of the haeres mundi theme, and also helps to connect his view of the soul and his attitude to the world:

That every Thing indeed is an Infinite Treasure  
is an Infinite Paradox to some Understandings;  
But infinitely Sweet, because truth is so great  
y<sup>t</sup> in Divine Things there can be no Hyperbolie,  
every Thing must be an Infinite Treasure because  
y<sup>e</sup> Spectators are of Infinite Capacity Depth and  
Reach: and there is by y<sup>e</sup> one Laid in for y<sup>e</sup>  
other an Infinite Depth of Endless concernments,  
a fathomless mine of invisible Excellencies.  
Neither was it possible to be otherwise y<sup>e</sup>  
best things being always necessary, and upon  
y<sup>e</sup> admission of a God unavoidable.

("Select Meditations", III, 7.)

God has created infinite treasures for us in the world if we see them

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<sup>55</sup> In all probability Traherne had in mind the statement from Romans, 4: 13 when he wrote this first statement of the recurrent theme of man as heir of the world.

aright. Man, with his infinite capacity to understand, and with his position at the centre of the world, is the focus of these blessings and has the ability to understand and contain them, would he but perceive aright.

From this brief survey of the themes and ideas in the Osborn manuscript, one can see how important its discovery was, and what great light it sheds on the development of Traherne's ideas. While working on the "Select Meditations" and "Disquisition on the Soul", Traherne was probably also working on or thinking about the other significant product of his Credenhill period, the magnificent Thanksgivings. There are two reasons for dating the composition of these pieces during the Credenhill period, one on the grounds of content, the other on the basis of style. Assuming that my dating of the "Select Meditations" is correct, similarities in material that exist between them and the Thanksgivings argue a close temporal relationship. The exact verbal parallels, considered along with the thematic similarities that exist between "A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation" and the first few extant meditations of the "Select Meditations", support my contention that the two were written at approximately the same time.<sup>56</sup> We note that the material being praised in the

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<sup>56</sup> This tends to disprove Margoliouth's contention (I, xxxviii) that the Thanksgivings were written during the Bridgeman period. Wade and Salter are more cautious than Margoliouth, and ascribe only the "Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation" to Traherne's London period (Wade, p. 147 and Salter, p. 16) as does Robert Ellrodt, Les Poètes Métaphysiques Anglais (Paris, 1960), II, 261f. However, I feel that the evidence of close relationship present in the "Select Meditations" indicates that all the Thanksgivings were composed at Credenhill.

Professor Martz's theory of thematic repetition as a meditative device, discussed in The Poetry of Meditation, rev. ed., (New Haven, 1962), passim, may also account, in part, for the thematic repetitions in Traherne's works.

Thanksgivings, (God's laws, God's attributes, the soul, the body as a means for the glorification of the soul, and the welfare of the nation,) closely parallels, if not duplicates, subjects discussed in the Osborn manuscript. Such a close relationship in theme indicates rather convincingly that the prose poems were composed at roughly the same time as the longer prose meditations.

Another matter which connects the Thanksgivings with the period of the composition of the "Select Meditations" both thematically and stylistically is the comment, in the "Thanksgivings for the Wisdom of his WORD", about the glory of the revelation of the word of God not being simply a personal revelation. If we can trust the chronological order of Traherne's autobiography in the Third Century, his experiencing of the value of the Bible occurred soon after his return to the country from the University (CM III, 33-35). (In these meditations he describes his joy at realizing the full significance, and infinite value, of the universal revelation of the word of God in the form of the Bible.) This experience is also described in the "Thanksgivings for the Wisdom of his WORD" (Margoliouth, II, 299-310) in lines 216-258. Assuming that the poem was written not too long after the experience itself, it is safe to assume that this antipenultimate "Thanksgiving" was written during the Credenhill period, and that those that precede it were written about the same time.

The reader will remember, from my description of the contents of the "Select Meditations", that Traherne exhibited a great familiarity with the matter and manner of the Bible, particularly the Psalms and the prophetic books. A reading of the Thanksgivings will reveal a similar pre-occupation with the word of the Prophets, and with both the style

and words of David. Each of the prose poems begins with one or more quotations from the Psalms, followed by some three or four hundred lines of rhythmical prose that very closely resembles the style of the Psalms in the King James Version. The immediacy with which scriptural references from the Old Testament spring to his mind and pen, and the style of the writing that follows, argue for a great familiarity, on Traherne's part, with the style and content of the Bible, a familiarity which could only come from a close and prolonged study of the Book. It would appear that Traherne's pre-occupation with the Bible, so well illustrated by the latter part of the Third Century, combined with his desire to emulate David both in word and action, described in "A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation" (ll. 286-92), united to produce the excellent seventeenth-century version of the Songs of David.

If the refined rhapsodic style of the Thanksgivings demonstrates an advance over the jumbled and often hurried prose and verse of the Osborn manuscript, one also can notice a definite development of theme as well. In the Thanksgivings we see a refinement of Traherne's attitude to possession, perception, the soul, and the world, themes treated often in the Osborn manuscript. That he now considers the soul almost strictly an intellectual being, a trend indicated in the earlier writings, can be seen from the "Thanksgivings for the Beauty of his Providence" (ll. 38, and 55-58). But the soul still has retained its spiritual attributes: it is still the image of the Deity in man, as the "Thanksgivings for God's Attributes" (ll. 129-132) demonstrate. The soul is still considered to be the end of the world, the centre on which all God's bounty is showered; and it is by the perceptive power of the soul that this beauty is perceived, according to the earlier lines of the "Thanksgivings for the Glory of God's Works".

For a full discussion of his thoughts about the nature of the soul, though, the reader should turn to the "Thanksgivings for the Soul", where Traherne, in effect, repeats the arguments found in the "Disquisition" as to the nature of the soul: the soul's intellectual perception (l. 20), its liberty (ll. 68-71), its deformity (ll. 72-89), its role as centre and sphere of understanding (ll. 105-109), its duty to understand the spiritual purpose behind the physical world (ll. 187-227), and its use as the guiding force in a deiform life (ll. 502-535) all find statement here in substantially the same way as they did in the previous works.

Spiritual perception is once again emphasized in the Thanksgivings. Without proper perception, man is unable to see the full glory of God, and thus is unable to achieve his proper salvation. That blindness to one's proper riches is the cause of the unhappiness of most of the world was hinted at in the "Select Meditations". But in both the "Thanksgivings for the Wisdom of his Word" (ll. 60-97) and "A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation" (ll. 202-3), Traherne points out that man would be happy if he simply regained his proper sense of values by learning to perceive the world aright as a personal gift from God.

The intimate link between proper perception and the sense of possessing all the world as a gift from God is seen clearly in the "Thanksgivings for the Body" (ll. 80-91), where Traherne points out that it is the senses which make one realize that he is the centre and heir of the world. The haeres mundi theme is continued in the "Thanksgivings for the Blessedness of his LAWS" (ll. 129-149), where Traherne stresses the point that the laws of God, especially the law of mutual love between creature and Creator, makes one the heir of the world, the possessor of all things.

In the "Thanksgivings for the Glory of God's Works" (ll. 80-94), commenting on true and false senses of value, Traherne points out the need to see the gifts of God as the proper possessions of mankind, the greatest treasures, and emphasizes the necessity for realizing that they were given to all of us personally. That the world was given to ME, not to us but to ME as an individual, is pointed out clearly in the same poem (ll. 315-325), and anticipates the use of Seneca's statement to the same effect, quoted in meditation fifteen of the First Century (ll. 11-13).

It is easy to see that Traherne's attitude to the world has not really changed. The created universe is still seen as a means for the glorification of the soul, as a means of drawing us to God, as the "Thanksgivings for the Glory of Gods Works" demonstrate. But another attribute has been added: in both the "Thanksgivings for the Body" (ll. 170-192) and the "Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation" (ll. 32-37), Traherne points out that the world is a theatre in which we are placed to act in the similitude of God. Just as the world gives God a chance to demonstrate His love and goodness to us, so it provides us with an opportunity to either damn or glorify ourselves. Since man was created with free will, the world provides him with an opportunity to either fulfill his proper duty of loving and praising God or to damn himself by voluntarily ignoring the riches that surround him.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> From the very beginning, Traherne insisted on the necessity of free will. He stressed it in his epitome on pp. 10-13 of ENB, and pointed out in three places in the "Select Meditations" (SM II, 32; SM III, 28; and SM IV, 51) that the proper life for mankind is a voluntary devotion to the service of God. The "Thanksgivings for the Soul" (ll. 366-381) and the "Thanksgivings for the Blessedness of God's Ways" (ll. 442-464) produce yet more evidence of his early insistence in the need for and primacy of free will.

Life at Credenhill must have been quite rewarding for Traherne: he had the pleasure of serving his parish, the opportunity of enjoying the society of a group of devout people at Kington, and sufficient leisure time to devote to his literary pursuits. The result was the production of several manuscripts, all of which indicate important tendencies in the developing writer. We note an increased familiarity and facility with Biblical metres, indicated primarily in the Thanksgivings, and an unfortunately heavy reliance on Aristotelian methodology, as evidenced by the sterile and rather forced definitions of the various virtues in the "Select Meditations" and the overly-scholastic style of the argument in the "Disquisition on the Soul".

With regard to themes, the writings of the Credenhill period demonstrate a preliminary expression of the basic thought patterns which we find throughout Traherne's works. The possession theme, indicated by the epitaph "Hic situs est Haeres Mundi" (ENB, p. 197), is expanded and clarified greatly. The emphasis on perception and the need to see the spiritual significance of the created universe points to the later development of the theory of right apprehension in the Poems and Centuries and the later emphasis on a proper sense of value. The attitude to the world, seeing things of nature as manifestations of the Deity designed to lead the soul to God, foreshadows Traherne's later demands for man to see the world aright. The nature of the soul as an infinite and eternal

sphere of understanding is clarified, as is his contention that each individual soul is the centre of the universe. His thoughts about free will and the duty of man, scattered throughout the "Select Meditations" and Thanksgivings, preview his later theory that the proper duty of man is to voluntarily serve his Creator by continually giving praise for the blessings he has received. In fact, one is able to say, with few reservations, that all the prominent themes of Traherne's later writings are expressed, in one form or another, in one or more of the works of the Credenhill period. Left on his own, without the disturbance of any important external influences, Traherne spent his years at Credenhill solidifying and codifying his ideas of the relationship between Man, God, and the Universe. The result was a coherent philosophic system that formed the basis of his literary works.

During the Credenhill period, there were but two external forces which influenced Traherne to any great extent. The first was Aristotle, whose formalized terminology and definitions of virtue and the way to happiness had influenced Traherne deeply in his undergraduate days. The influence of Aristotle is most apparent in Traherne's basic definitions of virtue, happiness, and the proper life, all of which have a distinctly scholastic tone which sometimes detracts from the otherwise free-flowing, rhapsodic nature of his verse and prose.

The other major external influence, the Bible, affected Traherne both in style and outlook. His imitation of David, in both verse form and attitude of life, is clear to anyone reading the Thanksgivings. Traherne's immense knowledge of the Bible at this time is evidenced by the great facility with which he quotes line after line of scripture, usually from



memory (as the numerous misquotations attest). The attitude of the prophet crying in the wilderness, gained primarily from his reading of Isaiah, is seen both in his view of fallen man and the imagery he uses to describe the perverted world.

Despite the external influences on his style, however, Traherne's thought remains substantially his own. When he left Credenhill to take up his duties as private chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgeman in 1669, Traherne left behind him his years of early development, and moved on to what was to be his period of greatest intellectual and literary accomplishment.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Traherne's appointment as Sir Orlando Bridgeman's chaplain was most likely due to his association with Mrs Hopton. Wade (p. 87) points out that Mrs Hopton's sister was married to one Sir Heneage Finch, Solicitor General under Charles II. (For more information about Finch, see DNB; for more on his connection with the Conway family, see Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684, ed. M. H. Nicolson (New Haven, 1930).) Finch was a friend and associate of Sir Orlando, so it is quite possible that Traherne was brought to Bridgeman's attention through some arrangement between Mrs Hopton and her brother-in-law.

C. L. Marks ("Introduction", p. xxiv ff) points out that Sir Orlando Bridgeman was born of a clerical family in 1606, and educated at Cambridge (B. A. Queens, 1624) (Fellow of Magdalen, 1624) and the Inner Temple. A man of strong personal virtue, he was appointed to the Bar in 1632 and rose quickly, gaining many offices in rapid succession, and finally receiving a knighthood in 1640. Remaining an ardent Royalist during the Civil War and Interregnum, he went into a retreat, from which he acted as legal advisor to the Conway family and served as an oracle of support to his fellow sufferers. Following the Restoration, his rapid rise continued: he received the first baronetcy of the Restoration, and presided over the trial of the regicides. In his position as Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, he showed great legal exactitude, but encountered rather turbulent times when he succeeded Clarendon as Chancellor. Being a man too proud to compromise his high principles, he fell into disfavour with the King and lost his office to Shaftsbury in 1672. He then retired to his country home in Teddington, where he died, a broken man, on June 25, 1674. (Thomas Page Johnson's introduction to Sir Orlando Bridgeman's Conveyances (London, 1682) provides most of this biographical information, and is quite reliable, since the writer was one of Bridgeman's clerks.)

## LONDON

Whether or not Traherne left Credenhill for a lengthy period before 1669 is not known definitely. Since he received his B. D. from Oxford in December, 1669, however, we have reason to assume that he spent some time there while he was still technically in residence at Credenhill. His Roman Forgeries, published in 1673, was researched in the Bodleian, as the prefatory "Advertisement to the Reader" (Margoliouth, I, xxix) indicates; but internal evidence indicates that the book was not written in its final form until after 1671, thus calling into doubt Margoliouth's assumption that it was written as "the seventeenth-century equivalent of the modern B. D. thesis".<sup>1</sup> In all probability, Traherne began his work on the Roman Forgeries while in Oxford completing what requirements were necessary for his B. D. The research was most likely concluded, though, after he had moved to London and could more easily reach the Bodleian. The years in Credenhill had been spent codifying his own thoughts about felicity. When he had the opportunity of availing himself of the intellectual riches of Oxford, something he could do more easily from his position as private chaplain in London than from his post

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<sup>1</sup> Margoliouth's assumption (I, xxxviii) can be questioned when one considers, as Miss Marks points out ("Readings", p. 66f), that Traherne used, and acknowledged his debt to the edition of the Church Councils edited by Labbeus and Cossartius, first published in Paris in 1671.

as country parson in Herefordshire, he wasted no time in delving into the various sources, theological and philosophical, which he felt might support his primary contentions. One of the results was the scholastic and anti-papist Roman Forgeries, a document of theological dispute of no literary merit and of interest to the scholar of Traherne only in so far as it demonstrates his theological scholarship and his methodological debt to Aristotle.<sup>2</sup>

## 2

Traherne's renewed interest in ancient philosophy is evidenced by two manuscripts in particular: the somewhat Aristotelian "Commonplace Book" and the quite Platonic "Ficino Notebook". The latter volume, compiled some time between 1670 and 1672, contains numerous extracts from Marsilio Ficino's edition of Plato's works, along with several extracts from other works dealing with Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I omit a lengthy discussion of the Roman Forgeries because the volume contains little of any intrinsic literary or thematic merit. Outside of demonstrating Traherne's debt to the scholastic theological tradition, with its basis in Aristotle, the one useful purpose the volume serves for Traherne scholars is to indicate the numerous contemporary and ancient Christian scholars to whom Traherne turned. From a reading of the book, it is obvious that Traherne was by no means untutored in Christian doctrine: the list of authorities he cited in the Roman Forgeries would fill a page. Many of the authorities cited, for that matter, were also consulted when he was working on his other orthodox theological work, the "Church's Year-Book;" discussed later in this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> For the reasons for dating this manuscript, British Museum Burney MS 126, during this period, see Appendix II. For a description of the work, see Appendix I. Hereafter, in both text and notes, the work will be referred to as FNB.

In compiling his summary of Ficino's edition of Plato, Traherne used an edition which contained both Ficino's Latin translation of Plato's dialogues and Ficino's epitomes or summaries of the salient points in the works. Generally Traherne copied the material directly into the notebook, but there are instances of his paraphrasing, omitting, or adding to the material in the Ficino edition. Of the eighteen dialogues on which he made notes, the one most quoted is The Republic; while, dealing with subject matter, the majority of the entries concern virtue, particularly justice. Again, Traherne excerpts only that which interests him.<sup>4</sup>

Following the excerpts from Ficino, which occupy the first eighty-five pages of the manuscript, Traherne left a blank of some seventy-six leaves, and then added a twenty-two page life of Socrates and a three page correllarium to the same, both presumably copied from the same as yet unidentified source. It is this extract which provides the immediate

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<sup>4</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 225. As an example of the way in which Traherne excerpts from Ficino, Miss Marks quotes a passage from Miss C.A. Owen's unpublished University of London Master of Arts thesis, "The Thought and Art of Thomas Traherne" (1957), pp. 29-30, which illustrates my point about his selective excerpting. Commenting on Traherne's notes on Ficino's summary of the Charmides, Miss Owen remarks that Traherne drastically simplified Ficino, discarding the Neo-platonic comparisons between Platonic and Biblical figures, and also omitting a passage which spiritualizes Socrates' praise of beauty. The only two aspects he retained from the original were the emphasis on the need for active temperance, and the insistence on the essential unity of the virtues (temperance being inevitably linked with wisdom and prudence), themes which, Miss Owen points out, constantly recur in Christian Ethicks. This tendency to excerpt only that which interests him, or only that which proves his point, is characteristic of Traherne, and is seen most clearly in the "Commonplace Book" discussed below.

source of the two pseudo-Platonic statements in the Centuries.<sup>5</sup> The manuscript also provides a Latin version of the section "It was a notable observation of Plato . . . . in his own soul" found in Christian Ethicks.<sup>6</sup>

After a short extract from Socrates, copied by an amanuensis from Gale's Court of the Gentiles, Part II (Oxford, 1670), there is a two-page summary of Ficino's introduction to his Latin translation of The Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus.<sup>7</sup> This in turn is followed by a one-page extract from an unidentified Latin work entitled Stoicismus Christianus. The passage, a summary of the first eleven chapters of the work, deals with what men can justly possess and a discussion of the nature of the soul, appetites, and vision. It may well be that this short excerpt prompted Traherne to dig deeper into Stoic writings: his comments from Seneca, as well as his Stoic leanings in such poems as "Contentment is a Sleepy Thing", may indicate a deeper connection between Traherne and the Stoicism alive in the period than has heretofore been expected. Following the Stoic extract, the manuscript concludes with a one-page additional quotation, again copied by the amanuensis from Part II of Gale's

<sup>5</sup> FNB, ff. 51-51<sup>v</sup> provide a Latin version of CM I, 40, ll. 1-10; and FNB, f. 48 provides the immediate source of CM III, 60, ll. 7-8. Marks, "Readings", pp. 221-3.

<sup>6</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 223-4. The passage occurs on p. 108 of Christian Ethicks, ed. M. Bottrall (London, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> Quite possibly it was the reading of Ficino's Argumentum that prompted Traherne to read Everard's translation of The Divine Pymander, a text much quoted in Christian Ethicks and the "Commonplace Book". Hereafter the "Commonplace Book" will be cited, in text and notes, as CPB.

