

WILLIAM HENRY GRIFFITH THOMAS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Historical Theology

Dallas Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Theology

by

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May, 1974

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

As Dallas Theological Seminary enters its fiftieth year of training men for the ministry of the Word of God, it seems appropriate that we turn our eyes back to the early days of its history, and to the men who founded this school. According to Rudolf Renfer in his dissertation, A History of Dallas Theological Seminary, there were three men

. . . principally instrumental in the founding of Dallas Theological Seminary: Dr. A.B. Winchester, a Presbyterian minister of Toronto, Canada; Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas, Anglican minister, author, and Bible Conference speaker of Philadelphia; and Dr. L.S. Chafer, Bible Conference speaker, and pastor of the Scofield Memorial Church (independent) of Dallas.¹

There are many reasons why a study of each of these men would be appropriate and needed at this time. But the scope of this thesis will be limited to the study of the life and influence of one of these

¹Rudolf A. Renfer, "A History of Dallas Theological Seminary" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, June, 1959), p. 51.

men, Dr. William Henry Griffith Thomas. Dr. Griffith Thomas is important for a number of reasons.

Dr. Thomas was a leading churchman and scholar in the Church of England. He served for a number of years as the Principal of the theological college (Wycliffe) at Oxford University. In many ways his life and work illustrate the type of minister that Dallas Seminary attempts to produce. Although Dr. Griffith Thomas was called home to be with the Savior on June 2, 1924, and thus never had the opportunity to teach in the school, he was vitally involved in the planning process which led to the opening of the Evangelical Theological College (later Dallas Theological Seminary) the September following his death. Also, at Dr. Griffith Thomas' death, through the generosity of William Nairn of Dundee, Scotland, the personal library of Dr. Griffith Thomas, numbering more than five thousand volumes, became the nucleus of the library at the new school. Each year the Alumni Association of Dallas Theological Seminary sponsors a series of lectures in the memory of W.H. Griffith Thomas. Yet, few students at the seminary are aware of Dr. Griffith Thomas, the role he played in the establishment of the Evangelical Theological College, or his importance as a Christian scholar during the theological controversies of the early years of

this century. This paper attempts to illuminate these areas for the current and future students at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Dr. Griffith Thomas' life manifested many traits that are needed in the ministry of every Dallas Seminary graduate. He was eminently qualified as a scholar, and he was thoroughly evangelical. He was equally at home behind the pulpit in a church and behind the lectern in his classrooms. He was a careful lecturer and writer, and he was always known for his warm friendship with his students. He traveled widely to teach at Bible Conferences, and he wrote profusely on subjects as varied as Old Testament Criticism, and the Christian life. Dr. Griffith Thomas was one of the leading figures in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1910's and 20's. Such a man is indeed worthy of a study at this time.

Purpose and Method of the Study

With this as a background it will be the purpose of this thesis to investigate, evaluate, and display the available historical data concerning the life and ministry of Dr. William Henry Griffith Thomas. This thesis will attempt to show the character and influence of this man.

This thesis will be biographical in nature and will attempt to give the readers an appreciation for the various elements that went

into making Dr. Griffith Thomas into a man of God for his day. To facilitate this, the paper has been divided into three parts. The first section will focus on the early life of Griffith Thomas up to and including his theological education. This section will attempt to show the various factors that went into preparing him to assume a role of leadership in the Anglican Church. The second section will focus on his ministry in England, both at the Portman Square Chapel and at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. The final section will be devoted to his ministry on the American continent until his death in 1924. This final section will look closely at his role in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and in the founding of the school that became Dallas Theological Seminary.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE

Many Christian leaders have come out of unfavorable circumstances to rise to a height only possible through the influence of the Lord Jesus Christ on their lives. Griffith Thomas was such a man.

Family Background

William Henry Griffith Thomas was born on January 2, 1861, at Oswestry, Shropshire, England. His father had died before his birth, so his widowed mother moved back to the home of her parents. Thus, it was in the home of his maternal grandfather, Dr. William Griffith, that young William spent the early years of his life. His mother remarried and after the death of Dr. Griffith in 1869, the family moved to a new home at Gobowen in the same county. It seems that his stepfather was not a successful provider for the family. This resulted in William's dropping out of school at the age of fourteen to take a job to help support the family and himself. Thus, his earliest life was not very promising. But this was the background of the one whom God would shortly bring to Himself, and would

transform into a well educated, literary, sensitive man of God. This was the background of one who would bear the torch of truth in both Britain and North America.¹

