

THE WORKS OF
THOMAS TRAHERNE ❧ V

*Centuries of Meditations and
Select Meditations*

Edited by Jan Ross

THE WORKS OF THOMAS TRAHERNE

Volume V

Thomas Traherne (1637?–1674), a clergyman of the Church of England during the Restoration, was little known until the early twentieth century, when his poetry and *Centuries of Meditations* were first printed. There have been since only miscellaneous publications of his poetry and devotional writings.

The Works of Thomas Traherne brings together for the first time all Traherne's extant works, including his notebooks, in a definitive, printed edition. The six works in this volume are taken from two manuscripts. The first, held at the Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford (MS Eng. th. e. 50), contains *Centuries of Meditations*; the other, held at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (Osborn MS b. 308), is comprised of three works by Traherne, *Select Meditations* and two brief untitled treatises, 'Being a Lover of the world' and 'The best principle whereby a man can Steer his course'. It also includes two works by an unidentified writer, *A Prayer for Ash Wednesday* and *A Meditation*; neither is of Traherne's making.

THE WORKS OF THOMAS TRAHERNE

Volume V

Centuries of Meditations

Select Meditations

With miscellaneous works from the Osborn manuscript

Edited by
JAN ROSS

D. S. BREWER

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First published 2013
D. S. Brewer, Cambridge

ISBN 978 1 84384 327 6

D. S. Brewer is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
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Designed and typeset in Monotype Ehrhardt by
The Stingray Office, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CRO 4YY

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For Steve, Anne and Natalie

General Preface

Thomas Traherne (1637–1674) left a substantial body of work, primarily in manuscript form, when he died before the age of forty. He published only one work during his lifetime, *Roman Forgeries* (1673), and prepared for the press *Christian Ethicks*, which appeared posthumously in 1675. He remained for the most part unknown until Bertram Dobell published his poems and *Centuries of Meditations* in the early twentieth century. The story of the discovery of Traherne's manuscripts is well known, beginning in 1896/97 when William Brooke chanced upon a group of manuscripts of Traherne's works in both prose and poetry. Included among them were the *Centuries* and what is now known as the Dobell Folio, which contains Traherne's autograph poems and the Commonplace Book.¹ In 1910 H. I. Bell found and published Philip Traherne's hand-written edition of Thomas's poems, *Poems of Felicity*.² In 1964 James Osborn unexpectedly found the manuscript containing the *Select Meditations*.³ This was followed in 1981 by the identification of Traherne's *Commentaries of Heaven* by Elliot Rose.⁴ It was not until 1996–7 that other Traherne manuscripts were discovered. 'The Ceremonial Law', a poem of 1,800 lines, was identified as Traherne's by Laetitia Yeandle with the assistance of Julia Smith.⁵ In the spring of 1997, Jeremy Maule found yet another Traherne manuscript,⁶ consisting of four more works plus a fragment.

¹ See Bertram Dobell, ed., *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, B.D. 1636?–1674* (London, 1903; repr. 1906); and *Centuries of Meditations* (London, 1908).

² See H. I. Bell, ed., *Traherne's Poems of Felicity* (Oxford, 1910).

³ 'A New Traherne Manuscript', *The Times Literary Supplement* (October 8, 1964): 928.

⁴ 'A New Traherne Manuscript', *The Times Literary Supplement* (March 19, 1982): 324.

⁵ 'Felicity disguised in fiery Words: Genesis and Exodus in a Newly Discovered Poem by Thomas Traherne', *The Times Literary Supplement* (November 7, 1997): 17.

⁶ Denise Inge and Calum MacFarlane, 'Seeds of Eternity: A New Traherne Manuscript', *The Times Literary Supplement* (June 2, 2000): 14.

There are no doubt other missing notebooks and perhaps poems and treatises, as references in some of his works suggest.

There has been no attempt to gather all Traherne's extant works into a uniform, printed edition, with the purpose of giving a sense of the manuscript or printed originals. The primary purpose of this edition, therefore, is to present a definitive printed text of all of Traherne's extant works, both published and unpublished. In his 1903 introduction to Traherne's poems, Dobell wrote that 'there is a picturesqueness, a beauty, and a life about the manuscripts which is lost in the cold regularity of type',⁷ to which Peter Beal has added that Traherne's texts 'should be edited according to manuscript, rather than according to individual "work" as defined by modern editors', since 'the MS is "the work"'.⁸ This edition will present Traherne's texts by manuscript insofar as possible, giving due attention to the physical aspects and integrity of the manuscripts themselves, hoping to bring the reader as close as possible in a printed format to the manuscript originals and to the distinctive quality of Traherne's writings. His printed works will be edited with the same intention.

The text of Traherne's works will be printed in seven volumes, with an eighth volume of commentary, which will include a brief biography of Traherne and short essays about his influences, sources and seventeenth-century contexts as well as an index to the preceding volumes. Annotations in the separate volumes will be limited to textual notes, biblical references and immediately essential commentary. The arrangement of Traherne's works within the seven volumes is not an attempt to represent them chronologically, since their dates are uncertain.

Added to the eight volumes will be a supplemental volume nine, containing Traherne's notebooks, which consist primarily of extracts from other writers as well as undergraduate lecture notes. It will include its own introduction, annotations, glossary and index as well as translations of Latin and shorthand. Although separate from the eight volumes of Traherne's works, it will form a crucial part of the edition as a whole, increasing our understanding of his reading and breadth of knowledge as well as his early learning.

⁷ *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, B.D.*, pp. lxxiii–lxxiv.

⁸ See *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. II: 1625–1700, Part 2, compiled by Peter Beal (London and New York: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1993), p. 482.

Acknowledgements

Very special thanks are due to the staff of the Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford, for their kind assistance and good will in my work with the manuscript of the *Centuries of Meditations* and for allowing me to print the whole of it as well as giving me permission to reproduce the plates. I am grateful to Mr. Colin Harris, Superintendent, Special Collections Reading Room, and especially to Dr. B. C. Barker-Benfield, Senior Assistant Librarian, Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, who went out of his way several times to answer questions about the physical aspects of the manuscript. I am indebted also to the staff of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, for their competent and ready assistance throughout my work with Osborn MS b. 308 and for permission to publish the contents of the manuscript and to reproduce the plates for Volume V. I also owe a special thanks to Diane J. Ducharme, Archivist, and Kathryn James, Assistant Curator, for their kindness and ready attention while I was working at the Beinecke and for providing me with photocopies from the curatorial files. Warm thanks go also to Naomi Saito and Moira Fitzgerald, who provided me with photocopies from the James Marshall Osborn correspondence. A hearty thanks are also due to the staff of the Munby Rare Books reading room of the Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England, for their generous and efficient help in my research for the Introduction. Thank you also to Jeffrey Dean for his help with Greek and questions of style as well as his thoughtful typesetting of the text, and to Jacob Blevins for help with Latin. I owe also a continuing debt of gratitude to Stephen Taylor, Andrew Chandler, and Anne Lamb; and always to Allen for his constancy in encouragement and help.

Abbreviations

AV	Authorized Version of the Bible
Beinecke	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut
Bodleian	The Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford
Brooke's account	William T. Brooke's account of the discovery of Thomas Traherne's manuscripts: 'The Story of the Traherne MSS. by their Finder.'
<i>C/Centuries</i>	<i>Centuries of Meditations</i>
<i>CE/Ethicks</i>	<i>Christian Ethicks; or, Divine Morality</i> (1675)
<i>Commentaries/CH</i>	<i>Commentaries of Heaven</i>
<i>CYB</i>	<i>Church's Year-Book</i>
Dobell Folio	Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c. 42, includes Traherne's autograph poems and Commonplace Book
Edn.	Edition
Fol./fols.	Folio(s)
<i>Inducements</i>	<i>Inducements to Retirednes</i>
<i>Kingdom</i>	<i>The Kingdom of God</i>
MS/MSS	Manuscript(s)
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OSB/Osborn	unless otherwise stated, refers to James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut
Repr.	Reprint
<i>Seeds of Eternity</i>	<i>Seeds of Eternity or the Nature of he Soul in which Everlasting Powers are Prepared.</i>
<i>SM</i>	<i>Select Meditations</i> , from Osborn MS b. 308
<i>A Sober View</i>	<i>A Sober View of Dr Twisses his Considerations. With a Compleat Disquisition of Dr Hammonds Letter to Dr Sanderson. And a Prospect of all their Opinions Concerning GODs Decrees.</i>

Introduction

The six works in this volume are taken from two manuscripts. One, held at the Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford, MS Eng. th. e. 50, contains *Centuries of Meditations*; the other, held at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Osborn MS b. 308, comprises three works by Thomas Traherne, *Select Meditations* and two brief untitled treatises, 'Being a Lover of the world' and 'The best principle whereby a man can Steer his course'. It includes also 'A Prayer for Ash Wednesday' and 'A Meditation', which are not of Traherne's making and the identity of the author is unknown. *Centuries of Meditations* and *Select Meditations* are probably the best known of Traherne's works;¹ they are both written as Centuries, short, numbered passages, often designated as 'chapters' or 'texts', arranged into sets of one hundred.

The Century as a literary form

The literary form of the Century emerged with the monastic writers and collectors of spiritual and moral sentences for the purpose of teaching and meditation during the fourth and fifth centuries. Evagrius Ponticos, also known as 'Evagrius the Solitary' (c.346–399), was the first to number and arrange his sentences into groups, often of a hundred, under the name of Century.² The form continued to be

¹ Both *Centuries of Meditations* and *Select Meditations* were published during the twentieth century; see Bertram Dobell, ed., *Centuries of Meditations* (London: Dobell, 1908); H. M. Margoliouth, ed., *Thomas Traherne, Centuries, Poems and Thanksgivings*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958; repr. 1965, 1972); Anne Ridler, ed., *Thomas Traherne: Poems, Centuries and Three Thanksgivings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); Julia J. Smith, ed., *Select Meditations* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 1997). This is the first appearance in print however of the four short works at the end of the Osborn manuscript. It is also the first printing of both the *Centuries* and *Select Meditations* in a single volume.

² For instance *The Praktikos* and *Six Centuries*. Evagrius is also rendered as Evagrius. See Evagrius Ponticus, *The Praktikos & Chapters on Prayer*, Cistercian

used by such writers as Diadochos of Photiki (c.400–486),³ Nikitas Stithatos (c.1000–1092),⁴ and is probably best known through the Greek ascetic writings of Saint Maximos the Confessor (c.580–662), *Four Hundred Texts on Love* and *Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God*.⁵ The form of the Century is well suited to the organization of the complexities of spiritual experience, which often eludes logical argument or analysis, in that it provides short, concise, independent passages, each with a logic and wholeness of its own but also related to the other ninety-nine texts as John Bamberger explains:

In some sense the Century has no beginning and no end. Its construction is not based on the line of logical development but follows more complex psychological laws, and perhaps at times follows no law at all. This gives the over-all effect of approaching the same topic from different points of view or aspects, looking at it now from one side, now from another. It sets the truth before one as an object to encounter, to penetrate, to assimilate, rather than an element of a complete logical analysis. Each separate sentence exists independently from one point of view, but at the same time it has a relationship with each of the ninety-nine other sentences which lend various shades of meaning to it.⁶

Such passages are easily memorized and called to mind for meditation. In his Prologue to *Four Hundred Texts on Love*, Saint Maximos summarizes the form and purpose of the Century:

Studies Series, no. 4, tr. and ed. John Eudes Bamberger, OCSO (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1981). Evagrius referred to his numbered sentences as Centuries whether or not they comprised one hundred. See Bamberger, pp. lxx–lxxi.