Court of the Gentiles, dealing with "Socrates his Disciples".<sup>8</sup>

From this brief resumé of the contents of the manuscript, one can see several interesting trends and attributes. Traherne's habit of excerpting from his sources only those ideas which interest him or support his point of view is evidenced by the nature of the extracts from Ficino. His interest in Platonism is indicated by the entire manuscript. The detail with which he copied Ficino's introduction to the translation of The Divine Pymander suggest that he had not, at this stage, read the volume. The theme of the extracts from Stoicismus Christianus indicates the reason for Traherne's turning to that volume. It is quite possible that, when the identity of the volume has been determined, one will be able to make more positive judgements of the debt Traherne owes to the Stoic tradition. Generally, then, the manuscript indicates a broadening of Traherne's intellectual horizon, giving, at the same time, proof of his attitude to secondary sources and external authorities: other men's works are used by Traherne strictly to support his own ideas.

Another manuscript which dates from this same period is the "Church's Year-Book".<sup>9</sup> The second part of a work, of which the beginning has been lost, the CYB appears to have been compiled for the use of a devotional

<sup>8</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 219-224.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix I and Appendix II for a description of the contents, and a discussion of the reasons for the dating of this manuscript. Hereafter the work will be cited, in notes and text, as CYB.

circle.<sup>10</sup> It has the threefold purpose of providing Anglicans with information about Church Festivals and Saints' Days, furnishing prayers for those days, and attacking Low Churchmen and Puritans for opposing the celebration of these feasts. Stylistically it resembles the Meditations and Devotions on the Life of Christ, providing facts about the saints or feasts, and then proceeding to meditate on the facts in prayers. Though often derivative, the material still retains traces of Traherne's hand throughout. His vocabulary and rhythms appear even in his adaptations of other authors, while his ecstasies of description and catalogues of the virtues of blessedness show a close stylistic affinity with the Thanksgivings and the Centuries.

Although there is much original material in the manuscript, a lot of borrowing from other sources occurs. These external sources fall into five general categories. His use of classical poets is characteristic: from Homer he borrows the story of Ulysses and Dometes' raid on the enemy camp ( Iliad, X) to support his reasoning as to why God sent both Barnabus and Paul to preach together (CYB, f. 69); while from Plutarch he borrows a passage from the Morals to support another argument about Christian truth (CYB, f. 102<sup>V</sup>). Similarly, his citing of such Church Fathers as Origen, St Augustine, and Leontius is done strictly to support his own pleas for

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<sup>10</sup> Both Margoliouth (I, xvii) and Marks ("Readings", pp. 55-56) agree that Traherne would have begun such a work with the beginning of the Church Year, that is Advent Sunday, the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The manuscript, however, begins with Easter Sunday and continues to All Saints Day, November 1st. Thus we are safe in assuming that there was a first part to the manuscript which has since been lost.

the observance of the various Church festivals. His references to Ecclesiastical historians provide him with material about the various saint's lives and feast days, as well as support for his claims of the validity of these feasts.<sup>11</sup> With regard to contemporary English theologians, Traherne uses Hooker's statement, wrenched out of context though it may be, to support his pleas for the celebration of Church Festivals.<sup>12</sup> Contemporary devotional writers, like Andrewes, Taylor, Herbert, and Daniel Featley, provide Traherne with a lot of devotional material which he freely adapts to his own purposes. In all his borrowings, Traherne demonstrates his usual trait of adapting his authorities or sources to suit his own argument. There is rarely a case in which borrowed material is left either in its original form or with its original theme or intent. Although he did borrow, Traherne effectively made the borrowed material his own, either by changing the meaning or introducing his own characteristic style.

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<sup>11</sup> Marks, "Introduction", p. 5 et passim states that Traherne's prime sources in this field were William Austin, Devotionis Augustinianae Flamma or Certain Devout, Godly and Learned Meditations (London, 1635), Edward Spark, Scintilla Altaris, or A Pious Reflection on the Primitive Devotion (London, 1652), and Meredith Hamner, Auncient Ecclesiasticall Histories (1577).

<sup>12</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 64a states that the quote from Hooker on CYB f. 24 comes from section 41, p. 82 Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie: The fift /sic./ Booke (London, 1597). A reading of this passage serves to demonstrate again the manner in which Traherne used his authorities. Hooker's comment, considered in context, does not directly apply to Traherne's argument. Taken out of context it could be used as support for the case Traherne is trying to make. If nothing else, the passage in question demonstrates Traherne's facility in wrenching out of context.



One interesting fact about the manuscript is the number of separate hands in it. One hand, probably that of Philip Traherne, is responsible for just one short entry on f. 24<sup>v</sup>, and requires little comment.<sup>13</sup> But the second hand, other than that one obviously Traherne's, arbitrarily termed "Hand C", is responsible for a considerable number of additions.<sup>14</sup> I submit that "Hand C" is in fact Mrs Hopton, and for these reasons: the handwriting resembles that of the "Meditation" and "A Prayer for Ash Wednesday" found in the Osborn manuscript; the tone of the material is that of the above-mentioned meditation and prayer; and the attention given to Church Festivals is typical of the devout nature of Mrs Hopton. I mentioned at the beginning of this section that the manuscript was probably written for a devotional circle. If this is so, I would argue that Traherne wrote this material for Mrs Hopton and then sent it to her in Kington, at which time she added her material. (A cursory glance at the manuscript shows that all the additions in Hand C were made at the end of the various sections). I would also suggest that, were we to discover the first half of the manuscript, we would find that the "Prayer for

<sup>13</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 53-54.

<sup>14</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 52-53, and p. 53n discusses the presence of three hands in the manuscript: I have no reason to disagree. Her list of passages attributed to "Hand C", to which I would add nothing and subtract little, includes the following: f. ii<sup>v</sup>: 4 lines near the end; f. 5<sup>v</sup>: a clause at the end of the first paragraph; f. 15: the last paragraph added; f. 16: several obvious additions, including the whole last paragraph; f. 31: a brief prayer; f. 47: 2 phrases; f. 79: a long prayer added; f. 113: the whole of the "antiphon for All Saints Day" and the "2 Antiphon". I disagree with Miss Marks' attribution of passages on f. 13, f. 52<sup>v</sup>, f. 89, and f. 89<sup>v</sup> to "Hand C"; most of the passages, I feel, were made by Traherne after the manuscript had been completed. The manuscript bears no trace of the amanuensis who worked on CPB.

Ash Wednesday" that appears in the Osborn manuscript, would occur, in the same form, in the Ash Wednesday section of the missing part of this manuscript.

The manuscript, then, provides us with several important pieces of information: it establishes a link between Traherne and Mrs Hopton during Traherne's period of residence in London; it shows that Traherne was well read in the devotional material of the day as well as in Ecclesiastical history and the Church Fathers; it proves again my contention that Traherne uses his external sources not as people to turn to for ideas but rather as authoritative backing for his own theories; and it demonstrates Traherne's strict adherence to the ritual of the Church of England. Looking at the volume thematically for a moment, we also note the presence of many of Traherne's characteristic themes: the world was made for you (ff. 38<sup>v</sup>, 42<sup>v</sup>, 94 and 83-83<sup>v</sup>), a proper education is needed to escape corruption (f. 72), the pure mind satisfies the soul (ff. 17<sup>v</sup>, 37<sup>v</sup>, 41<sup>v</sup> and 54<sup>v</sup>), the soul is infinite in extent (f. 90) and all depends on the power of love (ff. 53<sup>v</sup>-54). The CYB demonstrates Traherne's intellectual development well, not only by indicating the continuation of the themes found in the early writings, but also by presenting evidence of Traherne's renewed and enlarged interest in devotional and philosophic material that supported his own intuitions or experiences.

### 3

More revealing than the notebooks as a record of Traherne's development of his themes are the Poems and Centuries. Traherne is basically a philosophic or didactic writer, one interested in proclaiming

a gospel. It is my contention that both the Centuries and the Poems were written for the expressed purpose of presenting parables and examples of the felicitous life. Both were written with the conscious purpose of providing, for Mrs Hopton and her group at least, a detailed examination of all aspects of approaching, achieving, and enjoying felicity.<sup>15</sup>

Although Traherne tried his hand at verse in many of his works, both early and late, the two prime sources we have of his verse are the fair copy that Traherne made himself in the opening sections of the Dobell folio, and the "Poems of Felicity", a manuscript collection of verse by Traherne compiled by his brother Philip and intended for eventual publication.<sup>16</sup> In both of these collections, which together form one continuous

<sup>15</sup> That the Centuries were written for Mrs Hopton is clear from the "Presentation Quatrain" (Margoliouth, I, 2) and the numerous references to "my friend" throughout the manuscript. I contend that the Poems were intended to form a companion-piece to the Centuries, and to present poetic epitomes of the prose statements of basic themes.

<sup>16</sup> There are rudimentary attempts at verse in many of Traherne's writings: the ENB contains poems discussed above, the Osborn manuscript contains a lot of what is really a weak attempt at verse, the Centuries contain some early verse too (including an early version of the poem "The Approach" in CM III, 4), and there is much mention and frequent quotation of sections from a "poem on moderation" in both the Centuries and Christian Ethicks.

The Dobell folio (Bodleian MS. Eng. poet. c. 42) contains some 96 leaves, of which the last 80 are occupied by notes on various subjects and are referred to as the "Commonplace Book" (CPB). Preceding the CPB are 16 leaves on which are written, in the hand Traherne reserved for passages of importance, fair copies of some 37 poems. Since these are fair and not draft copies of the verse, I contend that this is the order in which Traherne wanted them read. Also, since they precede the CPB, they must have been finished before those notes were started. Internal evidence dates the CPB as no earlier than 1670, but not too long after since extracts from it were used in the writing of the Christian Ethicks. Thus we are safe in dating the poems there as early 1670's. Since we have a fair copy of "The Approach" in the Dobell folio, we can date the final version of the poems as later than the composition of the Third Century.

line of development, one can discern three distinct thematic groups: a study of innocent, naive intuitions of the universe; a study of the period of sin and redemption; and a study of the redeemed state of proper attention to good thoughts. It should be noted that these three thematic groups correspond directly with the three estates of innocence, trial, and grace discussed in Christian Ethicks. On this point I am at variance with Miss Wade. In her work she points out that Traherne's poems fall into three main groups: parables of childhood, the need of God for man, and the nature of the mind; but she feels that the poems "are not arranged in any kind of sequence" in the Dobell folio (p. 169). Although I accept her finding of three sequences in the verse, I can accept neither her denial of conscious ordering nor her classification of the three categories.

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The "Poems of Felicity" (British Museum Burney MS. 392), compiled by Philip Traherne, contain his revised copies of 22 of the poems in the Dobell manuscript, as well as an additional 39 poems for which we do not have Traherne's original version. (For an idea of the disastrous revisions made by Philip, see Margoliouth, II, 4-85). Philip also arranged his poems in a conscious order, copying the first 22 poems of the Dobell manuscript and then inserting his additional poems from what I presume is a lost Traherne manuscript. He did not include the last 15 poems of the Dobell folio, which leads one to believe that there still exist two manuscripts: the original Traherne version from which Philip made his copy, and the second volume of Philip's copy, of which Burney MS 392 represents the first.

But the significant thing to note, both about the occurrence of the poems in the Dobell folio and in "Poems of Felicity", is the arrangement: they all follow a definite development from the joyous but naive infant state, to a perceptive state that watches and studies the world, to a contemplative state which deals not with the life of good actions but rather with the virtuous life of proper attention to good thoughts and intellectual contentment.

It is my contention that Traherne consciously arranged the poems in the order in which Margoliouth prints them for the purpose of presenting a guide to those who wished to reach the felicitous life, and that in that order he followed the plan of the three estates of man later outlined in Christian Ethicks.

The first thematic group, the poems presenting the study of the infant state, deals not with actual physical infancy but rather with the spiritual purity of the infant mind.<sup>17</sup> In meditation five of the Third Century, Traherne states that the return to infancy is to be a return to "the Peace and Purity of all our Soul" (CM III, 5, ll. 6-7), a return which involves a cleansing of the soul of all the "Leven of this World" (ll. 10-11), so that we can preceive as the infant did. The poetic epitome of this statement is found in "The Return" (Margoliouth, II, 87-88) where Traherne says it would be well for each of us to return to spiritual infancy both as a protection against the sin of the world and also in order to learn to rightly perceive the world as our own proper possession.

The first eight poems of this group provide one with a clear view of the innocent, naive, prelapsarian infant soul. In its naive state, the soul immediately and intuitively perceives the immanence of God ("Wonder", st. 1), the value of the body as a gift from God ("The Salutation", st. 4), the fact that the world was made for him alone ("Wonder",

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<sup>17</sup> In this first category I include the first 22 poems of the Dobell folio, plus the first six poems appearing only in the "Poems of Felicity"; that is, the poems appearing in Margoliouth II, 4-94, up to and including the poem "The World".

st. 8), and that he is completely free from sin ("Eden" and "Innocence"). The prelapsarian nature of the infant soul, explained in detail in the Centuries, is epitomized in "Innocence" and "Eden", poems in which Traherne describes the pure and uninfluenced life of the child that feels no spot of sin, knows nothing of the evils of the man-made world, and has no inclination to follow the wicked ways of men.

That he has been dealing with an early period in the child's life is made clear by Traherne in the fifth poem of the group, "The Preparative". Leading up to comments made later in "Silence" and "Dumnesse", this poem points out how valuable this period of "senseless" life is to the infant. Although he is not at all influenced by the world of man in his new-born state, the infant is still completely open to the influence of God, and thus receives an antidote to sin. The next poem, "The Instruction", then points out the value of the infant intuitions and the need to abide by them later. "The Vision" brings in the theme of proper perception or right apprehension, the "see the world aright" theme, stressing the need to perceive the order of God visible in the world. The section then concludes with "The Rapture", a hymn of praise for spiritual and corporeal infancy.

In the period of childhood, Traherne points out in poems like "The Improvement", it is necessary to augment the pure infant intuitions with knowledge of the reasons for the blessings perceived: we must see the goodness and wisdom of God behind the blessings in the world. The praise of the immanence of God in childhood in "The Approach" is quite Wordsworthian, and stresses Traherne's point that the pure infant soul is closest to God. After treating of the education of the infant spirit

in "Silence" and "Dumnesse", Traherne stresses the greatness of the unbounded, deiform soul in the beautiful lyric "My Spirit". The essence of his view of the soul, with its emphasis on capacity, infinite extent, purity, deiformity and perceptive power, is stated in this epitome. The praise of the soul as a power capable of perceiving the Deity and apprehending His goodness is continued in "Fulnesse", "Nature", "Ease", "Speed", and "The Designe", while the poem "The Person" echoes the praise of the body as a gift from God and home for the soul that is found in both "The Salutation" and the "Thanksgivings for the Body".<sup>18</sup>

The poems on childhood conclude with six poems found only in "Poems of Felicity". Since we have only Philip's version of the poem, we cannot be sure about Thomas' original intent. Certainly he would have stated, as "An Infant-Ey" does, that switching one's attention from the gifts of God to the goods of men would bring corruption, but whether he would have made the dichotomy between the spiritual and the material realms so distinct is questionable. The important point in this poem is the emphasis on proper spiritual perception: proper perception being essential to salvation. After discussing the pure infant soul in "The Return", and the desire of the infant soul for knowledge in "News", Traherne presents the epitome of his thematic intent in "Felicity". I feel Philip altered this poem greatly, since the theme of the verse is

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<sup>18</sup> The poems "The Estate" and "The Enquirie" begin a discussion, picked up later, about the proper relationship between Man and God, stressing the need for man to repay God with blessings and praise for the gifts of His goodness. This elementary statement of the "circulation" theme is expanded later in the poem "The Circulation", discussed below.

that felicity is in the mind of God while, for Thomas, felicity is here and now if you perceive aright.

Man's duty to God, the reason for the Fall, the nature of the Fall, and the way back to glory are all epitomized in "Adam", while the proper way for man to see the creation is summarized in "The World". These two poems form the end of the discussion of the period of prelapsarian innocence and introduce Traherne's discussion of the individual's Fall, the proper life for man, and the way to redemption. In "Adam" we see both how man is to behave, praising and prizing God at all times, and how man does behave, focussing on the vain man-made "riches" that really are worthless. The proper attitude to riches, the proper possession of the gifts of God, is stressed in "The World" as a preparation for the discussion of the Fall in poems like "The Apostacy".<sup>19</sup>

According to Traherne, man was created pure, each individual being free from all spot of sin. But man was also created with the ability to

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<sup>19</sup> Because of limitations of time and space, I cannot devote as much time as I would like to Traherne's theory of the Fall of man. There are two main points of view on the matter: K. W. Salter argues that Traherne was a Pelagian in Thomas Traherne: Mystic and Poet, pp. 130-136, while W. H. Marshall argues that he was an orthodox upholder of Article Nine in "Thomas Traherne and the Doctrine of Original Sin", MLN LXXIII (1958), 161-5. Although both men make their cases well, I feel they both ignore an attitude which provides a perfect analogue to Traherne's attitude to the Fall of man. The one indisputable analogue to Traherne's optimistic view of man is the Prometheus motif employed so much by the Renaissance Neoplatonists in their glorification of man. Time does not permit a full development of the various parallels between this attitude and Traherne's; but, I suggest the reader consult E. Cassirer, The Individual and the Cosmos, tr. Mario Domandi (New York, 1963), pp. 95-98, and O. Raggio, "The Myth of Prometheus: Its survival and metamorphosis up to the eighteenth century", JWCI XXI (1958), 44-62, for the basic outline of the Renaissance use of the motif. The parallels with Traherne's view of man and the Fall will be obvious.



be influenced and the freedom to chose his own course of action. As he tells us in the Centuries and "The Apostacy", although as an infant he perceived aright, he was soon drawn to imitate the actions of others. Thus he soon became perverted by the false values and evil customs of men who had lost their proper perception of the true riches of the world. This perversion resulted in his becoming alienated from God. Had he retained his right apprehension and prelapsarian sense of value, the experience described in "Solitude" would not have held such terror for him. Similarly, he would not have been subject to the feelings described in "Dissatisfaction" and "Poverty" had he not lost his proper sense of values. Once fallen, though, he sought and found a way to redemption: the Bible provided the instructions, as the poem by that name describes.<sup>20</sup>

The proper start on the road to redemption, as "Misapprehension" points out, is to see aright, to see yourself as the centre, circumference, and heir of the world. Proper perception of the self and the value of the body is the subject of the next poem, "The Odour", which likewise stresses proper apprehension, a proper sense of values. Admiration of the world, and the praising of God for the gift of the world, is the proper duty of man, "Admiration" states, echoing the dictums of "Adam". Following in

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<sup>20</sup> Following "The Bible" come several poems that are mainly descriptive and only generalized in their mention of the themes being examined here. "Christendom", "Bells", "On Christmas Day", and "Churches I and II" describe experiences from the Credenhill period, in all probability.

A similar short group of poems, including "Shadows in the Water", "On Leaping over the Moon", and "To the same purpos" form a section requiring no comment in this thesis.

this vein, "Right Apprehension" indicates the importance of giving to things their true esteem. Using what he called "righteousness" in the "Select Meditations", Traherne stresses the need for one to see things in the proper light, to give them their true value. Prefacing his comments with a reminder about the deformity of the soul in "The Image", Traherne goes on to a justification of the haeres mundi theme in "The Evidence". The Bible declares that we are heirs of the world, he states (sts. 1-2), and the way in which the world serves us provides sufficient evidence to prove the case.