Conversion

Right after his sixteenth birthday, William was persuaded to teach a Sunday School class, much against his will. Prior to this he had been an active member of Holy Trinity Church, Castle Fields, Oswestry, England. He enjoyed the musical programs and sang tenor in the Parish Church Choir. He also belonged to the Young Men's Society.² This Sunday School class caused William to look sincerely into his own life to determine whether he knew the truth of what he was teaching in this class. It became evident to him that he had nothing of any lasting value to teach to his students about God. He has written:

. . . for about four months I did my best, though I was led to see that I was really trying to teach what I did not know myself. During this time I bought a Bible and all the while I was getting more impressed with the fact that these men had something I had not.³

¹ M. Guthrie Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, 1861-1924: Minister, Scholar, Teacher (London: Church Book Room Press Ltd., 1949), p. 4.

² W.H. Griffith Thomas, "True Stories of Well-Known Men," The Herald of Salvation, LXIII (n. d.), n. p.

³ Autobiographical manuscript supplied by Mrs. E.H. Griffith Thomas Gillespie.

It was soon after this time that William met two Christians, Mr. Charles Poole and Mr. Preston, from the Young Men's Society. Through discussions with these two men he began to consider God's claim on his life.

No light came at first, Griffith Thomas' difficulty being that he could not "feel" saved. At length Poole gave him a coin and asked him to put it into his pocket. "Do you feel you've got it?" he was asked. "No," he replied, "I know I have." "So," Poole rejoined, "we know we have Christ when we accept Him and believe in His Word, without feeling it." Kneeling down, they all prayed and light and joy came into the soul of Griffith Thomas. "When I awoke the next morning (March 24, 1878)," he wrote later, "my soul was simply overflowing with joy, and since then I have never doubted that it was on that Saturday night that I was born again, converted to God."¹

Griffith Thomas' conversion resulted in an immediate increase in his service at his church. Later in that year he was confirmed. During his early years as a Christian, William wondered if God were calling him to the foreign field or into the ministry at home. This resulted in conflicts with his stepfather, but through these early experiences Griffith Thomas' faith was strengthened.

London

In 1879, Griffith Thomas went to London for a visit with his stepfather's brother, Mr. William Charles, in Clerkenwell.

¹Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 4.

Although the visit was only to be for a short time, Griffith Thomas was offered a post in his uncle's office.¹ After receiving guidance from scripture and a confirming letter from home, Thomas took up residence in London. This move provided an opportunity for young William to take up his studies once more.²

The time that William spent in his uncle's office was hard on him physically. The office work was so severe that the only time that was available for studies was between 10:30 and 2:30 a. m. Although this hardly seems like an ideal situation, it was during these three years that he acquired a working knowledge of Greek.³ This would serve him well in the rest of his educational endeavors as well as in the years of ministry that were ahead of him.

At the age of twenty-one, young Griffith Thomas was offered a lay-curacy by Rev. B. Oswald Sharp, the Vicar of the church he attended. This allowed Thomas to begin attending lectures at King's

¹ Herbert F. Stevenson, "Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas," in The Ministry of Keswick, ed. by Herbert F. Stevenson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 197.

² Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, pp. 5-6.

³ M. Guthrie Clark, "W.H. Griffith-Thomas (sic)--a Great Christian Educationist," The Evangelical Christian, XX (September, 1961), 16.

College, London. He attended classes each morning while fulfilling his obligation to the church during the afternoons and evenings.

During this time Griffith Thomas studied under Principal Henry Wace, who was later to become the Dean of Canterbury. Thomas would later dedicate his work A Sacrament of our Redemption to Wace in memory of the time spent at King's College.¹ After three years of this arrangement, Griffith Thomas was graduated with his Associateship from King's College, London, "with distinction."² This was an extraordinary achievement in light of the time required by his parish duties. This points up two elements that recur throughout Griffith Thomas' life. First, the elements of scholarship and practical work are intertwined, and second is the stress on excellence in the academic aspects of life.

Having received his Associateship, Griffith Thomas' way was now clear for Ordination, the final preparation alone remaining. This can be told in a couple of sentences. A "First" in the Cambridge Prelims, which was hurriedly prepared for, was followed by the Bishop of London's examination for Deacon's Orders. In the latter, Griffith Thomas headed the list and this distinction meant, as usual, that he was chosen as Gospeller at the Trinity Ordination in 1885.³

¹W.H. Griffith Thomas, A Sacrament of Our Redemption (London: Bemrose & Sons Ltd., n.d.), p. iii.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 7.