³ See *On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination: One Hundred Texts*, in *The Philokalia*, tr. and ed. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware, 4 vols. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1983–98), Vol. 1, pp. 251–96.

⁴ See *On the Practice of the Virtues: One Hundred Texts* and *On Spiritual Knowledge, Love and the Perfection of Living: One Hundred Texts* in *The Philokalia*, Vol. IV, pp. 76–174.

⁵ See *The Philokalia*, Vol. II, pp. 52–163. See also St Thalassios the Libyan, a personal friend of St Maximos, *On Love, Self-Control and Life in Accordance with the Intellect*, written in four Centuries, *The Philokalia*, Vol. II, pp. 306–32. Many Centuries in *The Philokalia* are addressed to friends and monks at their request; for instance St Maximos wrote his Centuries on *Love* to Elpidios the Presbyter and those on *Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God* to Thalassios. Saint Maximos is also rendered as Saint Maximus.

⁶ Bamberger, p. lxx.

I am . . . sending you . . . this treatise on love divided, on the analogy of the four Gospels, into four centuries of chapters . . . I have gone through the writings of the holy fathers and collected from them passages relevant to my subject, condensing much material into short paragraphs and in this way making it easy to remember and to assimilate . . . I beg you read them with sympathy . . . overlooking the inelegant language.⁷

The literary form of the Century was prevalent among the Eastern Church fathers as the works in *The Philokalia*⁸ demonstrate. In the sixteenth century Nostradamus (1503–1566) found it a fitting pattern for his *Prophecies*,⁹ where the texts of each Century are rhymed quatrains; and in the seventeenth century Francis Quarles (1592–1644), whose works Traherne knew,¹⁰ used it for his *Enchiridion* (1641), which imitates closely the literary ideal of numbered sentences arranged

⁷ See *The Philokalia*, Vol. II, p. 52. See also *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings*, tr. George C. Berthold, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985), 'where overlooking the inelegant language' is translated 'a style which lacks charm', p. 35. See C IV. 94, 'Perhaps they might be cast into Better frame, and more Curiously Exprest' (p. 183), which demonstrates Traherne's concern about literary form, style and language.

⁸ Compiled by two Greek monks in the eighteenth century, St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain of Athos (1749–1809) and St Makarios of Corinth (1731–1805), *The Philokalia* is a collection of the writings of the spiritual masters of the Orthodox (or Eastern) Christian tradition written during the fourth to the fifteenth centuries.

⁹ See *Nostradamus and His Prophecies*, tr. and ed. Edgar Leoni (New York: Bell Publishing Company, 1982) and *Nostradamus: The Prophecies*, tr. and ed. Richard Sieburth, and ed. Stéphane Gerson (New York: Penguin Hardback Classics, 2012). *The Prophecies* of Nostradamus, or Michel de Nostredame, was refuted by scholar and mathematician Pierre Gassendi, *The Vanity of Judicary Astrology; or, Divination by the Stars* (1659). The complete *Prophecies* was translated into English in 1672 by Theophilus de Garencières. See also Theophilus Gale, *The Court of the Gentiles*, Part II, 'Of Philosophie' (London, 1669), and Carol L. Marks and George Robert Guffey, eds., *Christian Ethicks* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 367 n. 239. 13–14.

¹⁰ See the Early Notebook (Bodleian MS Lat. misc. fol. 45) where Traherne copies various lines from Quarles's *Sion Sonets* (1625): two couplets (fol. 184) from Sonet iii, 'What e're I have' and vii, 'Oh how injurious' and two stanzas (fol. 185) from Sonet iii, 'As fragrant Mirrhe', and Sonet ix, 'What greater Joy' as well as a quatrain (fol. 189) from the *Meditatio Prima of Hadassa; or, the History of Queen Esther* (1621), 'To bee a Monarch'. See also Anne Ridler, 'Traherne: Some Wrong Attributions', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s. 18 (1967): 48–9.

into *Centuries* specifically for instruction as used by Evagrius and Maximos.¹¹

Literary form and purpose

Traherne's choice of the form of the *Century* as the organizing principle for his meditations was carefully considered and well suited to his purpose.¹² In *Centuries of Meditations*, written perhaps sometime during the late 1660s or early 1670s,¹³ he wished to administer 'Physick' in order to comfort, refresh and delight, not burden or overwhelm, his audience with lengthy theological discourse, as he writes: 'As a Deep Friendship meditates and intends the Deepest Designs for the Advancement of its Objects, so doth it Shew it self in chusing the Sweetest and most Delightfull Methods, wherby not to Weary, but Pleas the Person, it desireth to advance. Where Lov administers Physick, its Tenderness is exprest in Balms and Cordials' (C I. 4). The *Century* offered Traherne a way of concise theological explication without diminishing the concrete and complex nature of his subject. The visual aspect of numbering short texts served also to advance his desire to 'recover' the 'Principles of Upright Nature' and to 'Exhibit them again to the Eys of Men' (C IV. 54), the very method being essential to his purpose.

Although we do not know the identity of Traherne's immediate audience, *Centuries of Meditations* is specifically addressed to a 'friend', who gave him an empty book and asked him to fill it, and is personal

¹¹ See Francis Quarles (1592–1644), *Enchiridion: Containing Institutions Divine: Contemplative. Practical; Morall: Ethicall. Oeconomicall. Politicall* (London, 1654). Quarles's *Enchiridion* was written for and dedicated to Charles, Prince of Wales 'as Rudiments to ripen (and they will ripen) with your growing youth, if they but feele the Sunshine of your gracious eye' (sig. A4); not only does he designate the numbered sections as 'chapters', but many of his 'institutions' contain borrowed material from such writers as Bacon and Machiavelli. See also Karl Josef Hölzgen's article on Quarles in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Vol. XLV.

¹² Margoliouth (pp. x–xi) suggests that Traherne was not aware he was writing *Centuries* until the end of the Second *Century*. This however is untenable, especially in light of *Select Meditations*, an earlier work. Margoliouth wrote before its discovery.

¹³ Carol Marks dates the *Centuries* c.1670 (CE, p. xiii, n. 3).

as well as pedagogic with an epistolary quality.¹⁴ By short concise passages Traherne will unfold 'those Truths you Love, without knowing them' (C I. 1) and teach glorious principles that will impart lustre and delight, for 'you must hav Glorious Principles implanted in your Nature; a clear Eye able to see afar off, A Great and Generous Heart, Apt to Enjoy at any Distance: a Good and Liberal Soul Prone to Delight in the Felicity of all, and an infinit Delight to be their Treasure . . . it more concerneth you to be an Illustrious Creature, then to hav the Possession of the whole World' (C I. 38). Like Saint Maximos, Traherne expected his numbered paragraphs to be read seriously and the principles remembered and assimilated: 'These Principles are like Seed in the Ground, they must continually be visited with Heavenly Influences, or els your Life will be a Barren feild. Perhaps they might be cast into Better frame, and more Curiously Exprest; but if well Cultivated they will be as fruitfull, as if evry Husk were a Golden Rinde' (C IV. 94).

In *Select Meditations* the form of the Century gave Traherne an opportunity to examine a range of public and private concerns: the state of the nation, his choice of vocation as well as questions about holiness, society and solitude.¹⁵ It is no doubt a work earlier than *Centuries of Meditations* and anticipates it as well as *Christian Ethicks*.¹⁶

It may have been written over an indefinite period of time, starting shortly after the Restoration in 1660. It is likely that most of it was written sometime during the mid-seventeenth century after Traherne's subscription to the Act of Uniformity (1662), while he was serving as rector of the church of St Mary at Credenhill, Herefordshire.¹⁷ Parts

¹⁴ Note the direct address beginning at C I. 1, 'And since Love made you put it into my Hands . . . To you, in Communicating most *Enriching Truths*'. See also the reference to 'my excellent friend' in meditation 80 of the first century, the whole of which has been crossed through for deletion.

¹⁵ See Sharon C. Seelig, 'The Origins of Ecstasy: Traherne's "Select Meditations"', *English Literary Renaissance*, 9 (Autumn 1979): 419–31, for a discussion of dating the manuscript as well as the differences between *Select Meditations* and the *Centuries*.

¹⁶ See specifically *SM* iv. 56–68. To Seelig it 'represents an earlier stage of Traherne's development' both theologically and stylistically (p. 421). Smith dates the work 'not long after 1660' (pp. xiii–xiv).

¹⁷ See *SM* i. 85: 'Thou hast . . . Established thy word and worship by Laws, Buildest thy Selfe Temples, and Apoynted Revenues for thy church and Ministers, Greatly are the Bishops [of] our Saviour Dignified, and our Cittys Beautified with those thy most Glorious and Beautifull Houses . . . But O the Wickedness of Ignorant Zealots! who Contemn thy Mercies and Despise the union the Beautifull union of my Nationall church! . . . O lord when our citties

read like a national lament with intercessory prayers similar to those of the Old Testament prophets Isaiah, Nehemiah and Jeremiah as well as several Psalms, such as 74, 80 and 26.¹⁸ Because the manuscript book is missing the initial eighty meditations, we do not know if Traherne began with the tone of unease and contrition present in several parts of *Select Meditations*, nor do we know if it was addressed to a specific person, or if it represents private meditations only. Traherne's mention of his Happiness being disguised 'with Lamentations for his people' and his 'Awful Dread' of God's 'Great Judgments which have So latly happened' (*SM* II. 42) suggests a time between 1664 and 1667, during which England saw the outbreak of the second Dutch War (1664),¹⁹ the plague (1665), the fire of London (1666) and France's declaration of war on England (1666). It was a time of humiliation, defeat and discouragement for England, as Tim Harris writes:

The war of 1664–7 against the Dutch (and also, from 1666, the French) went humiliatingly badly: much of the English fleet was destroyed, and colonial possessions were lost, while in June 1667 came the ultimate disgrace when the Dutch fleet managed to sail up the Medway to Chatham and destroy four of the English

and Territories are united by Laws in the fear of thy Name: and are at one accord in Calling upon Thee; When they Move by Consent like an united Army. How Ravishing is their Beauty, How Sweet their Order! It is O my God as if the Nation had but one Soul.'

¹⁸ Many of Traherne's prayers in *Select Meditations* recall 'A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the NATION' in *Contemplation Of the Mercies of GOD*, with all its political implications: 'We have sinned with our Fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. / We understood not thy wonders, / Nor remembered the multitude of thy tender Mercies: / But provoked our God continually, / Both at Land and Sea. / Nevertheless he saved us for his own Name sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. / That we might see the Glory of his loving kindness; / And that the goodness of God might lead us to repentance. / But we have been all day long a stiff necked and rebellious people' (See Ross, Vol. IV, p. 421, line 38 – p. 422, line 7). N. I. Matar dates 'A Thanksgiving . . . NATION' at 'ca. 1667' after *SM* (see 'Prophetic Traherne: "A Thanksgiving and Prayer for the NATION"', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 81 (January 1982): 16–29).