Following these poems, Traherne inserts three short poems of a pseudo-autobiographic nature (see note 20 above), and then concludes the section on what he was later to call the "estate of trial" with thirteen rather more philosophic poems. In "Sight" he properly differentiates between the visual organ of the body and the perceptive eye of the soul, comparing the infinite eye of the soul to a mirror of the Deity (st. 5). It is this eye of the soul that does the perceiving described in the next poem, "Walking". In this work Traherne is quick to point out that proper perception does not involve a visual recognition of the object but rather a spiritual apprehension of the full significance of the eternal meaning of the object: the perception is intellectual.<sup>21</sup> The haeres mundi

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<sup>21</sup> Two things should be noted here, in particular. In the first place, one should note the definite similarity between Traherne's point of view about prophetic perception and the theory of perception expounded by William Blake in his verse. In essence what Traherne advocates in "Walking" is what Blake describes in his verse letter to Butts from Felpham on October 2, 1800. See Blake, Complete Poetry and Prose, 4th ed., ed. G. Keynes (London, 1961), pp. 845-848.

theme forms the basis of "The Dialogue" that follows. The validity of the mental existence, and the value of good thoughts, something stressed in the Fourth Century, forms the theme of "Dreams" and is supported by the comments in "The Inference I and II". This later bipartite poem stresses the great value of the temple of the mind. It significantly indicates a change, also apparent in the Fourth Century, in Traherne's attitude to the world: here we note a change from the theme of active involvement in the performance of good works to the theme of intellectual devotion to good thoughts and proper ideas about Man, God, and the Universe. This more intellectual trend, apparent both in the verse and in the prose Centuries, mirrors the actual change in Traherne's life pattern from that of the country parson of a rather quiet parish to the private chaplain in an intellectually and socially alive city household. As if to confirm my theory that the change in attitude mirrors the change in habitat, Traherne follows his praise of thoughts with a praise of urban life in "The City", as seen through the eyes of one who perceives his proper riches aright. This is followed by a further emphasis on the insatiable, infinite longings of the eternal, intellectual spirit. In "Insatiableness I and II" we have the best description Traherne provides of the inquiring, unrestricted soul. This is further clarified by a praise of the messengers of the soul, the cosmic roving thoughts which inform the soul and fill it with the wonders of infinity ("Consummation").

Traherne's summary of the "estate of trial" comes in the form of

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One should also note the use of the bee image in stanza 5. This image first appears in ENB, p. 68.

three poems. The actual conclusion comes in the pair of poems "The Review I and II", where he questions the value of his change of focus from the things of God to the thoughts and souls of men. There he points out that thoughts, not things, are what either ensnares us in a mesh of deceit or frees us from the burden of sin. Though the two "Review" poems are the last in the sequence, the true summary of the discussion of the "estate of trial" comes in the poem "Hosanna", one of Traherne's most typical poems. After discussing the unconfined nature of the infinite soul (st. 1), Traherne develops the haeres mundi theme (st. 2), stating that the individual can enjoy heaven here and now if he perceives aright (st. 3). It is not earthly treasures that make us rich, he says (st. 4), but rather the proper apprehension of the divine order of the world which makes all things subservient to the highest ends (st. 5). Once man realizes that the world was created for him by God's love, and ordered to his benefit, and once man praises God for this treasure (st. 6), he will be lifted from his estate of trial to the estate of grace that is the subject of the final fifteen poems of the Dobell manuscript.

Traherne's study of the redeemed man is seen in a series of poems, not included by Philip in the "Poems of Felicity", which are quite intellectual in nature and deal to a great extent with the virtue of the proper mental attitude to the world. The section begins with the key poem "The Circulation", which elucidates Traherne's central metaphor for the relationship between Man and God. The reciprocal circulation of blessings and praise forms the central action of man in the world: man must accept the gifts of God, see them in their proper light, possess them as his own treasures, and then return them to God in his hymns of

praise. This explanation is followed by "The Amendment", a poem which stresses the need to prize the universe for what it really is. "The Demonstration" aptly points out the necessity of seeing that we are both the object of God's love and the source of His happiness. Only when we are happy and satisfied with His gifts can He be happy Himself. The quite Aristotelian and highly unsuccessful attempt at a philosophic poem in "The Anticipation", while attempting to demonstrate that God is the source, means, and end of all things, serves to demonstrate quite well the way in which Aristotelian terminology often suffocates the lyric brilliance of which Traherne is capable. The circulation and haeres mundi themes are admirably justified in the magnificent poem "The Recovery", in which Traherne states that God's end is reached when we enjoy Him, that He is satisfied when we are satisfied with Him, that He is content when we are content in Him. But in order to be satisfied, Traherne points out, we must perceive His gifts aright, must see ourselves as the end or heirs of the world. The two things God desires of us are our voluntary act of love in accepting Him and His gifts, and our voluntary acts of praise and thanksgiving for the gifts received. The theme is continued in "Another" which, again, emphasizes God's desire for us to express our gratitude to Him in hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

The final nine poems of this third group form a unit centred around the power of good thoughts and dealing with the results of the proper life. The section opens with an ecstatic praise of the power of love, in the poem by that name. This is followed by the first of the "Thoughts" poems, which is a description and praise of thoughts as the messengers or agents

of the soul, the means whereby the soul is nourished.<sup>22</sup> The following poem, "Blisse", is Traherne's original version of stanzas five and six of "The Apostacy", a poem which exists only in Philip's revised form. Its insertion in this later sequence indicates Traherne's determination to elucidate the false value of so-called earthly treasures. "Thoughts II", sounding very much like meditation ninety-one of the Second Century, points out that good thoughts are the proper praises God desires of us. Following the theme of temples in the mind, seen earlier in "The Inference I and II", Traherne argues that the spiritual world one creates within oneself is of greater value to God than any external world man could build.<sup>23</sup> The central poem in this group, "Ye Hidden Nectars" is an ecstatic praise of thoughts, focussing on the permanence and value of good thoughts. Following it is "Thoughts III" which provides an anatomy of thoughts. The main point of the poem is that thoughts, not things, are important; that because of the free, active, infinite nature of thoughts, one is capable of enjoying heaven here and now if he will think aright. The next poem, "Desire", stresses the joy Traherne feels at having been filled with an irrepressible desire that forced him to search

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<sup>22</sup> Note that once more, in stanza 5 of this poem, thoughts are compared to the bee who gathers the sweetness. The image is used in the same manner here as in "Walking", l. 31.

<sup>23</sup> The affinity this idea bears with the Platonic theory of Ideas is clear. Traherne made notes on the theory of Ideas on ff. 17-17<sup>v</sup> of FNB when he was summarizing comments on the Parmenides. It is quite possible that the point of view in this and the other "Thoughts" poems was influenced in some way by the Platonic theme, although it is clear that the Parmenides is not a "source" for the ideas in the latter nine poems of the Dobell manuscript.

until he found the spiritual meaning of the objects he saw. "Thoughts IV" then summarizes the "thoughts" sequence in a poem that demonstrates Traherne's affinity with Blake as well as indicating some of those similarities between Traherne and Vaughan that struck Grosart so forcibly.<sup>24</sup> The main point of the poem, though, is that were we to think aright, we would realize that heaven is here and now. The poems then conclude with "Goodnesse", a work stressing Traherne's theme that all the things that surround us are examples of God's goodness, and are given to us to be possessed and appreciated as such.<sup>25</sup>

Looking at the poems as a whole, then, there are two main points to be noted. The first is that of conscious order or arrangement, an order which quite effectively outlines the passage of man (both in the corporate and individual senses) from a period of blissful innocence,

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<sup>24</sup> With regard to the connection between Traherne and Blake, one should note particularly ll. 9-12 which discuss the omnipresence of the visionary mind. Like Blake, Traherne insists that a proper realization of the nature of the world and a recognition of the fact that we are in an earthly paradise would allow man to live in heaven here and now. By means of proper thoughts, in Traherne's terms, or through the use of the creative imagination, in Blake's terms, all mankind could be united, the fragments of Albion could be drawn together, and mankind could build the New Jerusalem here and now.

The similarity with Vaughan is particularly striking in the first lines of the poem, where we see Traherne, like Vaughan, pointing out the ability of the soul to soar throughout eternity.

<sup>25</sup> I have omitted a discussion of those poems which are part of the various prose works since I feel they should be discussed in the context in which Traherne placed them.

through a season of trial, to a period of grace sustained mainly through intellectual effort. This arrangement not only shows the religious development of Everyman, but also the course of intellectual development followed by Traherne. The period of innocence and the estate of trial can both be seen to be associated with his life in Herefordshire, while the latter attention to the state of grace, the intellectual achievement of a spiritual goal, is probably more closely allied with the London-Teddington period.

The other development worth noting in the overall pattern, as suggested above, is the change from a Wordsworthian naive delight in the phenomenal world to an intellectual enjoyment of the spiritual world. Although most of the basic themes -- haeres mundi, circulation, proper perception, and the infinite nature of the soul -- remain the same, one notes a definite change from the simple intuitive proper perception of the earlier period to the more intellectual, and possibly more Platonic outlook of the later period. This alteration in outlook I suggest is due to Traherne's removal to the more intellectual environment of London, There the study of Plato, and the authors cited in CPB, would naturally have led him to a more intellectual attitude, an attitude that was bound to appear in the works. Just as the Poems show this trend, so the Centuries of Meditations, probably written over a period of years, show a gradual change in Traherne's attitude from that of the rather prophetic country preacher to the more restrained and intellectual private chaplain.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The manuscript of the Centuries, Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 50. presents various indications of its being a work in progress rather than a fair copy. Traherne's practise when making a fair copy (as the Dobell



That the Centuries were written over a period of years, during which time the author's mind underwent a considerable change of attitude, is clear from even the most cursory reading. Within the four hundred and nine meditations one sees Traherne's approach to his subject change from that of the friendly personal adviser speaking about the nature of God to that of the almost-Stoic intellectual examining the ramifications of the argument that God is all infinity and eternity. The Centuries started out as a guidebook for Mrs Hopton's community; but I suggest that this purpose was lost by the time Traherne reached the end of the first half of the Fourth Century, and that from then on the meditations become, for the author, a meditative proving-ground for ideas later used in Christian Ethicks.<sup>27</sup>

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MS of the Poems shows) was to erase his error and then recopy the passage: in the MS of the Centuries, the errors are simply deleted and the correction added above the passage stroked out. The deletion of entire sections (such as CM I, 80) and the skipping of a meditation (there is no CM II, 88) indicate a rough draft.

The dating of the work is a problem. Since material from FNB is quoted in CM I, 40, the Centuries must have been written after the composition of FNB (that is, some time after 1669 -- see Appendix II). The reference to the author's being 100 miles away from his friend in CM I, 80 (100 miles being the approximate distance between Hereford and London) seems to prove that this section of the manuscript was written after Traherne moved to London. The latter meditations of the Fourth Century indicate later intellectual interests, and the meditations on infinity and eternity in the Fifth Century bear close resemblances to the thought of Thomas Jackson, a writer quoted freely in the "Commonplace Book" (composed between 1670 and 1674). Judging from this evidence I date the composition of the Centuries between 1669 and 1674, and suggest that they were in progress during all of this period, probably being composed as a spiritual exercise.

27. That the Centuries were written for the use of Mrs Hopton and her community is a fact accepted as true now. Wade's comment on it in her chapter on Mrs Hopton provides the background for Margoliouth's definitive statement (I, 236, et passim).

Although they are arranged in a pattern by Traherne, the Centuries can be considered to form another basic pattern if examined along thematic lines. A close reading reveals that the first two Centuries are, in fact, one unit dealing with the expression of Traherne's basic themes. This dogmatic assertion of facts is then followed, in the Third Century, with an autobiographic explanation of how the conclusions were reached, complemented by a study of the Bible that demonstrates that both the manner and matter of felicity are found in the Scriptures. In the Fourth Century Traherne becomes consciously artistic about his work, assuming the fiction of a second person to complete the instructions in felicity. This is a wise choice, since the theorizing about felicity is the task of the contemplative man of the first three Centuries, while the life of active felicity is the proper sphere of the active man of the latter Centuries. Opening the Fourth Century with the statement of over three-quarters of the "principles of felicity" in the first fifty meditations, Traherne changes his direction in the latter half of the Century and becomes more contemplative, assuming a detached attitude to his subject. The "felicity" of the first half of the Fourth Century is one that can be actively enjoyed. But the life of felicity that is described in the latter part of the Fourth, and ten meditations of the Fifth Century is a contemplative, withdrawn life based more on ratiocinative than experiential principles. The conclusion of the Centuries is definitely more abstract, detached, and intellectual than the beginning.

The expression of Traherne's basic ideas in the first two Centuries

shows a definite affinity with his earlier writings.<sup>28</sup> His comments on the haeres mundi theme, which open the Centuries (CM I, 1-50) are basically those seen in the earlier writings.<sup>29</sup> Meditations fifty-one to fifty-five introduce the subject of the reciprocal love of God and man, a subject dealt with later; but the majority of the latter part of the First Century deals with Christ and the matter of Christiform love, a theme we have previously connected with the early Traherne. Following the extended statement on the need for Christiformity, Traherne returns to the haeres mundi theme at the beginning of the Second Century, augmenting it, in meditations nineteen to seventy-two, with a lengthy study of divine love as exemplified in God, Christ, and the Incarnation. Adding nothing to his theory of divine love that was not found in the earlier writings, Traherne then goes on, in the rest of the Second Century, to comment on the deiform nature of the soul in much the same manner as he previously had in the "Select Meditations" and "Disquisition on the Soul". In all, the first two Centuries add nothing new in the way of thematic material: they simply state, in a clearer more mature manner, the themes of the previous writings.

The restatement of the original themes is followed, in the Third Century, with an autobiographical section that serves two purposes: it

<sup>28</sup> Although the description of Socrates in CM I, 40 can be found in FNB ff. 51-52<sup>v</sup>, thus dating the composition of the First Century some time in the early 1670's, the thematic attitude is that of the early Traherne.

<sup>29</sup> CM I, 43, ll. 2-3 repeats l. 93 of the "Thanksgivings for the Beauty of His Providence".

provides a means of demonstrating how the previous conclusions were reached, and it also presents a pattern which others can follow, should they wish to achieve felicity. In his narrative, Traherne sets forth the history of his own personal fall from the Edenic vision of childhood to the hell of spiritual loneliness and solitude, thus providing an analogue to the themes of poems like "Eden", "Innocence", "The Apostacy" and others; and then follows it with the story of his redemption, occasioned by his discovery of the merit of the Bible and his training in proper reasoning. After a resumé of his period at Oxford, Traherne comments on a period which I identify with his year or more of secluded retirement. The product of this retirement, as was noted above, was a close knowledge of the Bible. In the Third Century, Traherne links this close knowledge with the theme of felicity.<sup>30</sup> The definition of felicity (CM III, 52-69, especially CM III, 68) is followed by a detailed examination of the way in which felicity is manifest in the Psalms (CM III, 69-96). Traherne's attitude here is important: we note that he is delighted because he has found someone else praising what he thought was his own specific revelation (CM III, 70, ll. 1-7). Traherne does not look on the expression of felicity in the Psalms specifically as a source for his ideas, but sees

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<sup>30</sup> Although Traherne's adaptation of Aristotle's definition of felicity occurs in numerous places (e.g. ENB, pp. 8-9; CPB f. 21<sup>r</sup>.2; Christian Ethicks, p. 27; and, in slightly different form, in the "Disquisition", p. 259), a detailed study of felicity is not undertaken until this point. There were a few examinations of the matter in the "Select Meditations", including a listing of twelve principles of the happy life in SM III, 31; but it is not until this discussion that Traherne gets down to a detailed, somewhat intellectual study of felicity.

it more as a confirmation of the validity of his own personal intuitions and a proof of the universal spiritual harmony of Christendom. It is this attitude that Traherne takes to all secondary material: his ideas are the important thing; the words of others simply confirm his own ideas or support his own theories. The section then concludes with a short statement of our relationship with God: the realization of felicity points out the significance of our position as sons and heirs of God.

Growing less personal and more theoretical, Traherne opens the Fourth Century with a listing of his twenty-five principles of felicity. In the first forty-eight meditations he follows the standard approach of the Christian moral philosophers: his first twenty principles differ from standard Christian morality only in their greater emphasis on the haeres mundi and free will themes. Following this, Traherne embarks on two rather theoretical sections which demonstrate his individuality. His theory of self-love as the basis of all love (CM IV, 49-73) demonstrates the type of change that comes over Traherne in this period. Although love always formed the keynote of his philosophy, Traherne here expands his original thesis to explicate a doctrine of love which is less Biblical and more intellectual than his earlier statements.<sup>31</sup> The result is a well-reasoned

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<sup>31</sup> The earlier comments on love, in the "Meditation on Love", the "Select Meditations" and the earlier Centuries are far less theoretical than these. A good summary of Traherne's theory of self-love can be found in K. W. Salter, Thomas Traherne (London, 1964), pp. 92-110. Salter's summary is an adequate condensation of Traherne's argument, but I feel Salter is misled when he thinks that Traherne based his doctrine on the thought of St Bernard of Clairvaux. Traherne learned his philosophy in an Aristotelian atmosphere. The theology of St Bernard's time was completely Aristotelian. Thus there are bound to appear some similarities in expression. But the thematic differences that exist between Traherne

discussion which demonstrates the essential deformity of man's love.

The section is then followed by a praise of mankind, based on Pico della Mirandola's Oratio (De Dignitate Hominis), emphasizing the essential greatness of man and the glory of his soul.<sup>32</sup> Traherne used Pico as a source of support for his own statements (both in the Centuries and the earlier works) about the dignity of man, the need for free will, the

and St Bernard are sufficient to demonstrate that the similarities that exist are due to the training the men received, not to any direct similarity in thought.

32 Traherne's use of Pico is again typical. Pico's Oratio (1496) is a long and brilliant Neoplatonic praise of the glories of man. After a glowing introduction it discusses the various aspects of the mental and spiritual greatness of man. Traherne, although he may have been sympathetic with the rather pagan remainder of the treatise, chose to quote only from the beginning of the Oratio. Of the first five pages of the text, tr. A. R. Caponigri (Chicago, 1956), Traherne quoted all but one paragraph and some twelve odd lines here and there. He completely omitted the remainder of the thirty-eight pages. CM IV, 74, ll. 18-40 and ll. 42-49 quote p. 1 of the Oratio, except for the omission of two short phrases in the body, and a short passage at the end of Pico's paragraph. CM IV, 75 is an exact quotation of pp. 2-3 of the Oratio, stressing the need to understand the nature of God. CM IV, 76 continues from where CM IV, 75 stops, stresses the idea of free will so important to Traherne, but omits Pico's comment about the ability of the soul to enter into beings of a higher or lower order. CM IV, 77 then continues to quote from Pico, pp. 3-4, omitting a few non-essential interjections by Pico. After adding a comment of his own in the first six lines of CM IV, 78, Traherne goes on to quote pp. 4-5 of Pico. He omitted a typically syncretic comment by Pico on the transformations of men into animals and concluded his quotation of Pico with the comment (CM IV, 78, ll. 7-10) that the significant part of man is his spiritual intelligence.

It is significant to note again that Traherne quotes from Pico only those things which support themes already apparent in his own writings, and omits those comments in Pico which do not apply to the point he wishes to make. Traherne uses Pico strictly as an authoritative supporter of his own ideas. All Traherne's references to other authors, or quotations from other sources, are simply appeals to authority designed to prove the validity of his own argument.

intellectual nature of the soul, and the basic deformity of man. Expanding on the material from Pico in the following meditations, Traherne adds to his concept of the soul an intellectual aspect which shows the Platonic influence operative in this later period. Whereas in the "Disquisition" and the "Select Meditations" the soul was simply the spiritual part of man, in the remainder of the Centuries, in the "Thoughts" poems, and in Christian Ethicks, the soul becomes an intellectual force. In both the Centuries and the later poems one notes this change in Traherne's attitude to the soul, a change which brings about the abandonment of the insistence on proper perception (common to the early Centuries and the "Infant-Ey" poems) and the substitution of an emphasis on proper intellectual apprehension. In both the Poems and the Centuries we see a change from the perception accomplished by the "Infant-Ey" to the right apprehension performed by the intellectual soul. Traherne gives a good idea of the nature of the intellectual soul when, in the last meditation of the Fourth Century, he lists the "strange and Wonderful" things that are consequences of man's having an infinite, eternal, intellectual soul.