Following ordination by the Bishop of London, Dr. Temple, who afterward became Archbishop of Canterbury,¹ Griffith Thomas continued to work for three and a half years under the Rev. B. Oswald Sharp as curate of St. Peter's, Clerkenwell. During this time Thomas became known for his powerful preaching from the pulpit.

Oxford

In 1888, Canon Howell, whom Griffith Thomas had first met nine years earlier when his parents had moved to Wrexham just before he had moved to London, encouraged him to write to Canon Christopher concerning the possibility of obtaining an Oxford curacy.² Griffith Thomas began correspondence with Canon Christopher in July, 1888, concerning this possibility with which he could combine studies at Christ Church. Christopher's initial response was not too positive. He explained that although there was a considerable need for curates to give themselves to a program of visitation of the parishioners, there was in any case, no vacancy on his staff.³

¹ Rudolf A. Renfer, "A History of Dallas Theological Seminary" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, June, 1959), p. 64.

² Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 8.

³ J.S. Reynolds, Canon Christopher of St. Aldate's, Oxford (Abingdon, England: The Abbey Press, 1967), p. 255.

Canon Christopher was at this point convinced of Griffith Thomas' ability to do fine work at Oxford, although he would be entering at a much later age than was usual for students. Christopher wrote,

If you had not been Gospeller at the Bishop of London's Trinity examination [sic] and obtained a first class in the "Preliminary," I should have said to you that life is too short for an ordained man to apply himself to pass Oxford Examinations. But as I think from your past success that you would obtain a first Class in Theology the case is different. Some position of usefulness may be opened to you as a first Class Oxford man which would not be open to you as a King's College Associate.¹

He sent literature about the examinations with the letter which must have given Griffith Thomas encouragement.

The correspondence between Thomas and Christopher continued for six months. Additionally, "impressive letters of recommendation were reaching Christopher, notably from Canon Howell, Vicar of Wrexham, one of the ablest Welsh preachers, who especially commended Thomas' own sermons."² Meanwhile, Alfred Peachey Cox, one of Christopher's curates, became ill and unable to continue in the ministry at St. Aldates. This resulted in an invitation in early January from Canon Christopher to Griffith Thomas to join the staff of St. Aldates, as Senior Curate. He was offered the same salary that

¹Ibid.

²Reynolds, Canon Christopher, p. 255.

previous curates had received, even though he was to devote a portion of his time to the studies for his degree at Oxford. In February, 1889, Griffith Thomas began his duties in Oxford.¹ Thus began seven years under the direct supervision of A. M. W. Christopher, one of the most outstanding leaders of evangelical Christianity in England. Of this relationship Renfer writes,

The godly Canon, whose chief aim was to win men to Christ, regularly invited undergraduates to his home to join him in extemporaneous prayer, and supplied them with books of an evangelical character. His influence was doubtless a major factor in molding the young divinity student's [Griffith Thomas'] keen interest in scholarly Bible exposition and evangelism.²

Pastoral Work

Griffith Thomas was very involved in the ministry at St. Aldate's. It must be remembered that Canon Christopher was well advanced in years during the seven years that Thomas ministered under him. Clark says,

Besides frequent preaching on Sundays, there was a round of parochial meetings, such as the weekly prayer meetings, Band of Hope gatherings, and a mid-week service. He did much to revive the Sunday School in

¹ Ibid., p. 256.

² Rudolf A. Renfer, "Giant in the Church," The Sunday School Times, CIII (September 23, 1961), 742.

the parish, a regular feature of his work being the teachers' preparation class on Tuesday nights.¹

Indeed, his work is amazing considering that he was at this time also devoting himself to the studies at Christ Church.

Again, at St. Aldates, Griffith Thomas became well loved for his ability to expound the scriptures from the pulpit. One evening, Canon Christopher "looked over his spectacles at the congregation and said: 'I see a larger congregation than usual here this evening. You did not expect me to preach. Well, he [Thomas] will be preaching next Sunday, so bring all you can to hear the Gospel.'² The increase in attendance at the Sunday evening services was credited to Thomas' ability by Canon Christopher.

Thomas also attempted to make changes within the church service which would be pleasing to those in attendance. Canon Christopher was known for being conservative in this respect. "During his earlier years at Oxford Christopher had been approached by some who wished that the psalms should be sung in St. Aldates, but he refused, saying, 'You can sing them over my grave.'³ Griffith Thomas succeeded in convincing Christopher to have the

¹ Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, pp. 9-10.

² Reynolds, Christopher, p. 266.