¹⁹ Although the second Dutch war was not declared until 22 February 1665, there were hostilities between the English and Dutch as early as 1661, when Sir Robert Holmes was sent to take possession of Dutch holdings in West Africa, with the approval of the King and the Privy Council in 1662. The Dutch responded by seizing the Royal Company ships off West Africa and blockading the Gold Coast. See N. H. Keeble, *The Restoration: England in the 1660s* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 102.

navy's biggest vessels and capture the flagship, the *Royal Charles*. In the ensuing peace, England ceded Surinam, on the north-east coast of South America, to the Dutch, and had to acknowledge Dutch claims in West Africa and the East Indies.²⁰

Traherne's prayer at *SM* i. 82, couched in Biblical language, expresses his immediate public concerns, 'Save this Nation, Spare thy People, let me O Lord rejoyce in the felicity of thy chosen . . . let Thy Citties prosper, our vilages flourish . . . Soften our kings Heart, Teach our Senators Wisdom . . . giv not Thy Turtle Dove, the Beloved of thy Soul into the Enemies Hand . . . O Lord they . . . all are gon a way and refuse to return. They will not make Mention of thy loving kindness nor understand the Excellency of thy H. laws . . . nor Sing praises unto Thee, yet O Lord pardon us, and make us not a Desolation, nor an Astonishment in the Earth.'²¹

Against this backdrop of national distress Traherne reconciled himself to his vocation as priest and minister to 'a Degenerate and unrighteous world'; he understood his priestly vocation to be a 'fellow workman' with God, whose task was 'to Thirst and love and bear, and long to reclaime' (*SM* ii. 20).²² He fully accepted that he had been sent to teach the gospel: 'Especially I who have been Nourished at universities in Beautifull Streets and Famous colledges, and am Sent thither From God Almighty the maker of Heaven and Earth, to teach Immortal Souls the way to Heaven, to sanctifie his Sabbaths, to instruct them in his Laws Given upon Mount Sinay, and to shew them the Lov of a Glorious Saviour Slain upon mount Calvary: to Lead them by his Merrits to Eternal Joys' (*SM* iii. 83). However, he also expressed his own misgivings about the difficulties, even the dangers, of living closely in a small community or 'Congregation', for 'it is no Small matter to Dwell in Community or in a Congregation, and to Convers there without complaint, and to Persevere Faithfully in it untill Death

²⁰ See *Restoration: Charles II and his Kingdoms, 1660–1685* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 71. See also Keeble, pp. 102–5.

²¹ Smith (p. xiii) thinks such passages as *SM* i. 82 to be Traherne's memory 'of turmoils which preceded the Restoration' that remained fresh in his mind. She agrees with Seelig (p. 419, n. 3) that such lines as 'As long as our Nation continueth in peace' (i. 86) suggest *SM* 'was composed before the declaration of war on the Dutch'. Such references to 'peace' however do not necessarily mean the nation was at peace. See note 19 above. Concerning 'They will not make Mention' see Textual Emendations and Notes, 82. 25, p. 391.

²² See *SM* 3. 67 'As my work of calling others is Greater then to Enjoy. So ought my Care in that work.'

. . . And wheather Innocent or miserable it is a weighty thing to be conversant a mong them and not to Erre' (*SM* iv. 52). He knew also that in imitation of Christ, he was to minister with love and compassion, to be both in the world but a part from it: 'not to Follow their Opinion, not to be Provoked by their Censure, not to approve ones selfe to them, not to give them occasion of evill Speech, not to be swayed by their example, are Difficult Things, and He that passeth Thorrow all thes Bryers well, and is in e[v]ry moment prudent shall be more beautifull then if he had never Sinned nor been a mong them' (*SM* iv. 52).²³

Traherne was aware that holy resolve was fragile and easily disturbed if not destroyed; his concerns about holiness are directly related to those about society and the vanity of idle conversation that would draw him away from his devotion: 'That we are Soe Apt to take the seal of impression from a nothers Thoughts, and suffer them to steal us a way from our Kingdom, And by a Secret contagion, to Annihilate our Joys! To the Intent I may be more fixed therefore I will be more Silent when they talk of vanitie. And since I cannot accompany their Imaginations and the thoughts of God; I will either overrule their Souls or Depart the Company' (*SM* iii. 2). Traherne however was a lover of company and companionship, the theme of friendship being central to both the *Centuries* and *Select Meditations*: '*It is a Good Thing to be Happy alone*. It is better to be Happy in Company, but Good to be Happy alone. Men owe me the Advantage of their Society, but if they deny me that just Debt, I will not be unjust to my self, and side with them in bereaving me. I will not be Discouraged, least I be Miserable for Company. More Company increases Happiness, but does not lighten or Diminish Misery' (*C* iv. 14).²⁴

²³ See also *C* iv. 20: 'Blind wretches that wound themselves, offend me. I need therfore the Oyl of Pitty and the Balm of Lov to remedie and heal them. Did they see the Beauty of Holiness or the face of Happiness, they would not do so.'

²⁴ Traherne expresses the reciprocal influence of society and solitude in several of his works; see *Inducements to Retirednes*, 'Retirement is therfore Necessary to him, that Studieth Happiness . . . For in Retirement alone can a Man approach to that which is Infinit and Eternal . . . In Societie a Man may Discours of Excellent Things; if the Company be Excellent: but by Retirement, we are fitted for that Societie' (Ross, Vol. 1, pp. 5, lines 21–3, and 7, lines 75–6); and *Commentaries*, 'If one were alone in the World, it would be wors for him now then it was for Adam in Innocence for he is exposed to more Wants and Dangers. Besides the Misery of his Solitude . . . the general Barrenness of the Earth . . . would Quickly teach him the Good of Societie' (Ross, Vol. 11, p. 417, lines 107–13). See also *C* iv. 13.

Bodleian MS th. e. 50

The manuscript book contains a single work, *Centuries of Meditations*; it was bought by William Brooke along with the Dobell Folio,²⁵ which brought forward a hitherto unknown seventeenth-century writer, destined to flourish in the twentieth century. The *Centuries* was for some time overshadowed by Traherne's poetry but has now gained a prominent place among seventeenth-century spiritual devotions and meditations. It not only sets forth Traherne's private search for felicity but also shows him to be a perceptive and prudent spiritual teacher akin to the early church fathers. The manuscript is one of the most heavily emended of Traherne's manuscripts; this may suggest that despite its intimate and private quality, he was preparing it for publication, either in print or manuscript form, perhaps for circulation among friends, although this is uncertain.

Description of the physical manuscript

The manuscript was probably bought as a blank, bound book.²⁶ It is an octavo, measuring approximately 178 mm long × 120 mm wide × 26 mm deep and sewn on three recessed cords. It was rebound in the nineteenth century in red morocco leather with parts of what was perhaps the original seventeenth-century calf replaced over it. At the top, bottom and fore edges, both the morocco and calf turn into the inside of the boards at approximately 10–12 mm. The spine is lettered in gilt 'MSS. of Henry Vaughan Silurist', probably at the direction of Alexander Grosart,²⁷ who thought Vaughan to be the author.²⁸ The calf was

²⁵ See 'Brooke's Account', Appendix, pp. 471–4.

²⁶ See below C I. 1, 'An Empty Book is like an Infants Soul, in which any Thing may be Written. It is Capable of all Things, but containeth Nothing. I hav a Mind to fill this with Profitable Wonders. And since Love made you put it into my Hands, I will fill it with those Truths you Love, without knowing them.'

²⁷ Alexander Ballock Grosart (1827–1899), a Scottish Presbyterian minister and theologian, Elizabethan and Jacobean literary scholar, bibliophile and collector of rare books and manuscripts. He edited and reprinted works of puritan divines and seventeenth-century poets including *The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Henry Vaughan, Silurist* (The Fuller Worthies' Library, 1891).

²⁸ Henry Vaughan (1621–1695), often referred to as 'Silurist' (Silures, ancient people of south-east Wales), a poet, writer and translator of devotional works; *Silex Scintillans* (1650 and 1655) is his most well-known work of poetry.

tooled on both boards with double gilt lines at the top, bottom, gutter and fore edges, forming a rectangle measuring approximately 170 mm × 110 mm, with a decorative flourish attached at each of the inner corners. Most of the decoration has been worn by age and use. Although there is evidence of previous, perhaps original, paste-downs, there are none now on either board. On the front board, approximately 61 mm from the top, is written in graphite 'pp 174'; and at the middle of the back board is a list of accounts in graphite.

The text of the manuscript book consists of one type of paper approximately 173 mm long × 112 mm wide, with four or five vertical chain-lines per leaf. The watermark form is partially visible at the bottom gutter of the leaf and can be tentatively described as having a crown at the top with a rounded bottom, formed by elaborate curling with the letters 'Advrani' printed inside a rectangle and attached by a cross.²⁹ There is modern foliation throughout in graphite.

Eighty-seven leaves contain text, folios 5^r to 91^r, with three preliminary leaves and fifty blank leaves after folio 91 with a total of 140 leaves. Folios 3^v, 4 and 87^v are also blank; folio 91^v is blank except for the number eleven written at the top of the page in ink similar to that of the majority of the text in the manuscript, indicating perhaps that Traherne planned to continue the fifth century of his meditations. Four leaves have been excised: one each between folios 33 and 34, 66 and 67, 80 and 81, and 86 and 87. Folio 87 has been excised at about one third from the top (approximately 62 mm) immediately after the title, 'The Fifth Century', leaving also a stub at the gutter of approximately 10 mm. The title is repeated at the top of folio 88^r. Two leaves are unnumbered: one between folios 112 and 113 and one after folio 139. Both the first (fol. 1) and last (fol. 140 ult) leaves are free end papers probably added when the manuscript was rebound; they are of a thicker paper with seven horizontal chain-lines each. Neither leaf is part of a gathering, and both appear to have been glued to the nearest leaf. Including the free end leaves (fols. 1 and 140 ult) the manuscript contains 142 leaves. Folio 2 was perhaps the original first leaf; it is torn and mended, with staining on the top, bottom and fore edges, corresponding to the outline of the calf on the inside of the front board, most of which has been removed; it may have been used as the front board paste-down, which was removed and then reattached to the first

²⁹ Identified as a coat of arms; see nos. 104 and 106 and nos. 678 and 661 in Edward Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hilversum: The Paper Publications Society, 1950).

quire when the presentation quatrain was written; this would account for the tearing and deep staining. The eighth leaf of the last quire (seven leaves) may have been used as the paste-down for the back board³⁰ and is now missing. The staining on the last leaf (fol. 140 ult) corresponds to the nineteenth-century morocco. The unnumbered leaf after folio 139 has slight staining, corresponding to the outlines of the calf on the inside of the board, most of which has been removed.

The collation of the manuscript is irregular;³¹ there appear to be fourteen gatherings of eight leaves each (folios 10–79 and 87–125) with sewing between the fourth and fifth leaves. Six leaves are glued together, suggesting that one or both may have been added: leaves 2 and 3, 9 and 10 and 133 and 134. Folio 10, conjugate with folio 17, is a part of the second quire.³² The first (eight leaves, folios 2–9), seventeenth (eight leaves, folios 126–33) and eighteenth (seven leaves, folios 134 – unnumbered leaf) quires are uncertain.³³ There is also an irregular gathering beginning at folio 80: folios 81–6 comprise a gathering of six leaves; however folios 80 and 86 are followed by excised leaves with a portion of a stub remaining.³⁴

The recto side of the first folio, originally blank, contains the following note: ‘This volume is the original manuscript / of Thomas Traherne’s ‘Centuries of / Meditation’. It was once in the hands of / the Rev. A. B. Grosart, who had persued himself that it was written by / Henry Vaughan, and who therefore / had it lettered on the back as it / now appears. / I need not say that I consider this to be a most precious manuscript. / It should be in the Brit. Museum, to /

³⁰ Collation is as follows: fol. 134, loose; fol. 135, conjugate with unnumbered leaf; fol. 136, conjugate with fol. 139; fol. 137, conjugate with fol. 138.