The later, more intellectual Traherne is more apparent in the Fifth Century, where his discussions of the ramifications and implications of the idea that God is infinite and eternal show him to be venturing into realms of speculation that he had not considered before. In meditations two and three of the Fifth Century Traherne repeats his characteristic themes of the insatiability of the soul, the homocentricity of the world, and the infinite and eternal nature of thoughts. But the manner in which they are expressed, the solidity of phrasing and determination of tone, point to a writer who now understands what is meant by eternity. Traherne's

examination of eternity in meditation seven serves as an excellent explanation of what T. S. Eliot meant by the "intersection of the timeless moments" in the Four Quartets.<sup>33</sup> The final ten meditations of the Centuries could not have been written by Traherne at Credenhill: they were written by a man who had finally attained an intellectual apprehension of the meaning and significance of religious faith, an apprehension attained only after much diligent study.

## 4

Traherne's use of other writers as support for his own ideas, and his delight at finding others who praise or emphasize ideas he holds to be true, can be seen in Christian Ethicks to an even greater extent than in the Centuries. The reason for this is that, between the time he moved to London in 1669 and the time he wrote Christian Ethicks (published 1675), Traherne was engaged in revitalizing his knowledge of ancient philosophy. One result of this period of study was the "Ficino Notebook", described above; but the prime result was the compilation of the "Commonplace Book" as a repository for information to be used later in Christian Ethicks.

Occupying most of the Dobell folio, the "Commonplace Book" is a collection of extracts from several sources, classified under specific

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<sup>33</sup> Although the line above is from the end of the first part of "Little Gidding", the comments about the rose garden in "Burnt Norton" or the mention of the still point in the turning wheel in Murder in the Cathedral would serve as well: they are all symbolic statements of the meaning of eternity, a meaning at once made clear by Traherne's statement.



headings, and arranged in double columns on the page.<sup>34</sup> The work apparently began as a collection of extracts from Theophilus Gale's Court of the Gentiles, Part II (Oxford, 1670).<sup>35</sup> Next, it appears, Traherne turned to the Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus, translated into English

<sup>34</sup> The "Commonplace Book" occupies ff. 16<sup>v</sup>-96<sup>r</sup> of Bodleian MS Eng. poet. c. 42. For a full description of the contents, the sources, and the copyist who entered the extract, see Appendix I, section iii.

<sup>35</sup> Both Margoliouth (I, xiii) and Miss A. Russell, "A Study of Thomas Traherne's Christian Ethicks", unpublished B. Litt. thesis (Oxford 1955), pp. 176-177, are incorrect in assuming that Traherne's amanuensis copied extracts from part III of the Court, published the year after Traherne's death. The page references given in CPB itself show that Traherne was using Part II (in the 1670 rather than the slightly revised 1671 edition), since it is the only edition which has the information cited on the pages noted in the manuscript, as C. L. Marks points out in "Thomas Traherne's Commonplace Book" PBSA (Dec., 1964), p. 460.

Theophilus Gale (1628-1678) was a contemporary of Traherne at Oxford, being a Fellow of Magdalen from 1650 until his ejection in 1660 for his Independent tendencies. After a few years of drifting, Gale became tutor to the two young Wharton boys, one of whom, Thomas, became a prominent political figure around 1700. With them, Gale spent three years (1662-5) in England and France. While with his charges at Caen, he met Samuel Bochart, a contemporary French philosopher, to whom Gale everafter referred to as the "learned" Bochart. It was during his period with the Whartons that he probably completed his compendious commonplace books, all of which were designed to demonstrate, by means of an examination of all the philosophies, that all knowledge originally came from the Hebrews. Gale's theory, his hobbyhorse for life, was eventually printed as Part II of the Court in 1670 (re-issued with slight corrections in 1671), although it was probably written earlier. It was preceded in 1669 by Part I, a philosophic introduction, and followed in 1677 by Part III and two of the three volumes of Part IV, and in 1678 by the third book of Part IV. Part II of the Court is an attempt to prove that all philosophy originated with the Jewish Church. In order to prove his argument, Gale provided summaries of all the ancient philosophies. It was to these summaries that Traherne turned. See Marks, "Readings", pp. 148-54, and the DNB article on Gale.

by Dr. John Everard in 1650, a book from which he took numerous short extracts.<sup>36</sup> After this, extracts were taken from the quadripartite Commentaries on the Creed (the parts of which appeared in 1625, 1628, 1629, and 1657, each with a separate title), written by Thomas Jackson.<sup>37</sup> Traherne must have still been reading Gale at this point, for extracts from Gale appear after some of the entries from Jackson.<sup>38</sup> Following the copying of comments from Jackson, some time was spent extracting more material from Hermes, and from Isaac Barrow's sermon on The Duty and

<sup>36</sup> Actually, as Miss Marks has shown ("Readings", p. 177) the page references in CPB show that Traherne used the 1657 edition of Everard's translation when making his entries. This edition differs from the 1650 edition only slightly in the text of the Pymander, but, unlike the 1650 edition, has the hermetic Asclepius appended.

The Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus was for centuries assumed to have been written by Hermes, an Egyptian philosopher living about the same time as Moses. The introductory "To The Reader" in the 1650 edition of Everard's translation affirms that the original was written "some hundreds of yeers before Moses his time" (sig. A2) by one Hermes, who was "the first Intelligencer in the World . . . that communicated Knowledg to the sons of Men, by Writing, or Engraving." (sig. A3). Although Casaubon's attack (in 1614) demolished the myth that Hermes was an actual person, the Pymander was still held in high repute by thinkers in the seventeenth century. Although Traherne doubted the historic authenticity of Hermes (see CE, p. 251), he still considered the work an important pre-Christian document. The high repute in which Hermes was held even after mid-century is attested to by Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man, 2nd ed. (New York, 1962), I, 153 and nn. 33-34, I, 331, who points out that Hermes was still treated as superceded in validity only by Holy Writ. Although the nature of the author was question, the text was still treated as valuable.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Jackson (1579 [?] - 1640) was praised by some of his contemporaries as being one with Herbert, Hooker, and Ferrar, and damned by others for being an Armenian (that is, insisting that post-lapsarian man possessed free will). His opera omnia were collected and published posthumously in 1672-3. See Marks, "Readings", pp. 111-150.

<sup>38</sup> See CPB, f. 77.1.

Reward of Bounty to the Poor.<sup>39</sup> The passages from the unidentified sources were probably made at a later date, while the three extracts from the first of Henry More's Divine Dialogues were made some time after the compilation of the Gale extracts.<sup>40</sup>

A bibliography of the works he studied during his last four years would indicate that Traherne was a man with little time to waste: hence it is not surprising that he employed an amanuensis to assist him in the compilation of his notes.<sup>41</sup> His reasons for turning to Gale's rather

<sup>39</sup> The sermon, according to <sup>the</sup> title page of the printing of 1671, was "Preached at the Spittal Upon Wednesday in Easter Week", and printed in the same year upon request. It was the only work of Barrow's published in his lifetime, the remainder of his writings appearing in a four volume posthumous edition in 1683-87. See Marks, "Readings", p. 198, where it is also suggested that, even though he made his notes from the printed version, Traherne may actually have heard the sermon delivered.

<sup>40</sup> Henry More (1614-1687) was one of the central figures of the Cambridge Platonist movement. Traherne may have known him personally through Bridgeman, although the possibility is slight. Like Traherne, More was fascinated by the religious significance of infinite space, as M. H. Nicolson points out in Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory (Ithaca, 1959), p. 140; but he disagreed with More on several connected points, as CPB ff. 33.2-33<sup>v</sup>.2 demonstrate.

<sup>41</sup> That there are two definitely different hands at work in CPB is obvious at first glance. As Margoliouth points out (I, xiii) Miss Angela Russell found two hands in the manuscript, and was supported in her findings by various experts at Oxford, as the preface to her B. Litt. thesis points out. Miss Wade was the first to point out the two hands, but felt they were all possibly variations of Traherne's own writing (pp. 251-2). R. Ellrodt (II, 264f) follows her in this (erroneous) opinion.

As Miss Marks points out ("Readings", p. 107f) Traherne's hand is definitely in the minority. From the various directions for the amanuensis (arbitrarily called B) written in Traherne's hand in the manuscript, it appears that Traherne read the various texts, marked the passages he wanted transcribed, and then handed the task over to B. That he checked B's work carefully can be seen from the extract on f. 91.1: Traherne neatly inserted a line which B had inadvertently omitted from Gale's work.

Whereas B worked with clerical exactitude, copying the extracts

eccentric work are obvious from the use he made of it: although he most likely did not accept Gale's central thesis, he appreciated the neat summaries of the various philosophic systems found in the text. It is doubtful that Gale had any influence on the formation of either Platonic or Aristotelian strains in Traherne: he was familiar with these authors long before he turned to Gale, as the earlier manuscripts show. Rather, Traherne turned to Gale to obtain summaries of the basic thought of the various Greek philosophers. Although B copied the material from Gale with exactitude, Traherne, in the few passages he copied, introduced his own personality by adding aphorisms and summarizing passages of the original text. On the whole, it appears that Traherne turned to Gale much as a student nowadays turns to the College Outline pamphlets: for a rapid refresher course in material learned beforehand.<sup>42</sup> Gale offered no support

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verbatim in a small, neat hand, Traherne was quite free with his sources, condensing, abstracting, interjecting, or re-directing as he saw fit. B copied dutifully: Traherne used the passages as a startingpoint for his own contemplations. An excellent example of this is the way in which Traherne argues with More in the extract on ff. 33.2-33<sup>v</sup>.2

The exact relationship between Traherne and B in the copying of the extracts will be discussed below. But, for an indication of the amount of work each man put into the manuscript, see Appendix I, section iii, where I have tabulated the contents of the manuscript and have indicated which man compiled the entry.

<sup>42</sup> That Traherne turned to Gale strictly for the latter's summaries of the various philosophers is shown by his extracts: he copied all of chapters 5-8 of Book II, Part II on Pythagoras, omitting chapter 9 (on Pythagorean symbols), and retained a good part of Book III's summary of Platonism (from which B copied a biography of Socrates into FNB f. 57<sup>v</sup>). Book IV, on Aristotle and his followers, was used heavily: chapter 1 was extracted in large part, while chapters 2-5, on Stoicism, Scepticism, the Cynics and the Epicureans were copied in toto under their own headings in CPB.

or denial of Traherne's own ideas, but rather provided him with the necessary review of Greek philosophy that was a prerequisite to the composition of Christian Ethicks. If Traherne owes anything to Gale, it is a debt of gratitude for the rapid review outline of Greek philosophy.

Traherne turned to Gale for academic reasons; his investigation of Hermes, on the other hand, was for thematic reasons. I feel that Ellrodt is overstating his case for Traherne's hermetic affinities when he states:

il n'est pas un aspect essentiel de sa philosophie,  
à l'exception de l'apologie des sens, dont les livres  
hermétiques ne puissent offrir un parallèle.

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The hermetic texts do not provide a parallel for the basic insistence in the primacy of love, definitely "un aspect essentiel" of Traherne's philosophy. Nonetheless he is correct in pointing out that there are a number of stunning affinities between the writings of Traherne and those attributed to the Thrice-Great Hermes. Although it cannot be stated dogmatically, the indications provided by the Traherne material we have suggest that Traherne did not encounter The Divine Pymander until his later years. The fervor with which he copied Ficino's introduction to the Latin translation of the Pymander (in FNB) indicates a first meeting, not a renewed acquaintance; and the detail with which he made the extracts from Pymander in CPB shows how personally enthusiastic he was about the writings.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Les Poètes Métaphysiques Anglais (Paris, 1960), II, 269.

<sup>44</sup> As Appendix I, Part iii shows, Traherne copied a large part of the extracts from Hermes himself. The passages that struck him first,

Traherne's enthusiasm is understandable, for Hermes provided him with much authoritative support for his numerous themes. Hermes lends authority to Traherne's praise of man ("Ease", "Amendment", CPB f. 65. 1-2; Pym. IV. 89-93), his theory that the intellectual soul is the image of God ("News", "My Spirit", "Thoughts I", CPB f. 23<sup>V</sup>.1; Pym. X. 119-137), his emphasis on the infinite capacity of the soul ("My Spirit", CPB f. 23<sup>V</sup>.1; Pym. X. 119-137), his praise of the active power of thoughts (the "Thoughts" poems, CPB f. 90; Pym. X. 119-137), his glorification of the body ("Thanksgivings for the Body", "The Salutation"; Pym. V. 23), his emphasis on the purity of the infant's soul and the manner in which the soul is corrupted by the evil influence of the world ("The Apostacy", CM III, 3-25, "Innocence"; Pym. IV. 54-55), and other minor strains in Traherne. In fact, if it were not for two difficulties, Traherne could be called a disciple of Hermes. The first of these difficulties is with Hermes himself: he is inconsistent. In his writings one finds mutually contradictory statements which praise then damn the world, elevate and

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those on "Capacity" (CPB f. 23<sup>V</sup>.1; Pym. X. 119-137) and "Man" (CPB f. 65.1-2; Pym. I. 25-27, II. 18, IV, 89-93) he entrusted to B. But following that, all the short, and a large part of the long entries are made by Traherne himself.

Traherne's first encounter with Hermes may have been when making the extracts from Pico in the Fourth Century: Pico quotes the Hermetic Asclepius, and Traherne repeats his quotation in CM IV, 74. Whether this extract was made before or after FNB was compiled is unknown. But it could have been the praise of man encountered here that drew Traherne to Hermes. It is interesting to note, though, that Traherne excerpted nothing from the Asclepius in the CPB, although it did appear in the edition of the Pymander that he employed when making the extracts that appear in CPB (i.e. the 1657 edition of Everard's translation).

then debase man, praise God as immanent and describe Him as being transcendent. Traherne extracts only those theories which support his assertions, thus avoiding the contradictions inherent in the original work. The second difficulty, and the one which points out the main difference between Traherne and Hermes, lies in the emphasis on or absence of love. For the Hermeticist, knowledge is the greatest virtue; for the Christian, charity. Although throughout his writings Traherne stresses the need for knowledge and emphasizes the necessity of realizing, intellectually, the significance of Christ's sacrifice and God's glory, his main point in both the Christian Ethicks and the earlier works is that charity, or more correctly caritas, is the root of all virtue, the foundation on which the Christian world is built. It is the presence of this insistence on love in Traherne's philosophy that makes him a definite Christian. Ellrodt was right for the most part: there are many similarities between Hermes and Traherne. But the former lacks what is the cornerstone of the latter's philosophy: an emphasis on the proper understanding of Christian love.<sup>45</sup> Traherne turned to Hermes not for knowledge, but rather for authoritative support for his own theories, conclusions he had solidified in his mind long before he read The Divine Pymander.

Barrow's sermon on bounty or charity again provided Traherne with support for his own ideas. Traherne respected Barrow's style and content deeply, as is evidenced by two facts: he copied all the Barrow

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<sup>45</sup> The above distinction was suggested, in part, by Miss Angela Russell in her "Study", pp. 118-120.

extracts into CPB himself in the fine hand reserved for fair copies of material he wrote, and he copied the material verbatim in blocks of a page or more.<sup>46</sup> Excerpting all the powerful central section of this rather long sermon, Traherne transcribed Barrow's glorification of the dignity of man (CPB ff. 62, 1-2, 70<sup>v</sup>.2 and 23.1-2), his emphasis on active charity (CPB f. 26.1) and his insistence on the need for a practical rather than a theoretical piety. As with Hermes, so with Barrow: the material copied provided support for Trahernian ideas formed long before. Barrow is not a source, he is a brace used later to support the structure of Christian Ethicks.

Presumably attracted to the work by its emphasis on free will and the dignity of man, Traherne made copious extracts from three of the twelve books of Thomas Jackson's Commentaries on the Apostles' Creed.<sup>47</sup> From Book V, A Treatise of Unbeliefe (1625), he followed up his earlier researches into man's natural and commendable thirst for knowledge (seen first in the extracts from Reynolds in ENB), extracting Jackson's comments on man's innate desire to know God, a theme visible in many of his own

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<sup>46</sup> In what both Marks ("Readings", p. 154) and Wade (p. 142 and note) point out is an ill-informed article, J. W. Proud, in "Thomas Traherne: A Divine Philosopher," Friends' Quarterly Examiner (1917) attempted to show that Traherne was responsible for the composition of the extracts we know are from Barrow. The mistake is understandable: the style and material are quite similar to Traherne's.

<sup>47</sup> Traherne's extracts from Jackson's work are from Books V, VI, and XI. For the location and nature of the extracts in CPB, see Appendix I, Part iii.



writings.<sup>48</sup> And it is also interesting to note that, although they do not hold similar views about the Fall of Man, both Jackson and Traherne agree that the innate knowledge of God that we have as infants is lost because of poor education.<sup>49</sup> From the bi-partite Book VI of Jackson's Commentaries, on the nature of God, Traherne excerpted raw material: he may have been reading this section when he composed the meditations on the infinity of God in the Fifth Century.<sup>50</sup> Traherne's sympathy with the view of man as a creature endowed with free will is seen throughout his writings, especially in the sections quoting Pico's Oratio in the Fourth Century. His support for this view is also indicated in CPB by the long extracts under "Encouragement" (f. 37<sup>v</sup>.1) which is Jackson's defence of free will in the Commentaries. Firm in his championing of free will, Jackson was a little more hesitant than Pico and Traherne in his praise of the dignity of man. Traherne excerpted his comments on this theme, under the rubric "Libertie" (CPB f. 62<sup>v</sup>.1-2), although he felt more strongly about the matter, as his praise of man in all his writings shows. Similarly, Traherne's feelings about the power of God are stronger than those of Jackson which he quotes under

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<sup>48</sup> The comments from Jackson are found on ff. 60<sup>v</sup>.1 and 34<sup>v</sup>.1 of CPB, and parallel Traherne's comments in such places as CM I, 2, CM III, 26, CYB f. 85, and "News".

<sup>49</sup> CPB f. 34<sup>v</sup>.1.

<sup>50</sup> Miss Marks offers this suggestion ("Readings", p. 140); but it should be borne in mind that Traherne considered infinity to be one of the central attributes of God long before he read the comments in Jackson's treatise, as the numerous comments in the "Thanksgivings" and the earlier Centuries prove.

the headings of "Impossibilitie" and "Omnipotence". Whereas Jackson cautiously supports the preceding ideas, Traherne is quite adamant in his assertions, thus providing further support for the thesis that his study of Jackson did not provide him with any "source material" but rather served to harden his earlier feelings about the essential dignity and liberty of man.

In CPB Traherne excerpted voluminously from Jackson's comments on themes which he had previously treated in the Centuries and the Poems. But it is unlikely that Jackson offered anything new in the way of material that definitely altered Traherne's thinking on any of his central themes. Instead it appears that he turned to Jackson, as he did to Hermes, simply to gain support for, or find another point of view on themes which were central to the philosophic system that forms the basis of all his writings.<sup>51</sup>

Traherne's reaction to the material in Hermes, Barrow, and Jackson was positive: he liked what they said and was sympathetic to their general point of view. His reaction to the first of Henry More's Divine Dialogues, on the other hand, was negative, or at least argumentative. Of the three quotations from More in CPB, the two major entries show Traherne taking exception to More's views of space and God.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> For the summary of the material in Jackson's works, and for the basic assumptions concerning the use Traherne made of the material I have had to rely on Marks, "Readings", pp. 110-147 since I have not read Jackson's works.