³ Ibid., pp. 264-265.

psalms sung at a mid-week service. This was a first for St. Aldate's and the people liked the change, but it was a surprise to Thomas when Christopher announced that henceforth the psalms would be sung at every Sunday Evening service.¹

Another of Thomas' duties at St. Aldate's was the Sunday Schools, of which he was the superintendent. He initiated a Tuesday evening teachers' class to strengthen the presentation of the material on the following Sunday. When Griffith Thomas left St. Aldate's in 1895 the Sunday School had a staff of over sixty.²

Thus, it is evident that Griffith Thomas had a rare ability to work with people.

He attached very great importance to this side of his ministerial life and he gave himself wholeheartedly to it. . . . He was a great favorite with young and old alike. His cheerful approach, combined with a desire to care for the spiritual welfare of all he met, gave him a flying start.³

Academic Work

As was noted earlier, Griffith Thomas desired to further his education while in Oxford at St. Aldate's. This was to prove to

¹ Ibid., p. 265.

² Ibid., p. 283.

³ Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 9.

to be a difficult goal to achieve because of his heavy schedule in the parish and his absence from the scholastic life for a number of years. For the first eighteen months, Thomas studied with a tutor to prepare himself for entrance to Christ Church, Oxford.¹ After the initial difficulties were overcome, partly through the kind assistance of Dean Paget, Griffith Thomas was enrolled as a non-collegiate (one who didn't live in) student. The work was difficult, but Griffith Thomas was able to devote four mornings a week to his preparation for his examinations. Clark reports,

There was a corner at the Bodleian Library which was known only to the Rector, where he did most of his work. His powers of concentration were very great and it was jokingly said he never forgot anything he read even to the number of the page.²

Another has said, "It was during the time he was filling this Oxford curacy that he entered upon his university course, which proved to be one of real brilliancy."³

In 1894, Griffith Thomas was awarded the Hall-Houghton Junior Septuagint Prize for his excellent scholarship. The following year he was "Proxima accessit" for the Ellerton Theological

¹Clark, "Griffith-Thomas, Educationist," p. 17.

²Ibid., pp. 8-9.

³A personal friend, "A True Evangelical Leader," The Sunday School Times, LIV (December 14, 1912), 797.

Essay. When the time for the final examinations, "Schools," came in the Trinity term of 1895, Griffith Thomas was graduated in the first class with only one other student.¹ This was a notable achievement but one that was typical of Griffith Thomas, i. e., in combining parochial work with the study for a degree. Also receiving his degree in Theology in 1893 was another scholar of note. The name of Kirsopp Lake of Lincoln, Oxford, appears on the lists as graduating in the second class.²

As a result of his notable achievements in the academic world, Griffith Thomas began to receive offers to speak at various churches and conferences. The most outstanding opportunity came in early 1896 when he was invited by Dr. Barlow, the Vicar of Islington, to read a paper at the Islington Clerical Conference. Clark reports that this was the only time that a curate had been honored in this way.³ His lecture on the church was arranged under three headings: (1) The foundation of the Church; (2) The Functions of

¹Arthur Cleveland Downer, A Century of Evangelical Religion in Oxford (London: The Church Book Room, n. d.), p. 95.

²List for Oxford B. D., 1895, Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas papers.

³Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 10.

the Church; (3) The Form of the Church.¹ Clark quotes his closing paragraph which sums up Thomas' view of the church.

Exalt Christ and the church finds her right place, but Church history more than once shows that together with what are called "High" view of the Church visible, have usually been found low views of the Church spiritual and of Christ the Head of the Church. Where the Church tends to precede, there Christ tends to recede. Bring forward the Church as the depository of grace and you tend to push back Christ as the Source of grace. But exalt Christ in the Godhead of His Person, the completeness of His Sacrifice, the power of His resurrection, the perfection of His righteousness, the uniqueness of His Priesthood; exalt the Holy Ghost as the direct Revealer of Christ to the Soul, as the immediate and not mediated Source of grace to all believers, as the divine Illuminator of the Word to each disciple-- and then you will obtain, maintain, and retain in its true position the primitive and positive truth of the Church as that body of which Christ is the head; in which the Spirit dwells as the present, continuous and permanent life; to which all the promises of God are made; outside which no one can ever be saved; from whom no believer can ever be excommunicated and against which the gates of Hades shall never prevail.²

It was because of the brilliance of this paper at the Islington gathering that Griffith Thomas was to be invited to accept the rectorship of St. Paul's, Portman Square, in the West End of London.³

¹Clark, "Griffith-Thomas, Educationist," p. 18.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 10.

³A Friend, "Evangelical Leader," p. 797.