³¹ See Appendix, pp. 475–9, for collation of the manuscript.

³² Collation of the first two quires is as follows: first quire: fol. 2 glued to fol. 3; fol. 4 conjugate with fol. 7; fol. 5, sewing, conjugate with fol. 6; fol. 8 may be loose or perhaps attached to fol. 3; fol. 9 glued to fol. 10; second quire: fol. 10 conjugate with fol. 17; fol. 11 conjugate with fol. 16; fol. 12 conjugate with fol. 15; fol. 13 sewing, conjugate with fol. 14.

³³ Collation of the seventeenth and eighteenth quires is as follows: seventeenth quire: fol. 126 perhaps conjugate with fol. 133 (glued to fol. 134); fol. 127 conjugate with fol. 132; fol. 128 conjugate with fol. 131; fol. 129 conjugate with fol. 130; eighteenth quire: fol. 134 (glued to fol. 133) perhaps a loose leaf; fol. 135 conjugate with unnumbered leaf; fol. 136 conjugate with fol. 139; fol. 137 conjugate with fol. 138.

³⁴ The pattern is as follows: fol. 80, excised leaf, fols. 81, 82, 83, sewing, 84, 85, 86, excised leaf. Because of the way the manuscript has been foliated, fols. 80–86 could mistakenly be considered as a gathering of seven leaves with leaf 8 missing.

which after I have printed its / contents I intend to offer it. / Bertram Dobell'.³⁵ Under Dobell's note (folio 1^r) is the class mark (Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 50) and the Bodleian Library purchase date in graphite, 'P. 25. XI. 50'.³⁶ The verso side of the first folio contains the following note perhaps in Grosart's script, '84 leaves 168 pp / would make a vol: of / 250 pages?'.

Folio 2^r contains an inscription:³⁷ 'This book unto the friend of my best friend / As of the Wisest Love a Mark I send / That she may write my Makers prais therin / And make her self therby a Cherubin'.³⁸ It

³⁵ Bertram Dobell (1842–1914), Charing Cross Road bookseller and self-made literary scholar with interest in books printed for private circulation, is best known for his part in identifying Thomas Traherne as author of the poetry and *Centuries* found by William Brooke in 1896/7. See 'Brooke's Account', Appendix, pp. 467–70, as well as Dobell's Introduction in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, B.D. 1636?–1674: Now First Published from the Original Manuscripts* (London, 1903), pp. lxxxiv–xcii. Upon Bertram Dobell's death the manuscript passed to his son Percy J. Dobell, from whom the Bodleian Library purchased it in 1950.

³⁶ The date of 1950 corresponds to the date recorded in graphite on folio ii^r of the *Church's Year-Book* (Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 51) and on folio i^r of the Dobell Folio (Bodleian MS Eng. poet. c. 42). According to Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield, Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, 1950 is the correct purchase date. The *Summary Catalogue of Post-Medieval Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: Acquisitions 1916–1975*, compiled by Mary Clapinson and T. D. Rogers, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), mistakenly records that the Traherne manuscripts listed under nos. 46709–12 (pp. 736–7) were 'bought from P. J. Dobell, 1952'.

³⁷ The inscription appears at folio 2^r about mid-page; above it are barely legible notations in the following descending order: Remember the [Stone?] / & [perhaps 'Chri' deleted] [Calvary?] / I [can?] / I / [from?].

³⁸ Margoliouth (Vol. I, p. x) refers to it as a 'presentation quatrain' and writes that 'the new blank notebook had been given to Traherne by the person for whom he wrote the *Centuries* (I. I, line 4). Now he returns it to her that she may use the forty-nine blank leaves for her own writing. In spite of the "11" on 91^v, Traherne had decided that he had finished the work of instruction and could now send it off' (Margoliouth, Vol. I, p. 234). Gladys Wade suggests Traherne stopped working due to 'the final fatal illness of September 1674', for which there is no evidence; see *Thomas Traherne* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 188. On the basis of textual changes between *The Approach* in the Dobell Folio (folio 6^r) and the poem at C III. 4, Margoliouth (Vol. II, p. 346) concludes that 'the manuscript of *Centuries* is earlier than D [Dobell Folio] and is therefore not the work of Traherne's last year'. Following Wade (pp. 181–3), Margoliouth (Vol. I, p. 234) concludes the 'best friend' to be God and the 'friend' Susanna Hopton, which has been challenged by Julia Smith, 'Susanna Hopton: A Biographical Account', *Notes and Queries*, 263 (March, 1991): 165–72.

appears to be in Traherne's script in a light, watery brown ink, different from that of most of the text. It was probably added later and written somewhat perfunctorily. It is ambiguous and difficult to draw a definitive conclusion from it. On folio 2^v is a catalogue of headings on the subject of blessedness, similar to the catalogues of the *Contemplation of the Mercies of God*; they are particularly germane to both 'Thanksgivings for the Blessedness of his *LAW*S' and *Christian Ethicks: or Divine Morality*.³⁹

Of the Signes of Blessedness
 Of the Objects of Blessedness
 Of the Causes of Bless[edness]
 Of the Laws of Bless[edness]
 Of the Qualifications of a Blessed man
 Of the Effects of Blessedness
 Of the Maner how Blessedness is to be enjoyed

	God
Of the Blessedness of	Angels
	Men.
	Magistrates
	Ministers
Of the Blessedness of	Physicians
	Lawyers
	Soldiers
	Marriners
	Artificers
	Rich &
	Poor.

The title *Centuries of Meditations* appears at folio 3^r. On the unnumbered leaf between folios 139 and 140 is written in ink perhaps by Dobell: 'Poems 3 century 4 - 19 - 21 - 26 - 47 - 49 - 50 - 69', which refers to poetry in the Third Century.

Identification of scripts

The text of the *Centuries* appears to be written entirely in Thomas Traherne's script, which varies a good deal throughout. The revisions are also Traherne's but perhaps made some time after the writing of

³⁹ See Ross, Vol. iv, pp. 375-85, and Marks, *Christian Ethicks*, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

the text. Bertram Dobell is responsible for the note at folio 1^r, and Alexander Grossart probably wrote the note at folio 1^v.

Provenance of the manuscript

The manuscript of the *Centuries of Meditations* may have belonged to Philip Traherne, who had possession of some of Thomas's other books and manuscripts. It was owned by William T Brooke,⁴⁰ who laid it aside for further investigation until it was brought to mind by correspondence with Grosart, to whom he sold it for £5.⁴¹ At Sotheby's auction of Grosart's book and manuscript collection, 11–12 December 1899,⁴² the Farringdon Road bookseller, Mr Charles Higham, purchased it, perhaps one of the items in lots 443–6.⁴³ Bertram Dobell subsequently bought it from Higham at the urging of William Brooke.⁴⁴ It may have been earlier in possession of a 'Ledbury' collector by the name of Skipp (Skip/Skippe?) of Upper Hall, Ledbury, Herefordshire,⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Brooke bought the *Centuries* either 'in Whitechapel, or in the Farringdon road'. He apparently did not examine it or compare it with other purchases. We do not know how long the manuscript was in his possession.

⁴¹ See 'Brooke's Account', Appendix, p. 472, 'Dr Grosart offered £5, for the folio manuscript . . . and he at once secured the second manuscript at the same price'. For correspondence between Grosart and Brooke, see Bodleian MS Dobell c. 56; see also Ross, Vol. iv, pp. xxii–xxiv.

⁴² See *Catalogue of a Collection of Books and Manuscripts, including Portions of the Libraries of the late Dr. A. B. Grosart . . . and others . . . which will be sold by Auction, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, Auctioneers of Literary Property . . . On Monday, the 11th of December, 1899, and the following Day, at One o'clock Precisely*. The Grosart sale took place the second day, 12 December. Lots 443–6 of the collection contain manuscripts in octavo: lot 443, 11 items, 3 identified, with other 'various MSS. 17th and 18th centuries'; lot 444, 10 items, 4 identified; with 'other Theological MSS. of the 17th and 18th centuries'; lot 445, 7 items, 5 identified, with 'others, Theological, 17th & 18th centuries'; lot 446, 11 items, listed as 'Sermons and Theological Treatises of the 17th century (anonymous)'.

⁴³ See *Summary Catalogue of Post-Medieval Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: Acquisitions 1916–1975*, Vol. II, No. 46709, p. 736.

⁴⁴ See 'Brooke's Account', Appendix, pp. 471–4; and Hilton Kelliher, 'The Rediscovery of Thomas Traherne', *The Times Literary Supplement* (September 14, 1984): 1038.

⁴⁵ The connection of Traherne's manuscripts and the Skipp family of Ledbury, Herefordshire, is uncertain: when the wood-engraver, John Skipp (1741–1812), son of John Skipp of Upper Hall, Ledbury, Herefordshire, died without issue, the estate went to James Martin, who married Penelope Skipp in 1774. Part of the Skipp 'collection' sold in 1888, of which Grosart writes, is perhaps

as mentioned by Grosart in a letter to Brooke, dated 27 August 1897, 'There must be a Ledbury store of MSS. etc. for I distinctly remember having both books & MSS dated Ledbury.'⁴⁶ The manuscript of the *Centuries of Meditations* remained in the possession of the Dobell family, until it was acquired by the Bodleian Libraries in 1950.⁴⁷

Osborn MS b. 308

The manuscript contains five works written in several scripts. The primary text, *Select Meditations*, is the remaining portion of a longer work, arranged into numbered sections of one hundred, or Centuries. It begins with the last part of number 81 of the First Century and ends with number 68 of the Fourth Century. The title *Select Meditations* first appears at p. 61, where the Second Century begins and is repeated at the beginning of the Third and Fourth Centuries (pp. 99 and 177). Also included in the manuscript book are two short untitled treatises by Traherne, 'Being a Lover of the world' and 'The best principle wherby a man can Steer his course in this world', and two very brief works, 'A Prayer for Ash Wednesday' and 'A Meditation', neither of which is written in Traherne's or the scribe's script; they are not of Traherne's making, and the identity of the author is unknown. The various works in the Osborn manuscript have been reproduced in the

that auctioned March 26–9, when Puttick & Simpson sold a 'Portion of the Library of H. W. Martin, Esq. (of the Upper Hall, Ledbury, Herefordshire)', a direct descendent of James and Penelope, who probably succeeded to Upper Hall on the death of John Martin in 1880. The auction of a 'portion' of Martin's library consisted mainly of printed books and a few 'autograph letters' but no manuscript books. The Skipp family name is never mentioned; and there is nothing listed that resembles Traherne's manuscripts. Nor is there anything that appears to be Traherne's or the Skipp's or Martin's of Upper Hall, Ledbury, in the Puttick & Simpson auction catalogues for May, 1888. The contents of Upper Hall were auctioned in 1919 by Stephenson & Alexander of Cardiff and John Brawn of Ross-on-Wye; and there is a collection of the Skipp family papers at the Herefordshire Record Office (B 38). I am grateful to Dr Sylvia Pinches, Heritage Centre, Ledbury, Herefordshire, for confirmation about the Skipp/Martin connection.

⁴⁶ See Bodleian MS Dobell c. 56, folio 1^r.

⁴⁷ The Bodleian Library *Catalogue of Post-Medieval Western Manuscripts*, records that the *Centuries of Meditations* (MS Eng. poet. th. e. 50) was 'bought from P. J. Dobell, 1952'; see entry at numbers 46709–12, pp. 736–737; '1952' may be the date the purchase was recorded, not actually purchased. See note 36 above.

order they appear and plates demonstrating the different scripts, have been supplied.