<sup>52</sup> For a tabulation of the material quoted from More, see Appendix I, section iii. The extract on "Cohaesion" (CPB f. 26<sup>v</sup>.2) is minor and technical. It is in the material listed under "Deitie" (CPB ff. 33.2-33<sup>v</sup>.2) and "Omnipresence" (CPB ff. 71<sup>v</sup>.2-72.1) that Traherne comes to grips with More's material and argues with him in a revealing manner.

Although they were in some ways sympathetic, Traherne and More were separated by fundamental differences in personality: More was a Platonist philosopher, primarily interested in the theoretical and philosophic significance of abstract ideas about a deity; Traherne was a very human Christian priest, concerned with the emotional and religious importance of the assumption that infinite space was an attribute of the God he worshipped. The result of this difference in outlook is obvious in the reaction of the priest to the abstract theories of the philosopher.

After summarizing More's argument that space is the essence of God, Traherne comments:

Thus much for y<sup>e</sup> Politeness & Ingenuity of  
their Endeavor, y<sup>e</sup> Vanity of it followeth.

(CPB, f. 33.2.)

Displeased with the theorizing that tends to reduce God to an abstract concept and remove from His nature those characteristics of life, knowledge, power, wisdom, choice, love, and goodness which are part and parcel of his God, Traherne counters More's argument thus:

Infinit Space I grant is ['] a more obscure Shadow  
or Adumbration ['] of his Essence, but not his  
Essence; ['] a more confused Apprehension of his  
Divine Amplitude ['] but not his Amplitude. It  
is a Pledg of the Existence of an infinit  
Spirit, but not his Substance.

(CPB, 33<sup>v</sup>.1.)

More's theory would have limited God to a powerless, loveless extent, bereft of "Life & Knowledg . . . Choise & freedom, Will & Power Joy & Glory" and have left the human soul unable to "conceiv infinit Space, to feel Eternity, & to be present by Light and Sight with all

Ages . . . ." (CPB, 33<sup>v</sup>.1). This, for Traherne, would not be God.<sup>53</sup>

His extract from More concludes, not with a counter-theory, but rather with a lyric description of the Deity that points out the basic difference in the approach of the two men:

Almighty Power therefore endued with Choise,  
& acting from all Eternity in the most wise  
& Glorious Manner . . . . a more pure Incom-  
prehensible Eternal Act, that is never Deso-  
late nor idle, but the fountain & the End of  
all Things, ordering all, & enjoying all,  
that is God. Who is a voluntary Being unbe-  
gotten from all Eternity, yet Begotten of  
himself, & proceeding by that Generation to  
all his Creatures, the father & the first  
Born, the virtu & the Beauty of evry Creature.

(CPB, 33<sup>v</sup>.2.)

Traherne's treatment of More is typical of his treatment of the authors, identified and unknown, in CPB. Traherne was not a disciple of anyone but Christ; and he felt no obligation to embrace any one philosophy other than that of Christianity, Christianity as revealed to him by his own intuitions. Thus, in CPB, he cited those opinions which coincided with his (as was the case with Hermes and Barrow) or lent authoritative support (as with Jackson). He chose, in the case of More, to argue with some points on which he felt strongly, but generally he was content to quote those statements which appealed to him. The result was a collection of extracts which, in the compilation, served to solidify his own ideas

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<sup>53</sup> For a further discussion of the relationship between More and Traherne in the CPB extracts, see C. L. Marks, "Thomas Traherne and the Cambridge Platonists", unpublished article, of which the draft copy was lent to the author by Miss Marks in April, 1965. The article examines Traherne's thematic relationships and differences with the Cambridge men.

and, in the application to Christian Ethicks, provided authoritative support for ideas that might strike orthodox readers as too novel to be tenable. If CPB provides us with nothing else, it gives us a view of the scholarly Traherne at work and demonstrates what affinities he has with certain philosophic traditions. And affinities they are, for Traherne owes no debt to any one way of thought: he is neither a Hermeticist nor a Cambridge Platonist, neither an Aristotelian nor an Armenian: he is an individual with a religious philosophy based on the firm conviction that the intuitions he had of the nature of God, the intuitions confirmed by the Word of God, were the proper rule by which to regulate his life. With this conviction in mind, Traherne turned to the composition of Christian Ethicks, a book designed to popularize and spread his ideas of "the Way to Blessedness, by means of the Rules of Virtue and Reason."

## THE FINAL SYNTHESIS

During the last few years of his life, Traherne was engaged in the composition of Christian Ethicks, the work in which he publically set forth his doctrine of the way to felicity in an appealing and instructive manner. Anyone familiar with Traherne's writing can, on reading Christian Ethicks, see quite clearly where both the form and the content came from, for the volume represents the final stage in the development of Traherne's mind. His gem-like themes reach their final crystallization, and are set in the base metal of Aristotelian terminology to produce an interesting combination of brilliant themes and lustreless structure. Although the setting at first detracts from the merit of the jewels, it later makes the beauty of Traherne's themes all the more apparent by contrasting them with the stark and uninspiring Aristotelianism of the more mechanical parts of the work.

Traherne's Aristotelianism, learned at an early stage, as ENB shows, and reinforced by the study of Gale, as CPB indicates, appears more in the method than the actual teachings of Christian Ethicks. Although not completely sympathetic with the ethics of the heathen philosopher, who was "short in the knowledge of man's end", Traherne nonetheless appreciated the method Aristotle employed when he set forth his theory in the Nichomachean Ethicks.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in Christian Ethicks

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Ethicks (London, 1962), p. 22.

the reader finds Traherne employing Aristotle's means for Christian ends. The general plan of Christian Ethicks parallels that of Aristotle: the "To the Reader" and the first two chapters corresponding to Book I of Nichomachean Ethicks, chapters III to VII corresponding to Books II and III on virtue in general, and the remainder of the treatise dealing, as Aristotle does, with the moral and then the social virtues, terminating the study with a consideration of the social significance of virtuous living.<sup>2</sup> The difference in the conclusions stems from a difference in outlook: Aristotle aimed at the good life on earth; Traherne was aiming at the glory of the New Jerusalem.

As well as a correspondance in general method, one also notes a definite similarity in the manner of defining the particular virtues. In fact Traherne's definitions of the various virtues are little more than Christianized forms of Aristotelian dicta. For instance, Traherne's primary virtue of righteousness, giving to things their proper esteem,<sup>3</sup> is actually Aristotle's definition of distributive justice,<sup>4</sup> given a Christian-ethical rather than socio-political orientation. Similarly Traherne's great emphasis on moderation in Chapter XXII is directly paralleled by Aristotle's insistence on Temperance, and maintaining the Golden Mean; the only difference lies in the end for which the virtue

<sup>2</sup> I realize that the parallel is not exact, but only wish to point out that Traherne's general pattern follows the same path as Aristotle's, and for roughly the same paedagogical reasons.

<sup>3</sup> CE, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Nichomachean Ethics, Bk. V, Ch. 3.

is practised. In defining the virtues, Traherne capitalized on Aristotle's "lucky hit" in falling in "point blank upon the nature of the way to blessedness",<sup>5</sup> and simply corrected the heathen's ignorance of the proper end by aiming the virtues at a Christian rather than pagan end.

Traherne writes best when he is able to give free rein to his enthusiasm. When he is forced by the nature of his material to restrict himself, he becomes quite lifeless and, frankly, boring. Such is the case in those parts of Christian Ethicks where Traherne has to define either his general approach or a particular virtue. Incapable of restricting himself in the writing of definitions, Traherne turns to Aristotle and attempts a Christian adaptation. Readers of the first few chapters of Christian Ethicks realize how Aristotelian, scholastic, and boring Traherne becomes when he is forced to explain himself in controlled sentences. The writing of an ethical treatise is not Traherne's forte. He is a "pindarique" writer who needs literary elbow-room to display his talents best. When he comes, in later chapters, to discuss the merits of love, righteousness, and charity, he becomes lyrical, and quite eloquently effective as a moralist. But in dealing with definitions he is out of his field. He realized this when writing, I feel, and attempted to gain support from Aristotle. Unfortunately the attempt failed. The one major weak point of Christian Ethicks is its methodology: it is too barren, scholastic, and un-Trahernian; and it is

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<sup>5</sup> CE, p. 28.



in the method employed that one sees the greatest indication of Traherne's Aristotelianism. Even in his later, more eloquent years, Traherne found himself unable to escape the stifling Aristotelianism to which he was introduced some twenty years before.

## 2

Although there are numerous methodological debts to Aristotle, thematic debts to him, or any other writer or philosopher, are of minor importance in Christian Ethicks. Traherne's attitude to his heathen authorities remains consistent: Aristotle, Plato, and the others are all viewed in the manner in which Hermes is in the following lines:

Trismegistus . . . saw the deep capacity of his own soul, but if a conjecture may be made by the residue of the discourse, did not understand the end, at least not clearly, for which it was implanted. Some knowledge he had, that all things in eternity were objects of that power, by reason of which he calls them fair and good; but that they were made to be the treasures and enjoyments of the soul, I do not find him affirming. He that knows this much must needs be of our Savior's mind . . . .

(CE, p. 251.)

Ignorance of proper ends is the one thing that lowers the heathen philosophers in Traherne's estimation.<sup>6</sup> Had they had the benefit of the Revelation of God's Son, they would have been able to discern the proper end of the capacious soul, or would have seen that their error

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<sup>6</sup> A judgement similar to that pronounced above on Hermes is passed on Aristotle (CE, pp. 22 and 28), and on Plato ("Select Meditations", II, 50).

lay not in the means which they embraced (means which Traherne adapted and all but wholly accepted), but in the end to which these means were directed. Thus, in Christian Ethicks, the reader finds Traherne taking the heathen means and applying them to Christian ends: his is not a job of revision but rather a task of re-direction: the heathens knew how to go about seeking for blessedness; Traherne simply shows them where.

Plato is quoted in Christian Ethicks in order to support Traherne's own ideas. Repeating a theme from the "Select Meditations", Traherne employs Plato's theory of vision, revising it to show that what Plato called the light of the understanding is really God.<sup>7</sup> Taking from Plato those points which support his central thesis, Traherne is able to obtain authoritative support for his own basic convictions about the immanence of God.

Aristotle's method is appreciated and employed; but his attitude to the ends of virtue is seen as false. In a passage which aptly illustrates that his debt to Aristotle is not thematic, Traherne comments:

I do not see that Aristotle made the end of virtue any other than a finite and temporal felicity, which is infinitely short of that felicity which is here begun, and enjoyed forever. He did not make God the object and end of the soul . . . . His definition of

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The passage in question (CE, p. 51) is a condensed version of "Select Meditations" III, 16, and is based on the theory of vision expounded in The Republic, VI, 507-9. Plato maintains that for proper intellectual vision one needs an object (an idea or concept), an organ to comprehend it (the intellectual soul), and a light that will make the object visible (the light of the understanding). Traherne adopts this wholly, simply adding the comment that the light of the understanding is God, thus Christianizing Plato and adapting him to prove his argument that the principle objects of our knowledge are all manifestations of the Divine presence of God in the world.

felicity importeth all this, but his behavior makes me to fear he did not understand it.

(CE, p. 68.)

Although aware of the means, Aristotle is ignorant of the ends. Thus he is to be employed only as a means himself, a way to Christian felicity. In his book, Traherne aims at showing us how to employ the heathen's means for Christian ends.

Although there is no concrete sign of More's influence in Christian Ethicks, one does notice traces of Jackson in the passages on free will, and the influence of Barrow in the chapters on charity and liberality.<sup>8</sup> But the two main sources on which Traherne relied for either authoritative support for his themes, or illustration of his ideas are the Bible and The Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus. The latter provides support for Traherne's glorification of man in the chapter on Magnanimity. Quotations from the Pymander, previously copied into CPB, are incorporated into the chapter to provide support for Traherne's idea that "A magnanimous soul . . . is an immovable sphere of power and knowledge . . . ."<sup>9</sup> Cautious comments about Hermes are made to clarify for the reader Traherne's point that the authority cited is

<sup>8</sup> The discussion of free will on pp. 39-40 shows similarities with the passages from Jackson quoted in CPB, and chapters XVIII and XIX (on Charity) and chapter XXX (on Liberality) demonstrate basic thematic parallels with Barrow's sermon

<sup>9</sup> CE, p. 248. Quotations from the Pymander, copied into CPB under the rubrics "Capacity" (f. 23<sup>v</sup>.1) and "Man" (f. 65.1-2) are incorporated into CE, pp. 245-248 in almost the same order as they were copied into CPB. Obviously Traherne had this praise of man in mind when he copied the passages from The Divine Pymander.

a heathen; but at the same time Traherne is quick to point out that, even though a heathen, Hermes still had been guided "by a mighty sense of the interior excellency of the soul of man . . . ."<sup>10</sup> From the chapter one is able to see that Traherne regarded Hermes as a kindred spirit who, unfortunately, lacked the specific knowledge of man's proper ends because of his ignorance of the Christian revelation. Hermes was to be appreciated as a means -- because he demonstrated knowledge of the way to blessedness and man's fitness for it because of his comprehensive soul -- but distrusted because of his ignorance of the proper end of man's employment of these faculties. Traherne treated him as such in Christian Ethicks.

But it is the Bible, not Hermes, that is cited more than any other authority in Christian Ethicks. Traherne's close familiarity with the Bible in his earlier writings, discussed above, is complemented by the abundance of Biblical references in his last work. As one writer has pointed out, Traherne was so familiar with the Bible that "it seems that the words of the Bible had become the very stuff of his thoughts . . . ."<sup>11</sup> Although Traherne may not have memorized the Bible, his writings indicate that he was so familiar with many passages that he quoted them from memory without checking the actual text: misquotations abundantly illustrate how sure he was of his knowledge of the Biblical texts.

<sup>10</sup> CE, p. 246.

<sup>11</sup> Russell, "Study", p. 92.

Of the Biblical authorities cited, St Paul appears to be the favourite: "The Apostle", as Traherne calls him, is cited more than seventy times in the text. The best source of ethical guidance in the Old Testament, in Traherne's mind, appears to be the Proverbs. The brief pithy aphorisms of the book appealed to Traherne's mind, but he also turned to the longer stories of the Old Testament with a fundamentalistic faith in their historic authenticity.<sup>12</sup> His use of the Bible to add credence to basic themes is at once apparent to any reader; a few examples will suffice here. His ideas of the wisdom and power of God are introduced (CE, p. 196) with comments from Proverbs III, 19-20, and supported later (CE, p. 202f) with verses 13-19 of the same chapter. His discussion of caritas (CE, p. 151f) is based on an expansion of his quotation of I Corinthians, XIII, 4-7, while his emphasis on the need for righteousness is explained (CE, p. 107f) by a reference to the parable of the talents. Similarly the haeres mundi theme is justified by a misquotation of Romans VIII, 16-17 (CE, p. 30), and the whole chapter on Gratitude reads as though it were a paraphrase of Revelations. The centrality of the Bible in Traherne's scheme is fully discussed in Christian Ethicks, chapter XVI, in which he points out the historic, prophetic, and doctrinal aspects of Holy Writ, and the validity of each of them. As in the early writings, so in the last: the Bible provides the fundamental justification of all of Traherne's

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<sup>12</sup> CE, p. 121, for instance, provides an excellent example of Traherne's full acceptance of the Biblical narratives. Faith commands him to accept them as true.

themes. It is the one authority on which he constantly relies, the only authority other than his own personal intuitions which he considers infallible.

## 3

Traherne was so sure of his basic intuitions of the nature of the felicitous life that he altered few of his basic assertions in any of his works. The themes of Christian Ethicks are the themes of the "Select Meditations", as the following brief summary will show. The work was designed to point the way to blessedness by means of the rules of virtue, fundamental rules that Traherne had recorded in his earliest works. One notes no significant change in his definitions of the various virtues: Christian Ethicks simply expands on the basic definitions found in the final meditations of the "Select Meditations", as a brief glance at any of the chapters makes clear. In the "Select Meditations", Traherne saw himself as a modern-day Isaiah, whose duty it was to convert fallen humanity and wean them from their wicked ways. In Christian Ethicks this attitude is moderated, and instead one sees Traherne the teacher telling the reader that his purpose is to "elevate the soul and refine its apprehensions, . . . to enrich the mind, . . . . [and] to satisfy the curious and unbelieving soul concerning the reality, force and efficacy of virtue."<sup>13</sup> No longer is he the angry prophet: now he

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<sup>13</sup> "To the Reader", CE, p. 17.

is the calm teacher of virtue who employs the words of the Bible, supported by reference to eminent heathen authorities as well, to show men the blessedness of the virtuous life. Although some of his early vigour is lost, Traherne still remains the enthusiastic psalmist in his praise of virtue. In his final, and public utterance, he shows that he has learned to temper and moderate his praises and still retain the essential glory of them.

His moderation of expression is the only significant change visible in Christian Ethicks: the themes remain those of the "Select Meditations". In his last work, as in the early writings, the prime emphasis is placed on the need for man to live a life which conforms to the definition of felicity (CE, p. 27), a life deiform in nature, and inspired by love. Man is to act in the similitude of God; and since God is love, it follows that man is to live a life governed by the principles of love. This central thesis of the work is discussed in the two chapters on Charity (CE, chs. XVIII and XIX), but is seen throughout the entire work. Man, Traherne explains (CE, pp. 61-62) is like God because he loves like God. God's essence is an act of love and thus we, by loving, conform to the Divine Essence and become deiform (CE, p. 67). Self love eventually leads us to a knowledge of and union with God (CE, pp. 114-115) and thus allows us to act properly toward our fellow man (CE, p. 149). The prime duty of man, as Traherne explained earlier in the Centuries and Poems, is to live a life of praise, constantly singing hymns to the Creator (CE, p. 154). The centrality of love in the blessed life is summed up in the comment:

Love is the fountain and the end of all, with  
out which there can be no beauty nor goodness

in any of the virtues. Love to one's self,  
 love to God, love to man, love to felicity, a  
 clear and intelligent love, is the life and  
 soul of every virtue . . . .

(CE, p. 167f.)

Man is capable of loving, Traherne explains in his chapter on Magnanimity, because of the nature of his soul. After praising the characteristics which make man like God (CE, p. 244-245), in tones reminiscent of the praise of man in the Fourth Century, Traherne goes on to point out the infinitely capacious nature of his soul in the same manner as he did in the "Disquisition on the Soul". The characteristics of the magnanimous soul (listed in CE, p. 254) are the characteristics of the virtuous man described in the earlier writings. The soul of man allows him to achieve this status because it gives him the power to comprehend the true meaning and end of the universe. In his early writings, Traherne described the soul as essentially a spiritual entity; but in the Thanksgivings he gave it a more intellectual being. The trend toward a more intellectual soul continued in the Poems and is made clear by the rather Platonic discussion of the rational soul in the early chapters of Christian Ethicks (especially pp. 40-53). The intellectual, infinitely perceptive human soul is able to comprehend the Deity, he explains (CE, pp. 64 and 86), and is thus able to appreciate the world around it and perceive it in the proper manner (CE, p. 200). It is the rational soul that corresponds to God, or is the part of man that is the most deiform, since it has the ability to emulate the wisdom of God visible in the created world (CE, p. 201). From these passages in Christian Ethicks, it is easy to see that Traherne's ideas about the nature



of the soul have not altered to any significant degree. His studies in various philosophers may have somewhat enlarged his idea of the intellectual soul, and may have contributed to his emphasis on the intellectual, as opposed to the spiritual attributes of the human soul; but essentially his ideas of the nature of the soul expressed in Christian Ethicks are the same as those found in the "Disquisition on the Soul" composed years before.