CHAPTER III

MINISTRY IN ENGLAND

William Henry Griffith Thomas was thirty-five years old when he was offered the rectorship of St. Paul's. He had just completed his education. He had spent the last seven years learning through practical experience, by ministering under one of England's most noted men of God. He was now fully prepared to serve God's people in this place.

Portman Square

The Place

In the mid- to late 1700's, the City of London, as well as other commercial centers, experienced a period of population growth. At the same time, the church of England was experiencing revival forces.¹ These two factors led to increased numbers in the churches and the need for additional parishes to be established. But the Bishops were not eager to establish new parishes, because of the

¹G.R. Balleine, A History of the Evangelical Party (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), pp. 1-40.

control this would place in the hands of the evangelical clergy.¹ The resulting compromise was the establishment of proprietary chapels. It was through the influence of proprietary chapels and the lectureships within existing parish churches that evangelical preaching was continued in the English church through the 1800's.²

Proprietary chapels were semi-independent institutions. They were allowed to exist by the Bishops, but the Bishop did not have direct control over the chapel. A group of friends, living in the same general area, and desiring to worship together, could "put their heads and money together"³ and establish a proprietary chapel. Balleine says, "The lay proprietors were always allowed to choose their own minister, and now they began frequently to select Evangelical clergy, so that soon these chapels became strongholds of the new teaching."⁴

Between 1764 and 1784, Portman Square came into being on the fashionable west side of London. The citizens desired to hear

¹Ibid., pp. 40-43.

²Ibid., pp. 44-45.

³M. Guthrie Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, 1861-1924: Minister, Scholar, Teacher (London: Church Book Room Press Ltd., 1949), p. 11.

⁴Balleine, Evangelical Party, p. 44.

the gospel preached and to participate in congregational worship with one another. They banded together, agreed to lease property from Lord Portman, built a chapel and appointed their first minister.¹ They called their chapel St. Paul's and it has remained a center of evangelicalism till this day.²

At the time that Griffith Thomas was called to St. Paul's, Portman Square, the congregation included many distinguished members. Sir George Williams and Lord Kinnaird, both of whom were instrumental in establishing the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association, were members and regular in their attendance at services.³ The Church Warden was the well-known surgeon, Dr. Amand Routh. Also, in the congregation were "Lady Sophia Cecil, the Ladies Elizabeth and Flora Knox, Lady Lichfield, and others of high standing."⁴ Other

¹Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 13.

²Rudolf A. Renfer, "Giant in the Church," The Sunday School Times, September 23, 1961, p. 742.

³Rudolf A. Renfer, "A History of Dallas Theological Seminary" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1959), p. 65.

⁴M. Guthrie Clark, "W.H. Griffith-Thomas (sic)-- a Great Christian Educationist," The Evangelical Christian, LIX (September, 1961), 18.

distinguished members of the congregation included the Lords Shaftesbury, Cairns, and Harrowby.¹

The congregation was also noted for its emphasis upon missions. One of the "Cambridge Seven," Montague Beauchamp, had been raised in St. Paul's. The church was one of the strongest supporters of the Cambridge Missionary Society, both financially and by means of their prayers. Clark attributes this support of foreign missions, and other causes, to the deep spiritual experience of the members.²

The Ministry

This then was the congregation to which Griffith Thomas was called. For the next nine years he would build upon the foundation which he found there. He recognized that his role had greatly changed. In discussing the problems of a new man taking over the work of another, he writes, "When a man enters a new sphere the difficulty is of course much greater in regard to the work of the parish, because he is at once responsible for what goes on."³ The

¹Renfer, "History," p. 65.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 12.

³W.H. Griffith Thomas, Ministerial Life and Work, abridged by Alice Thomas (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1927), p. 230.

principles that Griffith Thomas operated on while at St. Paul's are preserved in his volume, The Work of the Ministry. Griffith Thomas wrote in the preface that the substance of this book came from addresses and lectures on pastoral work delivered from 1905-1910 at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.¹ Clark correctly points out that this is the case, "but the experience embodied in it was largely gained at St. Paul's."²

Preaching.--While it would be impossible to bring out all of Griffith Thomas' views on the pastorate, it is beneficial to consider briefly some of the major principles under which he worked. Foremost in his mind was "Preaching." He wrote, "A wise pastor has suggested that the new man should begin by feeding the flock, because, as it is well known, a man can do anything with sheep if first he feeds them."³ In his book on the ministry, Griffith Thomas devotes over half of the section on practical theology to one subject, and that subject is preaching. After commenting on the then present tendency to neglect preaching in the churches of England, he writes, "it is simple truth to say that there can be no strong ministry, and no effective

¹Ibid., pp. 7-8.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 11.