The manuscript is badly damaged, with excised leaves, loose leaves, torn leaves, missing leaves and even missing gatherings; many of the leaves are stained, frayed and curled at the fore-edge, and the pagination is erratic, as is the numbering of individual meditations. The damage to some pages obscures final words and letters.

Description of the physical manuscript

The manuscript was probably bought as a blank, bound book. It is an octavo, measuring approximately 152 mm long × 97 mm wide × 25 mm deep, bound in contemporary calf and sewn on four raised cords. The binding is scarred with worming on the front board. Both front and back boards were originally tooled with double lines in gilt at the top, bottom, gutter and fore edges, forming a rectangle, approximately 143 mm long × 92 mm wide. The spine also was tooled with double lines in gilt on each side of the four cords as well as at the top and bottom. The tooling has been badly worn, so that there are now only traces of gilt. On both front and back boards are four holes (two pairs of two), which originally held metal clasps. There is a partial clasp at the top fore-edge of the back board. The cords have been broken, so that the front board is loosely attached. At the bottom corner of the fore-edge of the front board is a torn remnant of a paste-down of paper similar to that of the manuscript; on it is written, '[. . .] bought near Montgomery / possibly Henry III' plus the Osborn manuscript catalogue number 'b. 308'; on the back board are fragments of a paste-down as well as the pins of the top clasp.

The manuscript consists of one type of paper, measuring approximately 147 mm long × 93 mm wide and identified by two related watermark forms of a post horn in an ornate shield (not a crown). The two forms vary in size and shape: one is rounded while the other is angular; both end in a central point. The bottom of the watermark form is a partial shield with a horn inside; the top is the ornate decoration of the shield, similar to numbers 2667 and 2684 in Heawood.⁴⁸ The watermark appears at the top gutter edge with no discernible counter-

⁴⁸ See Edward Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hilversum: The Paper Publications Society, 1950). See also W. A. Churchill, *Watermarks in Paper in Holland, England, France, etc., in the XVII and XVIII Centuries and their Interconnection* (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger & Co., 1935), no. 315, pp. ccxlix, 79.

mark. Chain-lines are vertical throughout the manuscript, with three to four per leaf. A consistent characteristic of leaves with four chain-lines is a narrow space between the two at the fore-edge of the leaf. The paper in Osborn MS b. 308 is similar to that of two manuscripts belonging to Philip Traherne, Thomas's brother, held by the British Library: Burney MS 392, Philip's edition of Thomas's poems, 'Poems of Felicity', and Burney MS 24, Philip's rough copy of Lambeth Palace MS 528B, *Codicis Ephesini Collatio*. It is also similar to the paper of Lambeth Palace MS 1360. The paper of the two Burney manuscripts, the Lambeth Palace manuscript as well as the Osborn manuscript bears not only similar watermark forms but also the characteristic feature of two chain-lines at the fore-edge of the leaf with a narrow space between them.⁴⁹

Due to the manuscript's damage, details of its collation are complicated and difficult to describe without a good deal of repetition. Instead of giving a complete analysis in the Introduction, I have noted all physical and textual irregularities in Textual Emendations and Notes and provided a diagram of the manuscript's foliation in the Appendix.

What should be said here by way of summary is that there is evidence in the extant manuscript of fourteen gatherings of eight leaves with sewing between the fourth and fifth leaves as well as a fragment of a fifteenth gathering. There are probably three missing gatherings of eight leaves each from the front of the manuscript, which would have contained pp. 1–44, with the first two leaves of the first gathering used either for paste-downs or left blank as fly-leaves. The text with the full title '*Select Meditations*' as well as 'The First Century'⁵⁰ may have begun on the recto side of the third leaf, or p. 5. The pattern of collation suggests that the manuscript book originally contained eighteen gatherings of eight leaves each. Pages 44–219 are irregularly paginated in ink, which may be scribal; the numbers are not always visible; pages 220–70 are paginated in graphite.

In the extant manuscript *Select Meditations* comprises 163 pages (pp. 45–219); 'A Prayer for Ash Wednesday' and 'A Meditation', four pages (229–32); 'Being a Lover of the world', nineteen pages (246–64); and 'The best principle wherby a man can Steer his course in this

⁴⁹ See Ross, Vol. 1, pp. xviii–xix.

⁵⁰ That is if Traherne followed the pattern of Centuries Two, Three and Four, where the scribe has written both the title, *Select Meditations*, plus the numbered century: '*Select Meditations / The / Second Century*'; '*Select Meditations / The Third Century*'; and '*Select Meditations / The / Forth Century*'.

world', five pages (266–70).⁵¹ There may have been another short work, perhaps verse, written at the end of the manuscript: on the verso side of the fragment, conjugate with pp. 268–9, are two rhyming words on consecutive lines: 'by / high:' perhaps the remnant of a poem.

Identification of scripts

There are at least three distinct scripts in the manuscript.⁵² The majority of the text of *Select Meditations* was copied by an unidentified amanuensis probably from a pre-existing draft. The scribe, who worked in a small, neat italic script and who may have been a friend or student of Thomas's, was not professional. The copying itself lacks the sophistication and quality of that of *The Kingdom of God*.⁵³ There are many errors, which suggest the scribe's immaturity, especially a hesitancy about spelling and punctuation, such as reversed letters ('Alimghty') and misplaced letters ('igornant'); there are also missing words, phrases and sentences, as well as one meditation (*SM* III, 86),⁵⁴ where blank spaces have been left perhaps to be supplied at a later date, either by the scribe or Traherne. It is clear however that the copying of *Select Meditations* was closely supervised by Thomas himself, who not only revised the text in places but who also wrote the whole of meditation 31 of the Second Century. At places Thomas's revisions are made in a darker ink and were probably added later; at others, in an ink of the same colour and consistency as that used by the scribe and may have been added simultaneously with the copying of the text; perhaps at times the scribe and Thomas worked side by side. The scribe is also responsible for the copying of the two short treatises, 'Being a Lover of the world' and 'The best principle', neither of which contain revisions by Thomas. 'A Prayer for Ash Wednesday' and 'A Meditation' are in a third script, which appears also at *SM* III. 90.⁵⁵

⁵¹ See Appendix (pp. 480–84), 'Osborn MS b. 308: Manuscript foliation' for details of collation, blank, torn, excised and missing leaves.

⁵² See Smith who writes that 'it is important that *Select Meditations* is interpreted within the context of the manuscript'. She sees the Osborn manuscript 'as in some degree the construct of a group', and refers to the presence of multiple scripts as 'a pattern of collaborative production . . . typical of the Traherne manuscripts . . . almost all of them contain sections or additions in the hands of other people. . . ' (pp. xi–xii, xxii).

⁵³ See Ross, Vol. I, pp. 253–553.

⁵⁴ See note at *SM* III. 87. I, p. 418.

⁵⁵ See notes at *SM* III. 90. I and 5. The script is similar to that of the anonymous critical reader of *Inducements of Retirednes* and *A Sober View* in Lambeth Palace

Production and purpose of the manuscript

We know very little about the production of the manuscript and there are many questions that cannot be answered by the physical aspects of the book. We don't know what form the early drafts of the three works, which are clearly Traherne's, were in before they were copied by the scribe. Was each a separate self-contained unit of loose leaves, kept in paper wrappers, which Thomas wanted to be preserved together in a book, perhaps intending to send it to a friend, as he did *Centuries of Meditations*? Or was it already a compilation, a complete unit in itself, but on loose leaves perhaps collated but not sewn nor bound? Was *Select Meditations* written as it is in the Osborn manuscript? Or was it a series of meditations on separate leaves of paper, which Traherne, with the help of his scribe, collected and arranged into numbered centuries? Why did the copying stop at iv. 68? Was there more to be copied? Or did Thomas himself intend to write more?

It is likely that Traherne arranged for the copying of the last two treatises, 'Being a Lover of the world' and 'The best principle' before the completion of *Select Meditations*. The series of blank leaves before 'Being a Lover of the world' suggest that there was a break in the work; and 'A Prayer for Ash Wednesday' and 'A Meditation' were probably written in the manuscript book at a later date. Without the intervening works, there would have been twenty-six blank pages between the end of *SM* iv. 68 and the beginning of 'Being a Lover of the world', ample space to complete the Fourth Century.⁵⁶

'Being a Lover of the world' is a brief untitled treatise about the nature of the soul, which Traherne wrote in response to a request from an anonymous acquaintance ('I am willing to gratifie your desires in treating of the Soul'). Although it is in a script similar to that of the scribe responsible for the copying of *Select Meditations*, it is not a part of it. It is stylistically an early work and has a scholastic quality about it. It also has affinities with *Seeds of Eternity or The Nature of the Soul*.⁵⁷ In his apology (lines 2–14), Traherne appears uncertain, not of his

MS 1360 (see Plates I and II in Ross, Vol. I, pp. 4, 47) and to the script in *Commentaries of Heaven* in British Library MS Add. 63054, 'These are Excellent Communicative Joys' (See Ross, Vol. II, p. 37, n. 1, and Introduction, p. xvi). The various scripts in Traherne's manuscripts will be taken up in full in Volume VIII, Commentary.

⁵⁶ See Appendix, p. 480–82. There are twenty-six pages after meditation 68 in the Third Century and the beginning of the Fourth Century; perhaps Traherne or the copyist was using this as a guide.

⁵⁷ See Ross, Vol. I, pp. 231–52.

ideas but of setting forth an hypothesis he knows to be controversial. He explains his motives for producing a speculative treatise and invites disputation, stating that he is able to accept the consequences of his proposals if he is in error. 'To appear abroad' may suggest publication either in print, or manuscript, to be sent to a limited number of friends.

Although we do not know why, when or for whom 'The best principle whereby a man can Steer his course' was written, as it stands it brings together Traherne's separate works in this volume. It is a culmination of the principles he proposes at the end of the *Centuries*, those which 'must continually be visited . . . or els your Life will be a Barren feild' (C iv. 94); it echoes clearly the principle of Love, which Traherne summarizes in *SM* iv. 43: 'This Lov . . . maketh the Soul Divine and Noble . . . infuseth the most Divin Heroick Principles . . . He that Followeth what Lov inspires, and ever doth what the Lov of God doth Purely Dictate. Walks by a never Erring and Blessed Rule. Contemns Himselfe For the weal of others, Promotes the Benefit of mankind, Doth all Things Honorable, and Sacrificeth Himselfe to Gods Glory' and summarizes the 'Instructions Teaching us how to Liv the Life of Happieness' at *SM* iii. 31 as well as corresponds to Traherne's explication of the infinity of the soul in 'Being a Lover of the world': 'There being an infinit Eternal and perfect freindship between God and Man Forevermore. The Greater Man is, the Greater Treasures God hath; the Greater king He is; and the Greater Subjects he Reigneth over' (p. 441, lines 163–4).

Provenance of the manuscript

There is little that can be said about the early ownership of the manuscript. It may have belonged at one time to Thomas's brother, Philip, but this is uncertain. We do however know more about it during the mid-twentieth century. At the urging of John Hayward,⁵⁸ who had seen the manuscript listed in a catalogue of the Birmingham booksellers, Holland Brothers, James Osborn⁵⁹ bought it for £65 in 1964.⁶⁰ In

⁵⁸ John Davy Hayward (1905–1965), literary scholar, book collector and editor of early modern poets Robert Herrick and John Donne as well as Samuel Johnson and T. S. Eliot. He was also literary advisor to many writers and critics such as Helen Gardner.