Traherne's other themes remain essentially the same too. The emphasis on the freedom of the soul, and on man's free will (CE, pp. 39-40, 63, 77, 103-106, 164-165, and 181-182) parallel passages in the Centuries; and the emphasis on the need for a proper perception, or the need to see aright (CE, pp. 159-160 and 209) is linked with Traherne's feeling that the Fall was due to improper perception of the gifts of God in the same way as it had earlier been (CM III). His whole attitude to the Fall of Man, and to the estates of innocence, trial, grace, and glory (CE, p. 203 et passim) represents no significant change from the Fall and Redemption sequence described in the Poems and Centuries. The haeres mundi theme is supported by a reference to Romans, XIII, 16-17 (CE, p. 30) and a citation of the comment from Seneca on possession that is also found in meditation fifteen of the First Century (CE, p. 68). Some of the later statements of this theme (CE, pp. 237, 271, and 292f) show Traherne's attitude to still be the same: one must perceive the world aright as a gift from God, and must realize that each individual is God's Son and heir, a co-heir with Christ. Since this is the case, it follows that Traherne's attitude to the world is substantially the same. He sums up the proper attitude to the created universe, and

along with it the proper view of man, the soul, and the love of God,  
in the statement:

To make visible objects useful, it was necessary to enshrine some spirits in corporeal bodies, and therefore to make such creatures as men, that might see and feel, and smell and taste and hear, and eat and drink, by their bodies, and enjoy all the pleasures of the world by their souls. And by their souls, moreover, know the original and end of all, understand the design of all, and be able to celebrate the praises of the Creator. For by this means pure essences abstracted from all corporality might enjoy the world, while they delight in the glory of its uses, and especially in those complete and amiable creatures for whom it was prepared.

(CE, p. 200.)

The one noticeable difference between the earlier expression of these themes and their exposition in Christian Ethics lies not in the themes themselves, but rather in the manner in which they are set forth. The diffuse, meditative style of the Centuries, or the rhapsodic style of either the Poems or the Thanksgivings, could not have produced the concise summary of the basic themes that the Christian Ethics presents: the unrestrained style of the "Select Meditations" could not have produced the compact summation that the preceding quotation from the last work does. From a reading of Christian Ethics one gains two significant pieces of information about Traherne's intellectual development. In the first place, the basic themes demonstrate no significant change from earlier expressions. All Traherne's early themes are present in the ultimate summation; and nothing significant appears in the work that was omitted from the earliest discussions of the way to blessedness. Secondly, one notes a change in style from the rhapsodic to the didactic,

from the effusive to the concise which, although it in some ways mars Traherne's earlier vitality, leads to a more concentrated and lucid expression of his basic ideas. Stylistically he has changed somewhat, possibly because of the nature of the material, but thematically speaking, Traherne changed little from his first expression of his themes in the "Select Meditations" to his final codification of the doctrine of the Way to Blessedness in Christian Ethicks.

## CONCLUSIONS

There is an aspect of seventeenth-century thought that has been unjustly ignored by the majority of scholars of the period. With the partial exception of Louis Martz, few critics have thought to examine the essentially individualistic interest in one's own particular spiritual development that is the very basis of the poetry written by such men as Donne, Vaughan, Crashaw, Herbert, and Traherne.<sup>1</sup> In the poetry of men like Petrarch, Chaucer, and Spenser, one is dealing with a generalized description of an abstract person: Petrarch's Laura is not an individual but rather a personification of perfect beauty. In the poetry of Donne, on the other hand, the lady described is an individual in a particular situation: the lady in "The Good Morrow" is a definite person in a clearly-defined place. The difference in the approach of the poets lies in their self-awareness or lack of it. Spenser was interested in writing a generalized allegorical work in the Faerie Queene, and thus had to omit specific references that would otherwise have destroyed the abstract tone of the poem. Donne, on the other hand, was interested in examining his own particular emotions in a specific situation. Spenser is aware of his audience: Donne is aware of himself.

An intense preoccupation with one's own emotional or spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Martz investigates the matter to some extent in The Poetry of Meditation (New Haven, 1962).

predicament is characteristic of that group of seventeenth-century poets loosely called metaphysical. Each poet is interested not in general themes and ideas but rather in specific times, places, and people that have something definite to do with their own individual situation. In "The Collar", Herbert is not expressing a general feeling of rebellion against ecclesiastical restrictions; he is venting his personal anger at his being kept from the type of life he wants to lead. The emotion is particular and individual. Of Traherne, the same can be said, for in the Centuries of Meditations he is not dealing with the general themes of the relationship of man to his God, but, like Donne in "A Hymne to God the Father", is dealing with his own individual relationship with his Creator.

Unlike other earlier writers, Traherne and the men like him are concerned with their own individual intuitions and ideas about God. They do not start with the general and work to the particular, but rather start with the individual and his singular experience, and then work from that to any general application they wish to achieve. Take, for example, Donne's "The Canonization": the thematic development of the poem moves from a focussing on the love of the two individuals to a consideration of the religion of love they will found -- the movement is from the particular to the general. I suggest that this is also the overall pattern followed by Traherne in the composition of his various literary works: the movement is from the individual personal comments of the "Select Meditations" and early Centuries to the more generalized expression of the same themes in Christian Ethicks.

The point is this: to understand Traherne properly, one must realize the way in which his mind worked. Of paramount importance to Traherne was not the general applications of Christian theology, but rather his own personal intuitions of the importance of God's love to him. Thus when he started writing seriously, in the "Select Meditations", he concerned himself with his own personal situation as a priest and Christian, not with the general significance of Anglican dogma. In his infancy he had intuited that the world was made for him, that he was created pure and free from sin, that his soul was an infinite sphere capable of infinite extension in time and space, and that all that was needed to make the world appear a paradise here and now was to perceive it aright as a gift from God. These infant intuitions, as he tells us in the Third Century, were overshadowed by the influence of men, and soon were replaced by a false sense of values. Later he learned, through diligent study, that his infant intuitions in fact were valid. This, in brief summary, is the personal basis on which Traherne built all his later works. At university he received a basic grounding in methodology and an introduction to authorities that could support or refute his case; during a period of meditative retirement he learned that the Bible provided both support for his ideas and a style in which to express them. The literary products, the Thanksgivings, Centuries, Poems, "Select Meditations", and Christian Ethicks, were the results of his considerations of his own individual experience, not of his indoctrination by external authorities. They represent a development and expression of his individual convictions, not a compendium of ideas picked from other men's brains.

Traherne turned to authorities in his later writings, but he turned to them for justification of his own ideas, not as a source for further concepts. His extracts from Plato, Ficino, Jackson, Hermes, More, Barrow, and Gale show that Traherne turned to these men to see what they had to say about his own ideas and theories. His attitude to all authorities is governed by an acute awareness of his personal intuitions, as his comments on David the Psalmist show:

When I saw those Objects celebrated in His Psalmes which GOD and Nature had proposed to me, and which I thought chance only presented to my view: you cannot imagine how unspeakably I was delighted, to see so Glorious a Person, so Great a Prince, so Divine a Sage, that was a Man after Gods own Heart by the testimony of God Himself, rejoycing in the same things, meditating on the same and Praising God for the same.

(CM III, 70, ll. 1-7.)

In all probability, he greeted his other authorities in the same way: with delight in seeing that they praise the same things that he knew by intuition to be true. The emphasis is always on his own intuitive knowledge; the delight is always in seeing that others were perceptive enough to see things as he saw them, to see things aright. When Traherne cites authorities in his work, he does so because they agree with him. When he consults an authority, he extracts from him only those things which interested him or support his ideas, as the extracts from Ficino show.

As a result of his self-awareness, Traherne produced several works, all of which are aimed at expounding the truth of his personal intuitions about his relationship with God. Like Donne's meditations, they are based on personal experience in a specific situation, and refer

to an individual happening. They have a general application, but they were originally written to exemplify a particular occurrence or intuition. Since this is the case, the proper way to view Traherne is through the eyes of an autobiographic critic. Traherne must be examined in the light of the comments he makes about his personal individual situation. It is pointless to approach Traherne entirely from the angle of the historian of ideas: it destroys one's proper perspective. Traherne developed his thought from the particular to the general: he must be studied in the same manner. For this reason, I have chosen to discuss Traherne's intellectual development in the light of his own statements. I have attempted to make clear that Traherne was neither an Aristotelian nor a Platonist, neither an Hermeticist nor an Hortulian Saint, but rather an individual who found in the works of ancient and contemporary writers support for his own individual intuitions. Through diligent study and superb literary expression, he gave the world a brilliant picture of the joys of the blessed life, a picture that could be painted only by a man who justly deserves the title of "Prophet of Felicity".



## APPENDIX ONE

### THE TRAHERNE MANUSCRIPTS

Bodleian MS Lat. misc. f. 45, the "Early Notebook", was originally owned by Philip Traherne, as the inscription on the second fly-leaf shows; and Philip regained possession of the volume again after Thomas' death, as the presence of an extract from Burnet's Theoria Sacra (London, 1681) in Philip's hand (ENB, pp. 237-40) indicates. But despite all this, the majority of the work in the volume is Traherne's. The manuscript itself, containing twenty-five gatherings in eights, was bound before Philip bought it. Of the 390 + vi pages, only two are cancelled, one between pages thirty-two and three, the other between pages 376 and 377. The 5.7" X 3.7" volume contains writing in two hands, both of which, though quite small, are very legible.<sup>1</sup> Margoliouth's preliminary table of contents (I, xx-xxii) can be augmented by the following information:

#### PAGES

#### CONTENTS

- i        -jottings by both brothers, including much decorative  
         jotting by Philip, and a note by Thomas referring to  
         Bacon.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Marks, "Readings", pp. 32-33, points out that Thomas' page reference "Vid pag. 83. mercuri in bivio." on p. i of the MS is a page reference to Bacon. The only edition of the De Augmentis to which this reference, and the other two references on the fly leaf, apply is P. Mettayer's edition (Paris, 1624).

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ii-iii | -notes in the form of shorthand taught by Thomas Shelton in his <u>Tachygraphia</u> (London, 1626). <sup>3</sup>  |
| iii    | -contains Philip's statement of ownership, and the date 1655.   |
| iv     | -Latin quotation from Bacon.  |
| v      | -Philip's elaborate title page. His penchant for decorations is seen in his providing headline ornaments for the first twenty-two pages of this manuscript, and also in his preparation of the elaborate title page of the "Poems of Felicity" which is reproduced by Bell in his edition of the manuscript (London, 1910). |
| vi     | -blank.   |
| 1-5    | -a Latin essay by Philip, including some twenty-two lines of verse, and dealing with classical history and mythology. Apparently it is a school-boy exercise. <sup>4</sup>  |
| 6      | -blank  |
| 7-21   | - <u>Totius Moralis Philosophiae Perfecta a Epitome et concisa per Quaestiones et responsiones Tradita.</u> (This is Thomas' summary of Eustache de Saint-Paul's epitome of Aristotle's <u>Ethics</u> .)  |
| 22-32  | - <u>Epitome Geometrica.</u> This is Thomas' summary of Eustache's comments on geometry.  |
| 33     | -blank except for "the hallmark of a student's notebook: vague doodled sketches of human faces." <sup>5</sup>   |
| 34-46  | -blank.   |

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<sup>3</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 5 and note.

<sup>4</sup> Although there is no record of Philip's having received a formal education or university training until his B. D. in 1669, this essay indicates he must have been engaged in some sort of schooling at this time.

<sup>5</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 26.

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 47-55  | - <u>Compendium Historicum ex Justino excerptum</u> is a Latin epitome of what is, in itself, an epitome. The fact that the following pages are blank, and that the account epitomized is not complete, indicates that Traherne probably intended to complete this section at a later date. |
| 56-68  | -blank.   |
| 69   | -quotations by Thomas from Bacon's <u>De Augmentis</u> (the praise of learning from Book II) and his <u>Novum Organum</u> (the fable of the spider and the bee).  |
| 70   | -five aphorisms on poverty (some may be from either St Augustine or a pseudo-Augustinian treatise).   |
| 71   | -Thomas' title page to the Bacon extracts.  |
| 72-75 }<br>85-103 }                              | -notes by Thomas from the <u>De Augmentis</u> .   |
| 76-84 }<br>104-112 }                             | -blank.   |
| 113  | -notes by Thomas from both the <u>De Augmentis</u> and the essay "Of Marriage and the Single Life".   |
| 114-125 }<br>127-129 }<br>131-151 }<br>153-157 } | -notes on the <u>De Augmentis</u> written by Thomas. <sup>6</sup>   |
| 126, 130, }<br>and 152 }                         | -blank.   |
| 158  | -notes from <u>De Augmentis</u> , plus a short entry from the <u>Apophtegems</u> .  |
| 159-161  | -notes by Thomas from the <u>De Augmentis</u> .   |
| 162-168  | -blank.   |

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<sup>6</sup> Bacon's comments are fortified by Thomas' addition of quotations from Reynolds' Treatise of the Passions (1640) on pp. 140, 143, and 154.

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 169-170                | -Thomas' final note from <u>De Augmentis</u> .   |
| 171-183                | -blank.  |
| 184-211                | -verse, with some blank pages. Margoliouth's description of this section (I, xxi-xxii) is accurate, except for the fact that he omits mention of the much corrected poem "Sperne voluptas" (ENB, p. 198).  |
| 212                    | -blank.  |
| 213-234 }<br>339-341 } | -Latin notes by Thomas from an unidentified religious treatise. Since John Davenant was not appointed Bishop of Salisbury until 1621, and since he is referred to as such in the entries, the book being cited must not have been written before 1621. |
| 235                    | -English notes by Thomas on proper possession (see Margoliouth, II, 348).  |
| 236                    | -blank.  |
| 237-240                | -quotations from Burnet's <u>Theoria Sacra</u> , copied by Philip Traherne.  |
| 241-338                | -blank. The original foliator missed a leaf between pp. 305 and 306. The recovered leaf is now paginated 305b and 305c, with the original 305 becoming 305a.   |
| 342-373                | -blank.  |
| 374-375                | -The original Latin, and then an English translation of a passage from Seneca's <u>Thyestes</u> (see above, Part I, section 4).  |
| 376-386                | -blank. <sup>7</sup>   |

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<sup>7</sup> This section is completely blank, except for p. 386, where, written in a nineteenth-century hand, one finds "Hearne. Salisbury. oo2oo. Pd." This same hand wrote "Rashleigh Duke Salisbury. April 30. 1841" in ink on p. iii and "R. Duke" lightly in pencil on p. iv. Whether this has any significance in the history of the transmission of the manuscript, or is merely the doodling of a nineteenth-century schoolboy, is unknown.

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

- 387-388      -a code, and then a passage in cypher. The code and cyphers are of the same type as those used in the treatise of Blaise de Vigenère (e. g. his Traicté des Chiffres (Paris, 1587), ff. 275<sup>v</sup>-276. Marks ("Readings", p. 5f) ascribes it to Thomas.
- 389-390      -blank.<sup>8</sup>

## 2

Purchased late in 1964 by Mr James A. Osborn, of Yale University, the manuscript of the "Select Meditations" represents yet another significant step in the resurrection of Traherne. Mr Osborn purchased the manuscript from a bookseller in England, and had it shipped to Yale. When he started his examination of it, he realized how much like Traherne the material appeared, so he called in his colleague, Louis L. Martz. It took Professor Martz very little time to see the basic parallels in method in the little book, and he soon realized that the attitude displayed and the themes and imagery used were substantially those of Traherne. But when he came across the poem "All Musick, Sawces, Feasts, Delights and Pleasures", in the sixtieth meditation of the "Fourth Century", Mr Osborn's librarian tells me he looked like a man transported: he seemed to rise from his chair on a wave of excitement. This same poem appears in Christian Ethicks, thus proving that Traherne was also the author of his newly-discovered manuscript.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The preceding summary is based on information in Marks, "Readings", pp. 1-49 and 229-230, and Marks, "Introduction", viii-xviii. I have not examined the manuscript personally.

<sup>9</sup> The details of the discovery were told to me by Mr Alastair Wood, librarian of the Osborn collection, in an interview at Yale on March 2, 1965.

The manuscript itself is a  $5\frac{1}{2}$  x  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inch octavo volume, bound in calf, and in rather poor condition. The unsigned gatherings are poorly bound in, many of them having fallen away, with the resulting loss of several significant parts of the manuscript. The volume is paginated in the original ink and hand in the earlier part, and a twentieth-century hand continues the numbering, incorrectly, in the latter section. Where the manuscript came from remains a mystery: the bookseller from whom Mr Osborn purchased it refuses to divulge where it was obtained. The only clue we have is a note on the inside front cover, written in pencil in a modern hand (possibly the same hand responsible for the incorrect later pagination), stating cryptically:

Bought near Montgomer  $\bar{[X]}$   $\bar{[?]}$   
Possibly Henry III

Montgomery is less than fifty miles from Hereford, and is in the territory that was under the judicial eye of Mrs Hopton's husband. If, in fact, the note in the manuscript refers to the place of purchase, I suggest that the manuscript found its way there through the hands of either Mrs Hopton or one of her circle at Kington. But this is mere conjecture: the following table of contents deals with fact.<sup>10</sup>

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1-44 | -Lost. Either they were torn out or have fallen out due to weak binding, but no trace of these completed pages remains. |
|------|---|

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<sup>10</sup> The following table of contents was compiled during my short one-week visit to Yale in the spring of 1965. I have not had a chance to check its accuracy against any other work or by a re-examination of the original. Any errors that do exist will be able to be corrected when the contents of the manuscript are published, some time in 1967 according to Mr Osborn.

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

- 45-56 -contain the latter part of SM I, 81, to the first part of SM I, 95.
- 57-60 -These pages are torn away en masse.
- 61-75 -Page 61 starts with four lines of verse, which I think are the last four lines of SM I, 100. This is followed by the title:
- Select Meditamins [sic.]  
the  
Second Century
- and the text of SM II.
- 76 -This page is misnumbered "78" in the original hand and ink. There is no sign of a cancelled leaf, and no break in the continuity of the text.
- 78-82 -This section includes the text of SM II, up to and including part of SM II, 67.
- 83-84 -These pages are cut out of the manuscript. There is a loss of part of the text (the last half of SM II, 67 to the first half of SM II, 71).<sup>11</sup>
- 85-86 -The First third of the page is cut away neatly, leaving only part of SM II, 71, all of SM II, 72, the first part of SM II, 73, and the last part of SM II, 75.
- 87-110 -These pages include text up to SM III, 18.
- 111-112 -The top corner of the page is torn away, mutilating the last half of SM III, 18, as well as parts of SM III, 19 and SM III, 20.
- 113-124 -These pages contain the text of SM III, 20, up to and including the first part of SM III, 32.
- 125-128 -These pages are lost -- either cut or torn away -- thus destroying SM III, 33-35 in toto, as well as the last half of SM III, 32, and the first part of SM III, 36.

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<sup>11</sup> Similar mutilations, some neat and some careless, occur in other Traherne manuscripts.