³Thomas, Life and Work, p. 230.

Church to-day without preaching."¹ And, "churches are well attended in proportion to the vigour of the preaching."²

Griffith Thomas taught that there are two necessary preparations that must take place before good preaching can occur. First, the preacher must be prepared for the sermon. "Spiritual preparation," writes Griffith Thomas, "might be regarded as so essential as not to require notice, and yet it is necessary to emphasize it as one of the methods of true discipline for preaching."³ He also says, "The man who plunges his soul in the pure stream of Bible meditation day by day will find his preaching marked by vividness and purity which will bring joy and blessing to his hearers."⁴ The second preparation that is necessary is the preparation of the sermon by the preacher. This, for Griffith Thomas, consisted of four steps. After the preacher had decided upon a text, he must "think himself empty."⁵ By this, Griffith Thomas means that the preacher must let the text speak forth, and not impose one's own ideas upon the

¹Ibid., p. 136.

²Ibid., p. 141.

³Ibid., p. 141.

⁴Ibid., p. 142.

⁵Ibid., p. 143.

text. Second, the preacher must "read himself full."¹ Here, Griffith Thomas suggests that the preacher read as widely as possible in books and journals. The third step is to "write oneself clear."² He taught that it is essential to put one's thoughts into writing. He felt that only by manuscripting a sermon would one achieve the precision that is necessary to true exposition of the scripture. When this intellectual work is done, and all through its process, the preacher must "pray himself keen."³ It is only then, according to Griffith Thomas, that the preacher is ready to stand before the congregation.

For Griffith Thomas, there were four essential requirements for every sermon. He taught that every sermon must have a definite aim or goal. In the sermon there must be a simplicity and precision of language. The sermon must be arranged clearly. And, there must be a forcefulness of application to every sermon.⁴

That these principles were not only taught by Griffith Thomas, but also practiced, is evidenced in a citation given to him upon his

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 144.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 145-147.

departure from St. Paul's to take up his responsibilities at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. This citation presented to him by the congregation reads in part, "You have above all opened the Bible to us in a wonderful way; and have preached the purity and saving power of the gospel message, whilst your consistent life and character have fitly emphasized your words."¹

Personal Work.--Griffith Thomas taught that it was extremely important for a pastor to be involved with his people. He says, "Intercourse with his people will enrich his preaching, making it real, practical, sympathetic and alive. The life of the preacher in the week will either deepen or remove the impression of the sermon."² Griffith Thomas recognized that visiting merely for social purposes was not enough, but "The primary aim of all our visitation must be spiritual and not merely social. Of course the social element must enter into it, but it certainly must not predominate."³ In his book on pastoral ministry, Griffith Thomas gives illustrations on how he found creative ways of involving himself with his people. His illustrations include visitation of his people at home, work and play

¹Citation, n.d., Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

²Thomas, Life and Work, p. 284.

³Ibid.

as well as the crucial times of visitation of the ill and the aged.¹

Griffith Thomas is careful to remind pastors and would-be pastors that it is vitally important not to let visitation of the flock take precedence over feeding the flock through preaching. He says,

If a man spends his time in visiting to such an extent that his time in his study suffers, he will experience an intellectual and a spiritual deadness when he comes to prepare his sermon which will inevitably affect the reality of his preaching. . . . But if visitation is kept strictly subordinated to preaching, it will prove one of the most unfailing opportunities of ministering to those who are familiar to the preacher, whose life he knows, whose interests he appreciates, whose joys and sorrows are his own, and whose life in Christ is his constant thought and prayer.²

That Griffith Thomas achieved his goal in this area of ministry is abundantly shown in the numerous notes he received from his parishioners upon his departure for Oxford.³

Sunday School and Bible Classes.--Griffith Thomas felt that a minister must take care, lest he neglect his work among children. He illustrates that fact in the following way. "A Scottish shepherd

¹ Ibid., pp. 208-212.

² Ibid., pp. 204-206.