⁵⁹ James Marshall Osborn (1906–1976), literary historian, editor, bibliophile and book collector, Research Associate in English at Yale University and adviser on seventeenth-century manuscripts to the Yale Library. He founded the James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection at Yale University and served as its first curator.

⁶⁰ See Invoice No. 10861, March 26, 1964, described as 'Select Meditations.

a letter dated April 27, 1964, Osborn wrote to Holland Brothers that 'I think I am going to be able to prove that this manuscript has some unexpected importance' and asks about provenance. The bookseller, J. E. Holland, however, had little information, responding on May 1, 1964, that 'All we can tell you is that we bought it from another Birmingham bookseller, now deceased [*sic*], and that he had it in his possession for a number of years.'⁶¹ The manuscript book has been in possession of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library as a part of the James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection at Yale University since the late 1960s.

General editorial principles

In this edition I have attempted to represent faithfully Traherne's manuscripts as well as to produce a clear, readable text. Traherne's spelling, punctuation and capitalization have been maintained insofar as possible. Standard abbreviations including the ampersand are silently expanded. The S. for St or 'saint', bec. for 'because', ch. for 'church' when used in 'Church of England' and H. for 'holy' have been maintained in most cases. It is difficult to be certain when exactly Traherne intended a capital letter, particularly with letters C, K, M, N, O, U, V, W, Y, and especially with letters S, P and E. Traherne usually uses a capital for these letters, which varies in size. When a capital was intended often had to be determined by comparing the size of letters within a context of ten to fifteen lines. First words of sentences when abbreviated, such as 'yt' and 'ye' are capitalized as are the first words of sentences or paragraphs when the initial capitalized word has been deleted.

Illegible words and phrases are indicated by an ellipsis within square brackets [. . .]. The rendering of uncertain words is indicated

Manuscript c.1650'. James Marshall Osborn correspondence, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, OSB MSS 7.38.768. The manuscript was listed in Catalogue No. 537 as 'SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DEVOTIONAL AND MYSTICAL MANUSCRIPT IN PROSE AND VERSE', item No. 85: *SELECT MEDITATIONS. FOUR CENTURIES*. Manuscript written on 200 small 8^{vo}. Pages, 5-½ by 3-¾ ins. 33 lines to the page, written in a very small neat and perfectly legible hand . . . c.1650, in contemporary calf bound volume, rubbed and worked'. See also James M. Osborn, 'A New Traherne Manuscript', *The Times Literary Supplement* (October 8, 1964): 928.

⁶¹ Letter dated May 1, 1964. James Marshall Osborn correspondence, OSB MSS 7.38.768.

by square brackets plus a question mark [hid?]; missing words, including numbers for stanzas in the poetry as well as to distinguish separate poems, by brackets only [in]. Illegible marks, notations and deletions are not noted. Traherne often uses multiple parentheses, as in '(when it is understood of Pleasing Him in all Eternitie) in its tru Dilated Notion)', which have been left as they appear in the manuscripts. Editorial additions of punctuation have been noted in Textual Emendations and Notes. Underscoring has been italicized. Corrections of obvious scribal errors as well as editorial emendations, such as deletions, commas, full stops, etc. for clarity's sake, have been recorded with all textual emendations.

Traherne's spelling is idiosyncratic and inconsistent, sometimes in harmony with general seventeenth-century conventions; he often reverses the 'i' and 'e', especially in such words as 'cheifly', 'feild', 'freind', 'freindship' and 'greif'; he also spells 'deity/deitie' as 'diety/dietie'. I have left these renderings as they appear in the manuscripts. In many instances Traherne uses 'bruitish' for 'brutish', 'breath' for 'breathe' and 'divel' for 'devil' among others; they have been left as they appear in the manuscripts. Traherne's 'e' and 'o' are written similarly and are sometimes difficult to distinguish, especially in the words 'those' and 'these'. I transcribed them according to context. The abbreviation 'yⁿ' is transcribed as 'then' instead of 'than', in keeping with Traherne's usage. The abbreviation of 'govermt' is expanded as 'government'.

In *Select Meditations* the scribe used both the uppercase 'N' as well as the lowercase 'n' as a capital; its use had to be determined by size. Also capitalized regularly are (1) the 'F' at the beginning of a word and often in the word 'of' as in II. 72 'more oF that Spirit' and III. 58 'Temples oF the Holy Ghost' and (2) internal letters, especially the 's' in such words as 'DiScouragement', 'ExaSperates', 'ReStored', and 'HimSelf'; the initial capital 'F' has been left as it appears in the text; the internal capital 'S' and 'F' however have been put into lowercase except for a few instances as examples of the scribes's copying methods; all such changes have been recorded in Textual Emendations and Notes.

The scribe also used the = sign as a hyphen. In the MS the = sign usually comes at the end of a line to indicate a break in a word, for instance 'therefore' at I. 83. 21 is written as 'there=fore', with 'there=' coming at the end of the line and 'fore', at the beginning of the next line; at II. 15. 7 'Blessedness' is written as 'Blessed=ness' with 'Blessed=' at the end of one line and 'ness' at the beginning of the

next. However not all such constructions are words divided at the end of a line. Neither 'a=lone' at l. 82. 10 nor 'a=mong' at l. 82. 16 comes at the end of the line, nor does 'I=mages' at l. 83. 14. The scribe may have copied the words as they appeared in the copy text, where the prefix 'a' of 'a=lone' and 'a=mong' and the 'I' of 'I=mages' may have come at the end of a line, with the root, at the beginning of the next line. The construction appears at several places in the manuscript. The copyist seems to have been hesitant about making decisions about transcription.

The = sign was used as the hyphen in early modern spelling. See for instance *Roman Forgeries*,⁶² where the = sign is often used; for instance at sig. B2, where 'Profanenesses' (line 43) is written as 'Profane=nesses', 'Profane=' coming at the end of one line and 'nesses' at the beginning of the next. See also the title page of Philip Traherne's edition of Thomas's poems where the = sign is used in 'An Infant=Ey'. Smith uses a hyphen to represent the = sign ('a-lone', 'a-mong', 'I-mages', etc.), except when the word comes at the end of a line such as 'there=fore' at l. 83. 21, where she joins the two parts of the word 'therefore'.

Except in a few instances, to give the reader some idea of the scribe's practices, I have dropped the = sign in transcription and joined the two parts of the word. All instances of the = sign have been recorded in Textual Emendations and Notes.

There is a discrepancy in the rendering of the word 'Meditation' in the title of *Centuries of Meditations*. The work has become known simply as *Centuries* or *The Centuries*. Dobell's first edition follows the title page of the manuscript (fol. 3^r), *Centuries of Meditations*. Margoliouth (p. x) suggests the title was written 'in a hand which may be seventeenth-century but is certainly not Traherne's'; his title page reads merely *The Centuries*. In her 'Abbreviations' Ridler (p. ix) refers to it as *Centuries of Meditations* but in her Introduction as well as the title to her edition as *Centuries* only. Beal however lists it as *Centuries of Meditation* (p. 478) and *Centuries of Meditations* (p. 479). See also Dobell's note below (p. 5), where he refers to 'Centuries of Meditation'.

There is clearly a final 's' at the end of the word 'Meditation' in the physical manuscript (folio 3^r); however, the final 's' of both 'Centuries' and 'Meditations' is unclearly formed. Margoliouth's conclusion that

⁶² *Roman Forgeries* (1673) is the only work Traherne published during his lifetime. The text will be printed in Volume VII of *The Works of Thomas Traherne*. See 'General Preface', p. ix.

the title is not in Traherne's script is conjectural, although he may be correct; and it may have been added at a later date. There is however a similarity between Traherne's script and that of the title, especially the final 's', for which Traherne often used a straight line; see Plate I under numbers 38 and 39 where is the final 's' on 'themselves', 'this', 'righteous' and 'Creatures' is a straight line.⁶³ I have chosen to use the full title as it is written at folio 3^r in the manuscript.

'Being a Lover of the world' (Osborn MS, pp. 246–64) has been reproduced insofar as possible as it is written in the manuscript, with subject heads to the side of the indented text. Indentation however is inconsistent, with text being written flush to the margin at the beginning of some pages. Manuscript page numbers have therefore been recorded in square brackets as a guide to the scribe's copying methods. Because of the erratic placement of full stops after subject heads, I have deleted them. 'The best principle' (Osborn MS, pp. 266–70) also has been reproduced as it appears in the manuscript immediately following 'Being a Lover of the world'.

Quotations from the Bible in Textual Emendations and Notes are taken from the Authorized Version. Any eccentric conventions of the texts within this edition are due to the peculiarities of the manuscripts and have not always been noted.

⁶³ Traherne sometimes used an upper-case 'M' similarly to that of the title 'Meditations' (f. 3^r); see for instance *Commentaries of Heaven*, f. 5^r, 'Man' under 'The Enjoyment of Abilitie'.

Centuries of Meditations

And pleasures Soil
By Thee!

Shall I remain
O' one y^e Plain

And never more lift up t^y Head!

It not my Savior Dead!

His Blood, thy Bane; my Balsam, Blis, Joy, Wine,
Shall Thee Destroy; Heal, feed, make me Divine!

51

I cannot meet wth Sin, but it kills me, & tis only by Jesus
Christ y^e I can kill it, & Escape. ~~Wth I came into the~~
~~Country.~~ Would you flamm^e me to be confounded, wth I have offered
my Eternal Father, who gav^e me all t^y Things in Heav'n & Earth?
Ow^e Sin is a Dreadfull Stumbling Block in t^y Way to Heaven. It breeds
a Long Paranthosis in t^y Fruition of our Joy. Do y^e not see my friend,
how it Disorders & Disturbs my Proceeding? There is no Calamity
but Sin alone.

52

Wth I came into t^y Country, & saw y^e I had all time in my own hands,
having devoted it wholly to t^y Study of felicitie, I knew not where to begin or
end; nor wth Object to chuse, upon wth most profitably I might fix my Contempla-
tion. I saw my self like som Traveller, & had Destined his Life to journey, & was
rejoiced to spend his Days in visiting Strange Places: who might wander in vain,
unless his Undertaking were guided by som certain Rule, & I innumerable Mil-
lions of Objects were presented before me, unto any of wth I might take my journe-
tain I would have visited t^y all, but t^y was impossible. Wth I should I do? Even
imitat a Traveller, who becaus He cannot visit all Count^y, Wildernesses, sandy
Deserts, Seas, Hills, Springs & Mountains, chuseth t^y most populous & flourishing
Citie, where he might see t^y fairest Prospects, Wonders, & Rarities, & be enter-
tain'd wth greatest Curiosity: & where indeed he might most Benefit himself
wth knowledg Profit & Delight; leaving t^y rest, even t^y naked & empty places unse-
en. For wth caus I made it my prayer to God Almighty, y^e He, whose Eys are open
upon all Things, would guid me to t^y fairest & Divinest.