## PAGES

## CONTENTS

- 129-219 -These pages contain the complete text of the remainder of SM III, 36, up to and including SM IV, 68.
- 219<sup>r&v</sup> -This paginated recto and its unnumbered verso contain the poems "The Living Waters" and "Another".
- 220 -This page begins the sequence misnumbered in pencil. The number should have been placed on the verso of the page numbered 219 in the original ink. This error is perpetuated throughout the rest of the manuscript.
- 220-228 -These pages are blank.
- 229-230 -Written in a hand other than that found in the rest of the manuscript, these pages contain "A Prayer for Ash Wednesday". See Part I, section 4, above.
- 231-232 -"A Meditation", written in the same hand as the preceding selection, occupies these two pages.
- 233-245 -These pages are blank.
- 246-264 -The unmutilated text of Traherne's "Disquisition on the Soul" occupies these pages.
- 265 -This page is blank.
- 266-270 -Traherne's "Meditation on Love" occupies these pages.
- 271 -The final page of the manuscript (and also the inside of the back cover) is blank.

## 3

Originally purchased in the late nineteenth century by W. T. Brooke, Bodleian MS Eng. poet. c. 42 is a folio manuscript measuring 11.8 X 7.6 inches, the manuscript having been bound (or rebound) in the late nineteenth century. The entries are all made in double columns in both the poetry and commonplace book portions of the manuscript.



Although the script of the poems is exactly legible, the notes in CPB sometimes provide problems. Of the poems that occupy the first fifteen and a half leaves of the manuscript, little need be said: Margoliouth provides a good description of them in his notes (I, xx-xiv) and his edition of the text. Following the poetry is the until recently unexamined CPB. A detailed study of this manuscript revealed that Traherne turned to five specific authors while engaged in research for his Christian Ethicks. The following table of contents will give the reader a general idea of the contents of the manuscript. The entries, all of which were made from the editions of the texts listed (to which text the page numbers in the table refer), will be cited thus: f. 29.2, where 29 refers to the leaf, and .2 to the column. Recto is to be understood unless verso is specified.<sup>12</sup> Pages not cited are blank. The symbols used to identify Traherne's sources are as follows:

Copyists: T = Traherne; B = the amanuensis

Sources:

Bar. = Barrow, Isaac. The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor. London, 1671.

G. = Gale, Theophilus. The Court of the Gentiles, Part II. Oxford, 1670.

HT = Hermes Trismegistus. His Divine Pymander. . . . tr. Dr John Everard. London, 1657.

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<sup>12</sup> The following table is based on information in Marks, "Readings", especially pp. 235-243. My verification of her findings with respect to Gale, More, and Hermes leaves me no reason at all to distrust her other findings.

- J25 = Jackson, Thomas. A Treatise Containing the Originall of Vnbeliefe . . . . London, 1625.
- J28 = ----- A Treatise of the Divine Essence and Attributes. The First Part. London, 1628.
- J29 = ----- A Treatise of the Divine Essence and Attributes. The Second Part. London, 1629.
- J57 = ----- Christ Session at the Right Hand of God . . . . London, 1657.
- M = More, Henry. Divine Dialogues . . . . The Three First Dialogues. London, 1668. /All Traherne's references are to the First Dialogue./

| ff.                     | title                  | copyist | source                         |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| 16 <sup>v</sup> .1-2    | Aristotle's Philosophy | B       | G., pp. 360-363, and 366.      |
| 17.1                    | Of Judicial Astrology  | T & B   | G., pp. 66-67.                 |
| 17 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Atoms                  | B       | G., pp. 205-208. <sup>13</sup> |
| 19.1                    | Authoritie             | B       | G., p. 192.                    |
| 19.2                    | Auditors               | B       | G., p. 376; HT, IV. 58.        |
| 20.1                    | Banishment             | B       | J28, p. 225.                   |
| 20 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Beatifick              | B       | HT, IV. 13, 19, 14, 16-19.     |
| 21.1-21 <sup>v</sup> .2 | Beatitude              | B       | G., pp. 383-389.               |
| 22 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Beginning              | B       | J29, pp. 51, 55-57.            |
| 23.1-2                  | Bounty                 | T       | Bar., pp. 174-80.              |
| 23 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Capacity               | B       | HT, X. 119-137.                |
| 24.1                    | Cause                  | B       | J25, p. 119; J29, pp. 51, 53.  |
| 24 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Censure                | T       | Unidentified source.           |
| 25.1                    | Ceremonies             | T       | G., p. 151.                    |

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<sup>13</sup> On f. 18 is a later addition of "Incidental Expenses 1746" which include the tantalizing reference to Sus. Treherne /sic./ Spinster.

| ff.                       | title         | copyist | source   |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------|--|
| 25 <sup>V</sup> .1-2      | Chaos         | B       | G., pp. 342-346; HT, III. 3.   |
| 26.1                      | Charity       | T       | Bar., pp. 142-146.   |
| 26 <sup>V</sup> .1        | Circulation   | T       | HT, IX. 32.  |
| 26 <sup>V</sup> .2        | Cohaesion     | T       | M., pp. 32, 119-120.   |
| 27.1                      | Cold          | T       | Unidentified source.   |
| 27 <sup>V</sup> .1        | Colors        | B       | G., p. 335; J25, pp. 117, 118.   |
| 27 <sup>V</sup> .2        | Communion     | T       | HT, VII. 41.   |
| 28.1                      | Condescention | B       | G., pp. 221-22.  |
| 28 <sup>V</sup> .1-2      | Conscience    | B       | G., pp. 290-292.   |
| 28 <sup>V</sup> .2        | Contemplation | B       | G., pp. 66, 285-286,   |
|                           |               | T       | G., p. 337,  |
|                           |               | B       | J25, pp. 375-376.  |
| 29.2                      | Continence    | T       | HT, VII. 39.   |
| 29 <sup>V</sup> .1-2      | Consultation  | B       | G., 392-395.   |
| 29 <sup>V</sup> .2        | Creation      | B       | J29, pp. 31-32, 52-53, 61.   |
| 30.1-2                    | Creation      | B       | G., pp. 316, 317-319; J29, pp. 33, 61.   |
| 30.2                      | Creature      | B       | HT, I. 43; J29, pp. 81-83, 85.   |
| 30 <sup>V</sup> .1-2      | Corruption    | B       | J25, p. 299.   |
|                           |               | T       | Unidentified; HT, VIII. 8-9.   |
| 31.1-31 <sup>V</sup> .2   | Cynick        | T & B   | G., pp. 417-423.   |
| 32.1                      | Custom        | T       | HT, VIII. 4.   |
| 32.2                      | Darkness      | B       | J25, p. 440.   |
| 32 <sup>V</sup> .2        | Death         | T       | Bar., pp. 159-162.   |
| 33.1                      | Death         | B       | G., pp. 167-168;   |
|                           |               | T       | HT, VII. 59.   |
| 33.2-33 <sup>V</sup> .1-2 | Deitie        | T       | M., pp. 88-90; summary by Traherne; M., pp. 104-108, 112; Traherne's counterargument; M., p. 93; Traherne's arguments. |
| 33 <sup>V</sup> .2        | Demonstration | B       | G., p. 337.  |

| ff.                                   | title                      | copyist | source  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---|
| 34.2-1                                | Dependance                 | B       | J29, pp. 67-68, 71-73, 70-71, 80, 81, 81-82.  |
| 34 <sup>V</sup> .1                    | Desire                     | B       | J25, pp. 456, 457, 457-458, 462, 464.         |
| 35.1-2                                | Divinity                   | B       | G., pp. 172-173, 173, 174-175, 176, 178.      |
| 35 <sup>V</sup> .2-36 <sup>V</sup> .1 | Dominion                   | B       | J57, pp. 358-362.                             |
| 37 <sup>V</sup> .1-38.1               | Encouragement              | B       | J28, pp. 200-207.                             |
| 39.1                                  | Earth                      | B       | G., pp. 160-161.                              |
| 39 <sup>V</sup> .1-2                  | Election                   | B       | G., pp. 395-398.                              |
| 40.1                                  | Empty                      | T       | HT, IX. 45-49, 51, 53-59, 61.                 |
| 40.2                                  | The Elective<br>Sect       | B       | G., pp. 260-261, 261-262.                     |
| 40 <sup>V</sup> .1                    | End                        | B       | G., pp. 391-392.                              |
| 41.1                                  | Essenes.<br>Their Original | T & B   | G., pp. 147-148.                              |
| 41.2                                  | Ethicks                    | B       | G., pp. 166-167, 169, 171, 208.               |
| 41 <sup>V</sup> .2-42 <sup>V</sup> .2 | Epicurisme                 | B       | G., pp. 440-448.                              |
| 43.1-2                                | Evill                      | B       | J29, pp. 107-110.                             |
| 43 <sup>V</sup> .1                    | Experience                 | B       | G., pp. 289-290.                              |
| 43 <sup>V</sup> .1                    | Fall                       | B       | HT, I. 87.                                    |
| 44 <sup>V</sup> .1-45.1               | Fire                       | B       | G., pp. 163-164, 169, 206, 209, 330, 338-340. |
| 45 <sup>V</sup> .1                    | Firmament                  | B       | G., pp. 330. 338. 340.                        |
| 45 <sup>V</sup> .2                    | Force                      | B       | J28, pp. 191-193.                             |
| 46.1                                  | Friendship                 | T & B   | G., pp. 142-143;                              |
|                                       |                            | T       | Unidentified source.                          |
| 46.2                                  | Friendship<br>with God     | B       | G., pp. 183-184.                              |

| ff.                      | title      | copyist | source   |
|--------------------------|------------|---------|--|
| 46 <sup>v</sup> .2       | Freedom    | B       | J29, pp. 73-74, 78.  |
| 47.1                     | Fruit      | T       | HT, VII. 98.   |
| 47 <sup>v</sup> .1       | Fury       | B       | J28, pp. 223-224.  |
| 48a.1                    | Fancie     | B       | J25, pp. 98-110.   |
| 48a <sup>v</sup> .1      | Fate       | B       | HT, I. 87; J29, pp. 116-117.   |
| 48b.2                    | Generation | B       | HT, I. 65-66; HT, II. 2, 8, 12-15.   |
| 48b <sup>v</sup> .2-49.2 | Generation | T       | HT, X. 4, 6-13, 18-38, 40-45, 56. <sup>14</sup>  |
| 49 <sup>v</sup> .2       | God        | T       | HT, X. 84-85, 87-94, 98, 114-115.  |
| 50.1                     | God        | B       | G., pp. 176-178, 183, 205-206;<br>HT, VI. 84-92; HT, I, 45-46, 80;<br>HT, IV. 4-5, 10, 11, 31.   |
| 50.2                     | God        | T       | Unidentified source;   |
|                          |            | B       | HT, II. 86-95; HT, IV. 13.   |
| 50 <sup>v</sup> .1-2     | God        | B       | HT, IV. 80;  |
|                          |            | T       | HT, p. 72; HT, IV. 25; HT, p. 115;<br>HT, VIII. 6; an original passage [?];<br>HT, IX. 60-61, 64-67, 69, 68, 71,<br>74-77; HT, X. 43, 47-50, 63, 65; |
|                          |            | T & B   | HT, XI. 1;   |
|                          |            | B       | HT, XI. 2-3.   |
| 51.1                     | Good       | B       | G., p. 354; HT, IV. 9;   |
|                          |            | T       | HT, IX. 75.  |
| 51.1                     | Grace      | T       | Unidentified source.   |
| 51.2-52.1                | Grove      | B       | J25, pp. 191-200.  |

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<sup>14</sup> Apparently, f. 48, a single column wide, was pasted into the manuscript after it was originally bound.

| ff.                       | title          | copyist | source   |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------|--|
| 52 <sup>v</sup> .2        | Guide          | T       | HT, VIII. 5.   |
| 53.1                      | Heaven         | B       | HT, I. 44, 53-58, 72-76;   |
|                           |                | T       | HT, I. 76.   |
| 54 <sup>v</sup> .1        | Humane         | B       | G., p. 389.  |
| 54 <sup>v</sup> .1-2      | Hypocrisie     | B       | J25, pp. 307-310; HT, I. 67.                                     |
| 55.1-2                    | Idea           | B & T   | G., pp. 179-180, 181-182;<br>HT, I. 28-29.                       |
| 55 <sup>v</sup> .1        | Images         | B       | J25, pp. 300-302.  |
| 56.1-56 <sup>v</sup> .1   | Idolatrie      | B       | G., pp. 177-178, 164-165, 264-266;<br>J25, pp. 134-135, 186-187. |
| 56 <sup>v</sup> .2        | Image          | B       | G., p. 279.  |
| 56 <sup>v</sup> .2        | Impossibilitie | B       | J28, pp. 186-188.  |
| 57.1                      | Imitation      | B       | G., p. 355.  |
| 57.1                      | Impossibilitie | B       | J29, pp. 12-13;<br>J28, pp. 186-187.                             |
| 57.2-57 <sup>v</sup> .1-2 | Intercession   | T & B   | J25, pp. 232-236, 239-240, 277-278,<br>382-384.                  |
| 58.1                      | Immortalitie   | T       | G., p. 127;  |
|                           |                | B       | G., p. 217.  |
| 58.2                      | Incarnation    | B       | J25, p. 130.   |
| 58 <sup>v</sup> .1        | Inclination    | B       | G., p. 283;  |
|                           |                | T       | unidentified source.   |
| 58 <sup>v</sup> .2        | Incorporeall   | B       | HT, I. 42.   |
| 58 <sup>v</sup> .2        | Instinct       | T       | Unidentified source.   |
| 59.1-2                    | Invocation     | B       | G., pp. 187-188; J25, pp. 346-348.                               |
| 59 <sup>v</sup> .2        | Interest       | T       | Unidentified source.   |
| 59 <sup>v</sup> .1-60.1   | Incertaintie   | T       | Bar., pp. 148-155.   |

| ff.                     | title        | copyist | source   |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------|--|
| 60 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Joy          | B       | J25, pp. 459-460; J29, p. 96.                                    |
| 61 <sup>v</sup> .1-2    | Irresistible | B       | J29, pp. 141-142, 143-144.                                       |
| 62.1                    | Liberalitie  | T       | Bar., pp. 180-187.   |
| 62 <sup>v</sup> .1-2    | Libertie     | B       | J28, pp. 188-189, 193-194.                                       |
| 63.1-63 <sup>v</sup> .1 | Libertie     | B       | G., pp. 398-402.   |
| 64.1                    | Light        | T       | There is a heading but no proper entry.                          |
| 64 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Logick       | B       | G., pp. 377, 378-380, 382.                                       |
| 65.1-2                  | Man          | B       | G., pp. 183-184, 334; HT, I. 25-27<br>HT, II. 18; HT, IV. 89-93; |
|                         |              | T       | HT, VII. 16, 47, 57, 60.   |
| 65 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Matter       | B       | G., pp. 323-324.   |
| 66.1                    | Mathematicks | B & T   | G., p. 159.  |
| 66.2                    | Medicine     | B       | G., pp. 346-347, 347, 349, 350, 351.                             |
| 66 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Metaphysicks | B       | G., p. 173.  |
| 66 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Monarchie    | B       | J25, pp. 374-375.  |
| 66 <sup>v</sup> .2-67.2 | Moralitie    | B       | G., pp. 217-219, 281, 287, 403,<br>410-411.                      |
| 68.2                    | Motion       | B       | G., p. 414;  |
|                         |              | T       | HT, IX. 1, 3, 25; a summary of IX.<br>17-34; IX. 36, 38-42.      |
| 68 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Multitude    | B       | J25, pp. 373-374;  |
|                         |              | T       | HT, VII. 4.  |
| 68 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Musick       | B       | G., p. 160.  |
| 69.1                    | Nature       | B       | J29, pp. 40-41.  |
| 70 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Neighbour    | T       | Bar., pp. 131-134.   |
| 71 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Omnipotence  | B       | J29, pp. 8-9, 57-58, 61, 106.                                    |

| ff.                     | title                  | copyist | source   |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|--|
| 71 <sup>V</sup> .2-72.1 | Omnipresence           | T       | M., pp. 132-133, 157-158, 133, 158-160; comment by Traherne; M., pp. 66-67; another comment by Traherne. |
| 72.2-72 <sup>V</sup> .1 | One                    | T       | HT, X. 65-70; an unidentified passage; HT, X. 76, 81-85. <sup>15</sup>                                   |
| 72 <sup>V</sup> .2      | Operation              | B       | G., p. 414.  |
| 73.1-75.1               | Paganisme              | B       | J25, pp. 127-132, 133, 136-151, 160-161, 168, 171-172, 162-163.  |
| 75.1-2                  | Passion                | B       | J 28, pp. 226-229.   |
| 75 <sup>V</sup> .1-2    | Perfection             | B       | G., pp. 332-333;   |
|                         |                        | T       | unidentified source; <sup>16</sup>   |
|                         |                        | B       | G., p. 334.  |
| 75 <sup>V</sup> .2      | Poett                  | B       | J25, pp. 461-462.  |
| 76.1                    | Poett                  | B       | J25, pp. 185, 187.   |
| 76.1-76 <sup>V</sup> .2 | Pope                   | B       | J25, pp. 362-371.  |
| 77.1                    | Preparation of Objects | B       | J25, pp. 438-439, 441-442, 446-447;  |
|                         |                        | T       | G., p. 152.  |
| 77.2                    | Preparation            | T       | Unidentified source; G., pp. 141, 140-141; unidentified source.  |

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<sup>15</sup> Miss Marks points out (in "Readings", pp. 212-213), that this section, subtitled "Against the Manichees", mirror's Traherne's comments in CM III, 61, and CYB f. 57; she also suggests that all three passages may be from the same source as the passage on the "Son" (CPB f. 90<sup>V</sup>.2, mentioned below). It is quite possible that the ultimate source for the passage is St Augustine's attack on the heresy.