³ Approximately fifty of these notes and letters are in the Griffith Thomas papers in the archives of Dallas Theological Seminary.

was once asked how he was able to produce so fine a breed of sheep, and he answered, 'By taking care of the lambs.'"¹ He continues, "It is a great mistake to think that 'anything will do' for Sunday Schools, and it is this attitude that leads many people to describe as 'Sunday School' something that stands for what is essentially weak, poor, and almost worthless."² While he believed that the content of the Sunday School work was vitally important, it was not the most important aspect. "Sunday School work will be largely that of personal impression and inspiration rather than that which is purely intellectual and educative."³

Bible classes were also an integral part of the function of the church. Especially important were men's Bible classes, "because when the men are won the wives and children will almost always be influenced."⁴ Women's classes should also play a role with the minister's wife and other capable women taking the lead.⁵

¹ Thomas, Life and Work, p. 213.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 215.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 216-217.

Prayer.--According to Griffith Thomas the prayer meeting may be described as "the big wheel of the Church."¹ It is around this wheel that all the other activities revolve. Clark has written of St. Paul's, Portman Square, "All the usual parochial machinery was there--with a difference! It was oiled and kept running sweetly by prayer. No less than six prayer meetings were held each week,"² This was no doubt related to Griffith Thomas' emphasis on prayer, and his practical teaching concerning public prayer in the prayer meetings. He writes,

. . . [there are] two essential requirements for public prayer: brevity and distinctness. If those present "make long prayers," or speak indistinctly, or with head bowed to the floor, the meeting will be injured. But if brevity and clearness are assured, the freedom of prayer will be in every way helpful.³

Important Events:--Griffith Thomas' nine years in London were marked by several incidents that are most worthy of note. After two years of service at St. Paul's, in 1898, Griffith Thomas married Alice Monk. He was thirty-seven years old when they married. The new Mrs. Thomas took an active place in the ministry of St. Paul's. She "taught a weekly Bible Class, conducted the

¹ Ibid., p. 224.

² Clark, "Griffith-Thomas, Educationist," p. 18.

³ Thomas, Life and Work, p. 225.

Gleaner's Union branch, and introduced the all-day working party,¹ an idea which spread to other churches."²

In 1898, St. Paul's was reorganized with a parochial church council of forty-eight members. This council served in an advisory capacity to the minister. Certain men were ex officio members, the rest were selected by the Vicar and the communicants.³

In 1900, Griffith Thomas led his congregation in a financial restructuring of the chapel. Until this time, the land under the chapel was owned by the Lord Portman. He received 400 pounds sterling per year for the use of the property. Griffith Thomas and the leading men felt that this arrangement was not ideal. Therefore, in 1900 Griffith Thomas effected a change. He asked for 8,000 pounds sterling from the congregation to purchase the property. In three months the money was raised and the property purchased. Of this amount, Lord Portman gave 3,000 pounds sterling back to the chapel to form the nucleus of an endowment fund.⁴

¹This was a day set aside during which all church members donated their labor in order to repair and beautify the church building and grounds.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 12.

³Ibid.

⁴Clark, "Griffith-Thomas, Educationist," p. 18.

At the same time, Portman Square was upgraded from a conventional district to an ordinary parish. This meant that Rev. Griffith Thomas was the first Vicar of the St. Paul's Portman Square.¹

From February 12 until April 15, 1902, Rev. Griffith Thomas led a group of fifteen parishioners to Palestine. He actually met the group at Genoa, because he had been ill when they had left London. The trip included stops at Genoa, Naples, Alexandria, Cairo, Port Said, Beyraut (Beirut), then the Holy Land. The first day there, the weather was cloudy and one member of the band was ill. He quickly recovered and the group toured from Carmel to Galilee, then Capernaum. They continued their stay in Palestine by visiting Nazareth and then back to Carmel. On to Jaffa, then to Jerusalem, Griffith Thomas guided this group. They also visited Bethlehem, Jericho, the Dead Sea, and Bethany. They returned to Jerusalem for Palm Sunday and worshipped on Mount Zion. The return trip to England included stops in Asia Minor, Greece, and several European cities.²

¹Ibid.

²(W.H. Griffith Thomas), "The Palestine Party, Feb. 12-April 15, 1901--A Rhyming Remembrance!" (pamphlet printed for private circulation), pp. 1-24. Two copies of this pamphlet are located in the Griffith Thomas papers in the Archives of Dallas Theological Seminary.

Undoubtedly this Palestine trip would have been the highlight of the year for Rev. Griffith Thomas, had not a second event occurred. It was in this year of 1902 that the Thomas' only child, Winifred, was born.¹ During the incumbency of Griffith Thomas at St. Paul's, he and his wife endured the sorrow of losing two other babies.

The year of 1903 marked another monumental event in the life of Griffith Thomas. It was in this year that Griffith Thomas traveled across the Atlantic for the first of many times. He had been invited to address the annual Northfield Conference which had been associated with Dwight L. Moody during his later years.² While there, Griffith Thomas received the following letter, expressing in part the feeling of those who heard him at this conference.