53

And wth Rule do you think I walked by? Truly a Strange one, but t^y
Best in t^y whole World. I was guided by an Implicit faith in Gods Goodness: &
therefore led to t^y Study of t^y most Obvious & Common Things. For thus I thought
wth in my self: GOD being as we generally believe, infinite in Goodness, it is most
Consonant & Agreeable wth His Nature, y^e t^y Best Things should be most com-
mon. for nothing is more Natural to infinite Goodness, y^e to make t^y Best Things
most frequent; & only Things Worthless, Scarce. Then I began to Enquire wth
Things were most Common: Air, Light, Heaven & Earth, Water, & Sun, Trees,
Men & Women, Cities Temples &c. These I found Common & Obvious
to all: Rubies Pearls Diamonds Gold & Silver, those I found Scarce,
& to t^y most Distant. Then began I to consider & compare t^y value
of t^y, wth I measured by their Serviceableness, by t^y Excellency wth
would be found in y^e, should they be taken away. And in Conclusion I saw
clearly, y^e there was a Real Valueableness in all t^y Common things, in
y^e Scarce, a forgone.

Plate II: From *Centuries of Meditations*, Bodleian MS Eng. th. e. 50, folio 57^r.
The plate is reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Bod-
leian Libraries, University of Oxford.

This volume is the original manuscript of Thomas Traherne's 'Centuries of Meditation'. It was once in the hands of the Rev. A. B. Grosart, who had persuaded himself that it was written by Henry Vaughan, and who therefore had it lettered on the back as it now appears.

I need not say that I consider this to be a most precious manuscript. It should be in the Brit. Museum, to which after I have printed its contents I intend to offer it.

Bertram Dobell

This book unto the friend of my best friend
As of the Wisest Love a Mark I send
That she may write my Makers prais therein
And make her self therby a Cherubin.

I

An Empty Book is like an Infants Soul, in which any Thing may be Written. It is Capable of all Things, but containeth Nothing. I hav a Mind to fill this with Profitable Wonders. And since Love made you put it into my Hands, I will fill it with those Truths you Love, without knowing them: and with those Things which if it be Possible, shall shew my Lov; To you, in Communicating most *Enriching Truths*; to Truth, in Exalting Her Beauties in such a Soul. 5

2

Do not Wonder that I promise to fill it, with those Truths you love, but know not: For tho it be a Maxime in the Scholes, That there is no Lov of a thing unknown; yet I hav found, that Things unknown have a Secret Influence on the Soul: and like the Centre of the Earth unseen, violently Attract it. We lov we know not what. and therfore evry Thing allures us. As Iron at a Distance is drawn by the Load-stone, there being some Invisible Communications between them: So is there in us a World of Lov to som what, tho we know not what in the World that should be. There are Invisible Ways of Conveyance, by which som Great Thing doth touch our Souls, and by which we tend to it. Do you not feel your self Drawn with the Expectation and Desire of som Great Thing? 10

3

I will open my Mouth in Parables: I will utter Things that have been kept Secret from the foundation of the World. Things Strange, yet common; Incredible, yet Known: Most High, yet plain; infinitely Profitable, but not Esteemed. Is it not a Great Thing, that you should be Heir of the World? Is it not an Enriching Veritie? In which the Fellowship of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in GOD, was concealed! The Thing hath been from the Creation of the World, but hath not so been Explained, as that the interior Beauty should be understood. It is my Design therfore in such a plain maner to unfold it, that my Friendship may appear in making you Possessor of the Whole World. 10

4

I will not by the Nois of Bloody Wars, and the Dethroning of Kings, advance you to Glory: but by the Gentle Ways of Peace and Lov. As a Deep Friendship meditats and intends the Deepest Designes for

5 the Advancement of its Object, so doth it Shew it self in chusing the
 Sweetest and most Delightfull Methods, wherby not to Weary, but
 Pleas the Person, it desireth to advance. Where Lov administers Phys-
 10 ick, its Tenderness is exprest in Balms and Cordials. It hateth Corro-
 sives, and is Rich in its Administrations. Even so God, Designing to
 shew his Lov in exalting you hath chosen the Ways of Eas and Repose,
 by which you should ascend. And I after his Similitude will lead you
 into Paths Plain and Familiar. Where all Envy, Rapine, Bloodshed,
 Complaint, and Malice shall be far removed; and nothing appear but
 Contentment and Thanksgiving. Yet shall the End be so Glorious, that
 15 Angels durst not hope for so Great a One till they had seen it.

5

The fellowship of the Mystery that hath been hid in God, since
 the Creation, is not only the Contemplation of his Lov in the Work of
 Redemption: Tho that is Wonderfull: But the End, for which we are
 5 Redeemd: A Communion with Him in all His Glory. for which caus, S
 Peter saith The God of all Grace, hath called us into His Eternal Glory
 by Jesus Christ. His Eternal Glory by the Methods of His Divine Wis-
 dom being made ours: and our Fruition of it, the End for which our
 Savior Suffered.

6

True Lov, as it intendeth the Greatest Gifts, intendeth also the
 Greatest Benefits. It contenteth not it self in Shewing Great Things
 unless it can make them Greatly Usefull. For Lov greatly Delighteth
 5 in seeing its object continually seated in the Highest Happiness. Un-
 less therfore I could advance you Higher by the uses of what I give, my
 Lov could not be satisfied, in Giving you the Whole World. But becaus
 when you Enjoy it, you are Advanced to the Throne of God, and may
 see his Lov; I rest well pleased in Bestowing it. It will make you to see
 10 your own Greatness, the Truth of the Scriptures, the Amiableness of
 Virtu, and the Beauty of Religion. It will enable you also, to contemn
 the World, and to over flow with Praises.

7

To Contemn the World, and to Enjoy the World, are Things con-
 trary to each other. How then can we contemn the World which we are
 Born to Enjoy? Truly there are two Worlds. One was made by God, the
 5 other by Men. That made by GOD, was Great and Beautifull. Before
 the Fall, It was Adams Joy, and the Temple of his Glory. That made by

men is a Babel of Confusions: Invented Riches, Poms and Vanities, brought in by Sin. Giv all (saith Thomas a Kempis) for all. Leav the one that you may enjoy the other.

8

What is more Easy and Sweet then Meditation? yet in this hath God commended his Lov, that by Meditation it is Enjoyed. As Nothing is more Easy then to Think, so nothing is more Difficult then to Think Well. The Easiness of Thinking we received from God, the Difficulty of thinking Well, proceedeth from our Selvs. yet in Truth, it is far more Easy to think well then Ill becaus Good thoughts be sweet and Delightfull: Evil Thoughts are full of Discontent and Trouble. So that an Evil Habit, and Custom hav made it Difficult to Think well, not Nature. For by Nature, nothing is so Difficult as to Think amiss. 10

9

Is it not Easy to conceiv the World in your Mind? To think the Heavens fair? The Sun Glorious? The Earth Fruitfull? The Air Pleasant? The Sea Profitable? And the Giver Bountifull? Yet these are the Things which it is difficult to retain. For could we always be Sensible of their Use and Value; we Should be always Delighted with their Wealth and Glory. 5

10

To think well is to serv God in the Interior Court: To hav a Mind composed of Divine Thoughts, and set in frame, to be Like Him within. To Conceiv aright and to Enjoy the World, is to Conceiv the H. Ghost, and to see his Lov; Which is the Mind of the Father. And this more Pleaseth Him then Many Worlds, could we Creat as fair and Great as this. For when you are once acquainted with the World, you will find the Goodness and Wisdom of God, so manifest therin, that it was Impossible another, or Better should be made. Which being made to be Enjoyed. Nothing can pleas or serv Him more then the Soul that Enjoys it. For that Soul doth accomplish the End of his Desire in Creating it. 10

11

Lov is Deeper then at first it can be thought. It never ceaseth but in Endless Things. It ever Multiplies. Its Benefits and its Designes are always Infinit. Were you not Holy Divine and Blessed in Enjoying the World, I should not care so much to Bestow it. But now in this you 5

accomplish the End of your Creation, and serv God best, and Pleas Him most: I rejoyce in Giving it. For to Enable you to Pleas GOD, is the Highest Service a Man can do you. It is to make you Pleasing to the King of Heaven, that you may be the Darling of His Bosom.

12

Can you be Holy without Accomplishing the End for which you are Created? Can you be Divine unless you be Holy? Can you Accomplish the End for which you were Created, unless you be Righteous? Can
 5 you then be Righteous, unless you be Just in rendering to Things their Due Esteem. All Things were made to be yours. And you were made to Prize them according to their Value. which is your Office and Duty, the End for which you were Created, and the Means wherby you Enjoy. The End for which you were Created is that by Prizing all that God
 10 hath don, you may Enjoy your self and Him in Blessedness.

13

To be Holy is so Zealously to Desire, so vastly to Esteem, and so Earnestly to Endeavor it, that we would not for millions of Gold and Silver, Decline, nor fail, nor Mistake in a Tittle. For then we Pleas
 5 God when we are most like Him. we are like Him when our Minds are in Frame. Our Minds are in Frame, when our Thoughts are like his. And our Thoughts are then like his when we hav such Conceptions of all objects as God hath, and prize all Things according to their Value. For God doth Prize all Things rightly. Which is a Key that opens into
 10 the very Thoughts of his Bosom. It seemeth Arrogance to pretend to the Knowledg of his Secret Thoughts. But how shall we hav the Mind of God, unless we know his Thoughts? Or how shall we be led by his Divine Spirit, till we hav his Mind? His Thoughts are Hidden: but he hath revealed unto us the Hidden Things of Darkness. By his Works
 15 and by his Attributs we know his Thoughts. And by Thinking the same are Divine and Blessed.

14

When Things are ours in their Proper places, nothing is needfull but Prizing, to Enjoy them. God therfore hath made it infinitely Easy to Enjoy, by making evry Thing ours, and us able so Easily to Prize
 5 them. Evry thing is ours that serves us in its place. The Sun serves us as much as is Possible, and more then we could imagine. The Clouds and Stars Minister unto us, the World surrounds us with Beauty, the Air refresheth us the Sea revives the Earth and us. The Earth it self is

Better then Gold becaus it produceth fruits and flowers. And therfore
 in the Beginning, was it made Manifest to be mine, becaus Adam alone
 was made to Enjoy it. By making One, and not a Multitud, God evi- 10
 dently Shewed One alone to be the End of the World, and evry one its
 Enjoyer. for evry one may Enjoy it as much as He.

15

Such Endless Depths lie in the Divinity, and the Wisdom of God,
 that as He maketh one, so He maketh evry one the End of the World:
 and the Supernumerary Persons being Enrichers of his Inheritance.
 Adam and the World are both mine. And the Posterity of Adam enrich 5
 it Infinitely. Souls are Gods Jewels. Evry one of which is worth many
 Worlds. They are his Riches becaus his Image. and mine for that rea-
 son. So that I alone am the End of the World. Angels and Men being
 all mine. And if others are so, they are made to Enjoy it for my further
 Advancement. God only being the Giver, and I the Receiver. So that 10
 Seneca Philosophized rightly, when he said, *Deus me dedit Solum toti*
Mundo, and *totum Mundum mihi Soli*. God gave me alone to all the
 World, and all the World to me alone.