<sup>16</sup> Miss Marks ("Readings", p. 215) suggests that this passage is from the same unidentified source as the section on "Treasure" (CPB, f. 94.2).



| ff.   | title       | copyist | source   |
|---|-------------|---------|--|
| 77 <sup>v</sup> .1-78 <sup>v</sup> .2<br>and<br>79.2-29 <sup>v</sup> .2 | Philosophie | T & B   | G., pp. 1-7, 8-9, 65-66,<br>263-264, 9-10,<br>11-12, 14-15, 16-19.                                       |
| 79.1  | Providence  | B       | G., p. 183;<br>HT, I. 23; J29, 97-98.  |
| 79 <sup>v</sup> .1  | Proverbs    | B       | G., p. 192.  |
| 79 <sup>v</sup> .2  | Purgative   | T & B   | G., pp. 216-217.   |
| 79 <sup>v</sup> .2-80.1   | Purgative   | T       | HT, II. 60-68;   |
|   |             | B       | HT, II. 69.  |
| 80.1-80 <sup>v</sup> .2   | Pythagoras  | B       | G., pp. 155-156;   |
|   |             | T       | G., pp. 126, 128-130, 129,<br>130-134, 136, 149,<br>148-149, 150, 153,<br>154, 155, 157-158,<br>153-154. |
| 81.1  | Prudence    | B       | G., pp. 389-390.   |
| 81.2  | Providence  | B       | J25, pp. 376-379.  |
| 82.1  | Punishment  | B       | J28, pp. 216-217, 217-218,<br>219-221.   |
| 82 <sup>v</sup> .1-2  | Reason      | B<br>T  | G., pp. 292-294, 408-410;<br>an insignificant interjection.  |
| 83.1-2  | Retirement  | B       | J25, pp. 200-203.  |
| 83 <sup>v</sup> .1  | Repentance  | T       | Source unidentified. <sup>17</sup>   |
| 85 <sup>v</sup> .1  | Sagacitie   | B       | G., pp. 288-289.   |
| 86.1-2  | Salt        | B       | G., pp. 144-146.   |
| 86 <sup>v</sup> .2  | Scholemen   | B       | G., pp. 373-374.   |

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<sup>17</sup> Between ff. 83 and 85 is an eighteenth-century fragment (f.84) dealing with old wives' remedies for deafness, toothache &c. See Margoliouth, I, xiii.

| ff.                     | title        | copyist | source   |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------|--|
| 87.1-87 <sup>v</sup> .2 | Scepticisme  | B       | G., pp. 435-439.                               |
| 87 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Seed         | B       | Unidentified source. <sup>18</sup>             |
| 88.1                    | Silence      | T & B   | G., pp. 140, 139, 140, 153-154, 221;           |
|                         |              | T       | HT, VII. 99.                                   |
| 88.2-89 <sup>v</sup> .2 | Stoicisme    | B       | G., pp. 424-434.                               |
| 90.1-2                  | Soul         | T & B   | G., pp. 188-189, 344-345; HT, IV. 19. 46, 64;  |
|                         |              | T       | HT, XI. 8.                                     |
| 90.2                    | Song         | T       | HT, VII. 65.                                   |
| 90 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Son          | T       | Unidentified source. <sup>19</sup>             |
| 91.1-2                  | Sun          | B       | G., pp. 53-54, 69-70, 340-342.                 |
| 92.1-92 <sup>v</sup> .1 | Superstition | B       | J25, pp. 156-158, 175-180.                     |
| 92 <sup>v</sup> .1      | Temperance   | B       | G., pp. 354-355.                               |
| 92 <sup>v</sup> .2      | Temperance   | T       | HT, VII. 38.                                   |
| 93.1-2                  | Theologie    | B       | G., pp. 187, 189-190, 215, 228, 215-217.       |
| 94.2                    | Treasure     | T       | G., p. 143; unidentified source. <sup>20</sup> |
| 95.1                    | Vice         | B       | G., pp. 412-413;                               |

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<sup>18</sup> The passage, to my mind, is quite Hermetic, and sounds much like Vaughan's "seed of light" theme. I suggest that the passage is a quotation or adaptation of a popular Hermetic treatise. The quotation is not from Hermes.

<sup>19</sup> See note 15, above.

<sup>20</sup> See note 16, above.

| ff.                    | title  | copyist | source                    |
|------------------------|--------|---------|---------------------------|
|                        |        | T       | HT, VII. 28-29, 31-32.    |
| 95 <sup>v</sup> 1-96.2 | Virtue | T & B   | G., pp. 403-409, 411-412. |

## 4

Purchased from Charles Burney by the British Museum in 1818, the "Ficino Notebook" (Burney MS 126) is a small volume, 7 X 5½ inches, written by Traherne in Latin. Although there are a few entries made by an amanuensis (the same one as in CPB) from Gale's The Court of the Gentiles, Part II, the majority of the book contains Traherne's summary of Ficino's Latin edition of Plato's works. The following table of contents will give the reader an idea of the various Platonic works Traherne turned to to revivify his knowledge of ancient philosophy.<sup>21</sup>

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- 1<sup>v</sup> The name "Elinor" is written six times with variant spellings.<sup>22</sup>
- 2 Some scribblings, not necessarily in Traherne's hand, occupy the page.
- 3 The title "PLATONIS PHILOSOPHI Speculationes practicae. A MARSIGLIO FICINO brevitur digestae", in Traherne's hand, is followed by the British Museum addition "E libris Caroli Parr

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<sup>21</sup> The following summary is based on Marks, "Readings", pp. 246-248. I have not studied the manuscript in detail.

<sup>22</sup> Marks, "Readings", p. 224, suggests that Traherne is not writing the name of his beloved, as Wade suggested (see Wade, pp. 255-257), but instead is trying to remember the correct spelling of a relative's name. An Elinor Traherne was baptized in Lugwardine, December 28, 1620. Note that Philip Traherne was sent to nurse in this town according to "To the same purpos" (Margoliouth, II, 132).

ff.

## Contents

Burney. 1818."

- 4 The list of twenty-five of Plato's dialogues and their principle subjects, not in the exact order of the notes following, including the names of eight dialogues from which no notes were taken, and omitting mention of The Republic, on which Traherne made many notes, is written in Traherne's hand.
- 5 - 9<sup>v</sup> The pages contain "Observationes quaedam notatu digniores e Platonis vita (A Marsilio Ficino scripta) veraciter excerptae".
- 10 "Platonis Hipparchus. uel De Lucri Cupiditate."
- 11 "Plato De Philosophia" [Erastae or Amatores].
- 12 "Meno. De virtute."
- 13-13<sup>v</sup> "Alcibiades I<sup>us</sup>. De voto."
- 14 "Alcibiades II<sup>us</sup>. De voto."
- 15-15<sup>v</sup> "Minos. De Lege."
- 16 "Euthyphro. Plato De Sanctitate."
- 17-17<sup>v</sup> "Parmenides. Plato De vno Rerum Principio. et de Ideis."
- 18-18<sup>v</sup> "Philebus. Plato de Summo Bono."
- 19 "Lysis. Plato De Amicitia."
- 20 "Hippias major. Plato De Pulchro."
- 21-22 "Civilis. Plato De Regno."
- 23 "Charmides. Plato De Temperantia."
- 24-26 "Laches. Plato De Fortitudine."
- 27-28 "Euthydemus sive Litigiosus. Plato Contra Sophistos et de vera Sapientia."
- 29-31 "Io. Plato De Furore Poetico."
- 32-33 "Menexenus sive Epitaphius."
- 34-36 "Plato De Justo sive De Republica. Dialogus 1."

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- 36-38 "Plato De justo. Sive de Republica. Dialogus. 2."
- 38<sup>v</sup>-41 "De justo. sive de Republica. Dialogus. 3."
- 41<sup>v</sup>-44 "Plato De justo, sive de Republica Dialogus. 4."
- 44<sup>v</sup>-45 "Plato De Republica sive De Justo Dialog. 5."<sup>23</sup>
- 46-56 "Observationes quaedam notatu digniores e Socratis  
vita -- Qui Platoni Magister erat, veraciter excerptae."  
[The source is unidentified.]
- 56<sup>v</sup>-57<sup>v</sup> "Correllarium" to the preceding.
- 57<sup>v</sup> Notes on Socrates. Traherne wrote the heading, and B copied  
the entry from Gale, The Court of the Gentiles, Part II,  
pp. 223-224.
- 58-58<sup>v</sup> "Argumentum Marcilij Ficini Florentini In Librum Mercurij  
Trismegisti."<sup>24</sup>
- 59 "Stoicismus Christianus." This excerpt, written in Traherne's  
hand, summarizes the first eleven chapters of this unidentified  
work.
- 59<sup>v</sup> "Socrates his Disciples". The heading, written by Traherne,  
is followed by an entry excerpted from Gale's Court, Part II,  
and copied into FNB by B.

## 5

The "Church's Year-Book" (Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 51) is written in

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<sup>23</sup> All of the above-listed entries (ff. 5-45) are Traherne's condensation of Ficino's Plato. In his edition of Plato, Ficino provided both the text of Plato (in Latin) and a short epitome of each section. Traherne freely excerpts from both of these in his notes. (See Marks, "Readings", p. 246, et passim.) For his method of dealing with the Ficino material, see Part II, section 4, above.

<sup>24</sup> Whether this was Traherne's first encounter with Hermes or not, I do not know. But I suggest it was, and that it stimulated him to further research in the matter, research which appears in CPB written shortly after the completion of FNB.

a very minute, but quite neat and legible hand. Into the two hundred and twenty-five pages of the 6.7 X 4.2 inch volume, Traherne copied or composed numerous prayers and devotions for the various feast days of the Church Year. To the table of contents given by Margoliouth (I, xvii-xviii) should be added the following:

ff.

Contents

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 15 <sup>v</sup> -16   | "Prayer for Pachal Time."                                    |
| 31                    | "The Antiphon for Ascension Day."                            |
| 46-55 <sup>v</sup>    | "How the H. Ghost descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost." |
| 55 <sup>v</sup> -56   | "A Prayer."  |
| 104 r-v               | "A Preface" to the meditation on All Saints' Day.            |
| 104 <sup>v</sup> -112 | "Meditations and Devotions for All Saints Day."              |

One should also note that the "Acts of Adoration and Thanksgiving" are found on ff. 24<sup>r</sup>-27<sup>v</sup>, not ff. 24<sup>r</sup>-27<sup>r</sup> as Margoliouth notes (I, xviii). Similarly the "Devotions on St Barnabas Day" are found on ff. 68<sup>r</sup>-70<sup>v</sup>, not 68<sup>r</sup>-70<sup>r</sup> as Margoliouth indicates (I, xviii).

APPENDIX TWO  
THE DATING OF THE CANON

Judging on the basis of internal evidence, paleographic particulars, and several other miscellaneous pieces of information, it is possible to determine the date of composition of most of Traherne's works. The nature of the notes on ethics, geometry and history in the "Early Notebook" place the composition of the early part of the work in Traherne's undergraduate years, while Philip's note of ownership (ENB, p. iii) suggests that Thomas may not have acquired the book until after 1655. The loss of the secretarial "r" in the Bacon extracts suggests that they were not composed until some time after the notes on ethics, probably not until the latter few years of the decade. Since the poetry deals, in part, with persons intimately associated with Credenhill and Traherne, we seem to have proof that these poetic pieces were written around 1660. Although there is some prose following the poetry section, it need not have been compiled after the poems: there is a chance that Traherne left several blank pages for the poetry and then continued his prose notes in the latter part of the volume. The information we have, then, suggests that the "Early Notebook" dates from the period between 1655 and 1661, and that the contents were being compiled during the entire span.

Internal evidence again provides a date of composition for the "Select Meditations". The numerous references to the new king and to the newly-established national church (SM I, 82; SM I, 86; and SM III, 25)

date the composition some time after the Restoration, but still during the period of uneasiness that prevailed for a few years. A reference to a small chapel environed with trees, and to the author's recent return from the University (SM III, 83), suggests the parish church at Credenhill during Traherne's first years there. These facts combine to give a probable date of composition around 1661-1664 for the "Select Meditations".

The mechanical scholasticism seen in the method of the "Disquisition on the Soul" makes me think the work may have been written earlier and simply included in the Osborn Manuscript for the edification of the author of the "Prayer for Ash Wednesday". Since it follows the "Select Meditations", we are safe in assuming it was transcribed later, but whether it (and the "Meditation on Love") were actually composed after the "Select Meditations" is open to conjecture. The tone of the pieces, though, is definitely early. If they were not composed when they were copied into the manuscript (around 1662-1664) they were written not more than a few years before.

The similarity of material and theme that exists between the Thanksgivings and the "Select Meditations" argues a close temporal relationship between the two works. Although I agree with Miss Wade's assumption (p. 146) that the Thanksgivings were composed in the order in which they were printed in the 1699 edition, I feel she is wrong in assuming that the "Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Nation" was composed directly as a result of the Plague and Great Fire. The same material is found in the early sections of the "Select Meditations", arguing that the two works were composed around the same time. The style of the Thanksgivings, both with regard to the Biblical rhythms and the immature use of the heroic couplet, dates the material during the Credenhill period, probably



during the middle years around 1665.

Although Roman Forgeries was not printed until 1673, it was probably started earlier, when Traherne had access to the vast research facilities of the Bodleian Library. Internal evidence proves that it was not completed, in its final form, before 1671 (see Part II, section 1, above) thus nullifying Margoliouth's conjecture (I, xxxviii). Similarities exist between authors and material cited in Roman Forgeries and certain passages in the "Church's Year-Book", arguing a close temporal relationship between the two, and helping to date the composition of Roman Forgeries some time between 1670 and 1672.

Since Philip Traherne had a hand in it, the "Church's Year-Book" must have been in progress before the autumn of 1670, at which time Philip left England to take up his duties as preacher of the Turkey Company in Smyrna (See Margoliouth, I, xxxiiif). But references to Bridgeman, and citation of authorities also found in Roman Forgeries point out that it must have been started in 1669. Since it is a year-book, it must have been completed within one church year. Margoliouth points out that the arrangement of feast days indicates that it belongs to the year 1662, 1664, 1669, 1670, or 1673. The first two years are ruled out because of the references to Bridgeman; Margoliouth's conjecture about the last is invalidated by the fact that the passage that forms the basis of his argument was not written by Traherne, but rather copied from Bishop Andrewes. This leaves us with 1669 and 1670 as the only two years the book could possibly apply to, the latter of which appears to be the most probable.

In the latter sections of the "Ficino Notebook" are extracts from the second part of Theophilus Gale's The Court of the Gentiles (Oxford, 1670),

copied out by the amanuensis who was also involved in the compilation of the "Commonplace Book". This indicates two things: that the notebook was in progress at approximately the same time as the "Commonplace Book", and that the Ficino extracts were made some time before 1670. Wade's conjecture (p. 256) that the extracts from Ficino were made some time in the late 1650s is questionable for two reasons: the handwriting of the manuscript is not at all like the hand seen in the "Early Notebook", and also the Ficino extracts form the basis for comments in the Centuries of Meditations, a work in progress at about this time. That the manuscript precedes the Centuries in composition is indicated by both the presence of material in FNB<sup>that</sup> appears in a later version in the Centuries, and by the handwriting of the work which, according to an authority on the manuscripts, is earlier than that found in the Centuries (Marks, "Readings", p. 222). All of these facts combine to suggest that the notebook was started some time in 1669, and completed some time after 1670.

That the Centuries were composed over a period of years has already been suggested. It seems likely that they were started sometime in 1669, shortly after Traherne left for London. There is mention made (CM I, 80, ll. 10-12) of the writer being some 100 miles distant from the reader, that being the approximate distance between Traherne in London and Mrs Hopton in Kington. The general thematic development of the Centuries suggests that they took some time to write, while the intellectual and stoic tone of the latter meditations matches the mind of Traherne in his last few years. Until further evidence can be found to determine otherwise, I feel we are safe in assuming that the Centuries were written during the years 1669-1674, and that they were in progress over the whole of that period.

The dating of the Poems is a little more difficult. Although we are reasonably safe in stating that the fair copy was composed around 1670, we are somewhat at a loss to determine the actual date of composition of the individual poems. Such is not the case with the "Commonplace Book". Wade's suggestion (p. 253) that it was composed during the period 1669-1674 appears valid. The extracts from Gale date the composition as post-1670, while the appearance of material and themes from the manuscript in Christian Ethicks indicates that the compilation was completed some time around 1674. Thus the manuscript can be dated with reasonable accuracy as belonging to the last three or four years of Traherne's life.

Christian Ethicks itself, published posthumously in 1675, was probably composed between 1672 and Traherne's death. Since he was probably working on the completion of Roman Forgeries until 1673, it seems reasonably certain that Christian Ethicks did not take its final shape until after that date, and that it was written with great rapidity over the course of little more than a year.

Although the dates of composition listed above are not all conclusively proven, it seems reasonably certain that no more accurate chronology can be established with the evidence we now have. Should another new manuscript come to light, as the Osborn manuscript did in 1964, we might learn more. Without such aid, though, we will have to rely on educated guesswork, a device which often provides amazingly accurate results.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

This thesis, as I pointed out in my preface, is a preliminary examination of Traherne's intellectual background, intended to provide a starting point for further, more detailed investigation of various aspects of Traherne's works. For this reason, I have chosen to include this select bibliography of the significant writings by or about Traherne. The following list includes what I consider to be the most valuable work about the man under discussion here. I have omitted many insignificant books and articles, and have probably failed to mention many of the unpublished theses and articles that exist; but I have attempted to include in this bibliography not only material which I found useful in my investigation, but also works that might prove of use to persons wishing to make a more detailed examination of topics I have either treated lightly or omitted completely in the preceding thesis.<sup>1</sup>

### I. Primary Sources:

#### 1. Manuscripts:

##### a. Bodleian Library, Oxford:

Bodleian MS Eng. poet. c. 42: The Poems and the "Commonplace Book". (This manuscript is often called the Dobell Folio.)

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid unnecessary duplication, I have included in this listing all the material I have used in my thesis. This select bibliography is intended to serve the dual purpose of providing a bibliography for the preceding thesis and a starting point for further investigation of Traherne.

Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 50: The Centuries.

Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 51: The "Church's  
Year-Book".

Bodleian MS Lat. misc. f. 45: The "Early  
Notebook".

b. British Museum, London:

Burney MS 126: The "Ficino Notebook".

Burney MS 392: Philip's copy of "Poems of  
Felicity".

c. The Osborn Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale:

The Osborn MS: "Select Meditations", "Meditation  
on Love", and the "Disquisition on the Soul".

2. Editions of Traherne's Works:

Centuries, ed. H. Vaughan. London: Faith Press,  
1960.

Centuries, ed. J. Ferrar. New York: Harpers, 1960.

Centuries of Meditations, ed. B. Dobell. London:  
Dobell, 1908.

Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings, ed H. M.  
Margoliouth. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press,  
1958.

Christian Ethicks; or divine Morality, opening the  
Way to Blessedness, by the Rules of Virtue and  
Reason. London: Jonathan Edwin, 1675.

Collection of Meditations and Devotions in Three  
Parts, A. London, Nathaniel Spinckes, 1717.  
(The work contains Traherne's Hexameron as  
part I, his Meditations and Devotions on the  
Life of Christ as part II, and the Daily Devotions,  
in which he had some part, as part III.)

Daily Devotions, consisting of Thanksgivings  
Confessions and Prayers, by an Humble Peni-  
tant. London: Jonathan Edwin, 1673.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Although the "Humble Penitent" is probably Susanna Hopton, Wade points out (p. 129ff) that Traherne had at least some part in the composition of the work.

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Poems of Felicity, ed. H. I. Bell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910. (This is an edition based on Philip's version of Thomas' poems.)

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Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, B. D., ed. B. Dobell. London: Dobell, 1903. (This is an edition of the poems found in Bodleian MS Eng. poet. c. 42.)

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Serious and Pathetical Contemplation of the Mercies of God in several most devout and sublime thanksgivings for same, A. London: printed by Samuel Keble for Dr. Hickes, 1699.

Serious and Pathetical Contemplation for the Mercies of God in several most devout and sublime thanksgivings for same, A, ed. R. Daniells. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1941.

Soul's Communion with her Savior, The. London, 1685. (This work is Philip's "reduced" version of Thomas' Meditations and Devotions on the Life of Christ.)

Way to Blessedness, The, ed. M. Bottrall. London: Faith Press, 1962. (This is a modernized spelling edition of Traherne's Christian Ethicks. Although it is a rather poor edition of the work, it is the only complete modern edition available.)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In a letter to the author on May 19, 1965, Miss C. L. Marks pointed out that her edition of Christian Ethicks will be published later this year as one of the volumes in the Cornell Studies in English series.

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tus, together with . . . Asclepius, tr. Dr John  
Everard. London, 1657. (This edition differs  
little from the 1650 edition, the main difference  
lying in the addition of the Asclepius to the  
latter edition. Traherne used the 1657 edition.)

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of Vnbeliefe, Misbeliefe, or Mispersuasions concern-  
ing the Veritie, Vnitie, and Attributes of the Deitie:  
with Directions for Rectifying our Beliefe or Knowledge  
in the Fore-mentioned Points. London, 1625.

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Attributes. The first Part. London, 1628.

She also indicated that Dr Guffey, an enthusiastic Traherne scholar in California, is interested in publishing the CPB and CYB, and that his edition of Traherne's Centuries is in the press and will be issued soon by the Augustan Reprint Society.

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