16

That all the World is yours, your very Senses and the Inclinations of
 your Mind declare. The Works of God manifest, his Laws testify, and
 his Word doth prove it. His Attributes most sweetly make it evident.
 The Powers of your Soul confirm it. So that in the midst of such rich 5
 Demonstrations, you may infinitely Delight in God as your Father
 Friend and Benefactor, in your self as his Heir Child and Bride, in the
 Whole WORLD, as the Gift and Token of his Lov. Neither can any
 thing but Ignorance Destroy your Joys. for if you know your self, or
 God, or the World; you must of Necessity Enjoy it. 10

17

To know GOD is Life Eternal. There must therfore some Exceed-
 ing Great Thing be always attained in the Knowledge of Him. To
 Know God is to Know Goodness; It is to see the Beauty of infinit
 Lov: To see it attended with Almighty Power and Eternal Wisdom; 5
 and using both those in the Magnifying of its Object. It is to see the
 King of Heaven and Earth take infinit Delight in *Giving*. Whatever
 Knowledge els you hav of God, it is but Superstition. Which Plutarch
 rightly Defineth *to be an Ignorant Dread of his Divine Power, without*
any Joy in his Goodness. He is not an Object of Terror, but Delight. To 10

know Him therefore as He is, is to frame the most Beautifull Idea in all Worlds. He Delighteth in our Happiness more then we: and is of all other the most Lovly Object. An Infinit Lord, who having all Riches Honors and Pleasures in his own Hand, is infinitely Willing to give
 15 them unto me. Which is the fairest Idea that can be Devised.

18

The WORLD is not this little Cottage of Heaven and Earth. Tho this be fair, it is too small a Gift. When God made the WORLD, He made the Heavens and the Heavens of Heavens, and the Angels and
 5 the Celestial Powers. These also are parts of the World. so are all those infinit and Eternal Treasures that are to abide for ever, after the Day of Judgement. Neither are these, some here, and some there, but all evry where, and at once to be Enjoyed. The WORLD is unknown, till the Value and Glory of it is seen: till the Beauty and the Serviceableness of
 10 its Parts is Considered. When you enter into it, it is an illimited feild of Varietie and Beauty: where you may lose your self in the Multitude of Wonders and Delights. But it is an Happy Loss to lose one self in Admiration at ones own Felicity: and to find GOD in Exchange for oneself. Which we then do when we see Him in His Gifts, and Adore
 15 his Glory.

19

You never know your self, till you know more then your Body. The Image of God was not seated in the features of your face, but in the Lineaments of your Soul. In the knowledg of your Powers, Inclina-
 5 tions and Principles, the Knowledg of your self cheifly consisteth. Which are so Great that even to the most Learned of Men their Greatness is Incredible; and so Divine, that they are infinit in Value. Alass the WORLD is but a little Centre in Comparison of you. Suppose it Millions of Miles from the Earth to the Heavens, and Millions of Mil-
 10 lions above the Stars, both here, and over the heads of our Antipodes: it is surrounded with infinit and Eternal Space: And like a Gentlemans house to one that is Travelling, It is a long time before you com unto it, you passe it in an Instant, and leave it for ever. The Omnipresence and Eternity of God are your Fellows and Companions. And all that is in
 15 them ought to be made your familiar Treasures. Your Understanding comprehends the World like the Dust of a Ballance, measures Heaven with a Span and esteems a thousand yeers but as one Day. So that Great Endless Eternal Delights are only fit to be its Enjoyments.

20

The Laws of GOD, which are the Commentaries of his Works, shew them to be yours: becaus They teach you to lov God with all your Soul, and with all your Might. Whom if you lov with all the Endless Powers of your Soul, you will lov Him in Him self, in His Attributs, 5
 in His Counsels, in all his Works, in all His Ways: and in evry Kind of Thing wherin He appeareth, you will Prize Him, you will Honor Him, you will Delight in Him, you will ever desire to be with him and to pleas Him. For to lov Him includeth all this. You will feed with Pleasure upon evry Thing that is His. So that the World shall be a Grand 10
 Jewel of Delight unto you: a very Paradise; and the Gate of Heaven. It is indeed the Beautifull Frontis Piece of Eternitie. the Temple of God, the Palace of his children. The Laws of God Discover all that is therin to be Created for your sake. For they command you to lov all that is Good, and when you see well, you enjoy what you lov. They 15
 apply the Endless Powers of your Soul to all their Objects: And by ten thousand Methods make evry Thing to serv you. They command you to lov all Angels and Men, They command all Angels and Men to lov you. When you lov them, they are your Treasures; when They lov you to your great advantage, you are theirs. All Things serv you for serving 20
 them whom you lov, and of whom you are Beloved. The Enterance of His Words giveth Light to the Simple. You are Magnified among Angels and men: Enriched by them, and Happy in them.

21

By the very Right of your Sences you Enjoy the World. Is not the Beauty of the Hemisphere present to your Ey? Doth not the Glory of the Sun pay Tribut to your Sight? Is not the Vision of the WORLD 5
 an Amiable Thing? Do not the Stars shed Influences to perfect the Air? Is not that a marvellous Body to Breath in? To visit the Lungs: repair the Spirits: revive the Sences: Cool the Blood: fill the Empty Spaces between the Earth and Heavens; and yet giv Liberty to all Objects? Prize these first: and you shall Enjoy the Residue. Glory, 10
 Dominion, Power, Wisdom, Honor, Angels, Souls, Kingdoms, Ages. *Be faithfull in a little, and you shall be Master over much.* If you be not faithfull in esteeming these, who shall put into your Hands the true Treasures. If you be Negligent in Prizing these, you will be negligent in Prizing all. there is a Diseas in Him who Despiseth present mercies, 15
 which till it be cured, he can never be Happy. He esteemeth nothing that he hath, but is ever Gaping after more: which when he hath He despiseth in like manner. Insatiableness is Good, but not Ingratitud.

22

It is of the Nobility of Mans Soul that He is Insatiable. for he hath a Benefactor so Prone to Give, that He delighteth in us for Asking. Do not your Inclinations tell you that the WORLD is yours? Do you
 5 not covet all? Do you not long to hav it; to Enjoy it; to Overcom it? To what End do Men gather Riches, but to Multiplie more? Do they not like Pyrrhus the King of Epire, adde hous to hous and Lands to Lands that they may get it all? It is storied of that Prince, that having conceived a Purpose to invade Italy, he sent for Cineas, a Philosopher and
 10 the Kings friend: to whom he communicated his Designe, and desired his Counsel. Cineas asked him to what Purpose he invaded Italie? He said, To Conquer it. And what will you do when you hav Conquerd it? Go into France said the King, and Conquer that. And what will you do when you hav Conquerd France? Conquer Germany. And what
 15 then? said the Philosopher. Conquer Spain. I perceivd said Cineas, you mean to conquer all the World. What will you do when you hav conquerd all? Why then said the King we will return, and Enjoy our selvs at Quiet in our own Land. So you may now said the Philosopher without all this adoe. Yet could he not Divert him till he was ruind by
 20 the Romans. Thus men get one Hundred pound a year that they may get another: and having two covet Eight, and there is no End of all their Labor; becaus the Desire of their Soul is Insatiable. Like Alexander the Great they must hav all: and when they hav got it all be quiet. And may they not do all this before they begin? Nay it would be well,
 25 if they could be Quiet. But if after all, they shall be like the stars, that are seated on high, but hav no Rest, what gain they more, but Labor for their Trouble. It was wittily fained that that Yong man sate down and Cried for more Worlds. So insatiable is Man that Millions will not pleas Him. They are no more then so many Tennis-Balls, in Comparison of the Greatness and Highness of his Soul.
 30

23

The Noble Inclination wherby Man thirsteth after Riches and Dominion, is his Highest Virtu, when rightly Guided: and Carries him as in a Triumphant Chariot, to his Sovereign Happiness. Men are
 5 made miserable only by abusing it. Taking a fals way to Satisfy it they Persue the Wind: Nay labor in the very fire, and after all reap but Vanitie. Wheras, as Gods Lov, which is the fountain of all, did cost us Nothing: so were all other Things prepared by it, to satisfy our Inclinations in the Best of Manners. freely, without any cost of ours.

Being therefore all Satisfactiones are near at hand, by going further we do but leav them: And Wearying our selvs in a long way round about, like a Blind man, forsake them. They are immediatly near to the very Gates of our Sences. It becometh the Bounty of God to prepare them freely: to make them Glorious, and their Enjoyment Easy. For becaus His Lov is free so are his Treasures. He therefore that will Despise them becaus He hath them is Marvellously Irrational. The Way to possess them is to Esteem them. And the true Way of Reigning over them, is to break the WORLD all into Parts, to examine them asunder. And if we find them so Excellent that Better could not Possibly be made, and so made that they could not be more ours to rejoyce in all with pleasure answerable to the merit of their Goodness. We being then Kings over the Whole World, when we restore the Pieces to their Proper Places, being perfectly Pleased with the whole Composure. This shall giv you a thorow grounded Contentment. far beyond what troublesom Wars, or Conquests can acquire.

24

Is it not a sweet Thing to hav all Covetousness and Ambition satisfied, Suspicion, and infidelity removed, Courage and Joy infused? Yet is all this in the fruition of the World attained. for therby God is seen in all his Wisdom, Power, Goodness and Glory.

25

Your Enjoyment of the World is never right, till you so Esteem it, that evry thing in it, is more your Treasure, then a Kings Exchequer full of Gold and Silver. And that Exchequer yours also in its Place and Service. Can you take too much Joy in your fathers Works? He is Himself in evry Thing. Som Things are little on the out side, and Rough and Common. but I remember the Time, when the Dust of the Streets were as precious as Gold to my Infant Eys, and now they are more precious to the Ey of Reason.

26

The Services of Things, and their Excellencies are Spiritual: being Objects not of the Ey, but of the Mind: And you more Spiritual by how much more you Esteem them. Pigs eat Acorns, but neither consider the Sun that gav them Life, nor the Influences of the Heavens by which they were Nourished, nor the very Root of the Tree from whence they came. This being the Work of Angels. Who in a Wide and Clear Light see even the Sea that gave them Moysture. And feed upon

that Acorn Spiritually, while they Know the Ends for which it was Created, and feast upon all these, as upon a World of Joys within it: while
 10 to Ignorant Swine that eat the Shell, it is an Empty Husk of no Taste nor Delightfull Savor.

27

You never Enjoy the World aright, till you see how a Sand exhibiteth the Wisdom and Power of God: And Prize in evry Thing the Service which they do you, by Manifesting His Glory and Goodness to your
 5 Soul, far more then the visible Beauty on their Surface, or the Material Services, they can do your Body. Wine by its Moysture quencheth my Thirst, whether I consider it or no: but to see it flowing from his Lov who gav it unto Man. Quencheth the Thirst even of the H. Angels. To Consider it, is to Drink it Spiritually. To Rejoyce in its Diffusion is to
 10 be of a Publick Mind. And to take Pleasure in all the Benefits it doth to all is Heavenly. for so they do in Heaven. To do so, is to be Divine and Good. and to imitat our Infinit and Eternal Father.

28

Your Enjoyment of the World is never right, till evry Morning you awake in Heaven: see your self in your fathers Palace: and look upon the Skies and the Earth and the Air, as Celestial Joys: having such
 5 a Reverend Esteem of all, as if you were among the Angels. The Bride of a Monarch, in Her Husbands Chamber, hath no such Causes of Delight as you.

29

You never Enjoy the World aright, till the Sea it self floweth in your Veins, till you are clothed with the Heavens, and Crowned with the Stars: and perceiv your self to be the Sole Heir of the whole World:
 5 and more then so, becaus Men are in it who are evry one Sole Heirs, as well as you. Till you can Sing and Rejoyce and Delight in GOD, as Misers do in Gold, and Kings in Scepters, you never Enjoy the World.

30

Till your Spirit filleth the whole World, and the Stars are your Jewels, till you are as Familiar with the Ways of God in all Ages, as with your Walk and Table: till you are intimatly Acquainted with that
 5 Shady Nothing out of which the World was made: till you lov men so as to Desire their Happiness, with a Thirst equal to the zeal of your own: till you Delight in GOD for being Good to all: you never Enjoy