East Northfield, Mass.
Sept. 12th 1903.

My Dear Mr. Thomas!

I want to tell you how much we have all enjoyed your lectures during these days and that I am very glad indeed that you are to give our people a message tomorrow morning.

¹Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 12.

²Renfer, "Giant," p. 742.

I am enclosing an order of service which is about the plan we usually follow--use it or not as you choose.

May I ask you to give out the notices as per enclosure? Prof. Phillips will (D. V.) be on hand to lead the singing.

I am sorry that my engagement at Mount Hermon will make it impossible for me to be at the morning service; but I shall not forget to pray you may be both blessed & a blessing.

Sincerely yours,

A. Fay Smith¹

The year 1904 marked the publication of Rev. Griffith Thomas' first major work, The Catholic Faith. This work, "represents an endeavour to answer two questions: (1) What is the Church of England? (2) What does the Church of England teach?"² This book primarily grew out of Griffith Thomas' work in teaching confirmation classes at St. Paul's, but he remarks that some of the material came from his sermons to various congregations.³ Canon

¹ Letter, A. Fay Smith to W.H. Griffith Thomas, September 12, 1903, Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

² W.H. Griffith Thomas, The Catholic Faith (new edition; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), p. 4.

³ Ibid., p. vi.

Dyson Hague of Canada later said that this volume "probably established his reputation first and foremost, and it will always remain a classic for the evangelicals of the Church of England."¹

In 1905, Rev. Griffith Thomas was asked to leave his first and only pastorate, and to assume the duties of Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. This brought to an end nine years in the pastorate which "afforded him opportunity to implement the evangelical principles which characterized him as a low church Anglican."² Those nine years also provided Rev. Griffith Thomas with an understanding of church life which would serve him well during his later ministry in Bible conferences and teaching in educational institutions in England and America. In his farewell letter to the congregation printed in the Parish Magazine of October, 1905, Griffith Thomas writes:

These nine years of happy ministry have left a deep mark on my heart and life, and I lay down my work here with keenest regret, even though I am fully convinced that I have taken the right step in so doing. I can understand now from personal experience what I have long known from the testimony of others that "Portman Chapel is one of the dearest spots on earth." It will be specially dear to me as the place of my first home,

¹ Canon Dyson Hague, "Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas," The Evangelical Christian, XX (July, 1924), 276.

² Renfer, "History," p. 65.

and as the place where we have had our first experiences of home joys and sorrows.¹

Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

In the middle years of the nineteenth century, the evangelicals of England were being attacked from two sides. First, they had to face the growing Oxford movement² which, with Newman, was moving back towards Rome. The second influence that they were facing was the liberalizing of Theology within the English Church. Binns says, "Earlier in the century the publication of Lyell's Principles of Geology had occasioned much perturbation amongst the orthodox, but those who proclaimed the new ideas in Geology made strenuous efforts to reconcile their teaching with the book of Genesis."³ By the middle of the century, "the translation of Strauss' Life of Christ and other similar works added to the confusion."⁴ Then, in 1858, clergymen of the Church of England published a volume entitled Essays and

¹"Farewell Letter," Parish Magazine, October, 1905, quoted in M. Guthrie Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas (London: Church Book Room Press Ltd., 1949), p. 14.

²For a brief sympathetic survey of the Oxford movement, see W. J. Knox Little, The Conflict of Ideals in the Church of England (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1905), pp. 36-74.

³Leonard Elliott Binns, The Evangelical Movement in the English Church (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1928), p. 53.

⁴Ibid., pp. 53-54.

Reviews. "The alarm aroused by Essays and Reviews became almost a panic when Bishop Colenso in the following years published his work on the Pentateuch."¹

These forces led the evangelicals to think deeply about the role of theological education. It seemed clear that influences other than evangelical had taken over the system of theological education. "In 1860 T. P. Boulton, Fellow of St. John's Cambridge, read a paper before the Western Clerical and Lay Association, calling attention to the urgent need for an Evangelical Theological College."² A few years later during the discussion caused by the slashing attack on Christianity of a book called Supernatural Religion, a fund was raised to found colleges at the Universities.³

This led in 1877 to the establishment of Wycliffe Hall at Oxford. Later in 1881, a similar institution (Ridley Hall) would be established at Cambridge. The purposes of these institutions are stated by Binns as: "(a) To set forth the sound scriptural and theological foundations of the Evangelical faith and practice of the

¹ Ibid., p. 54.

² G. R. Balleine, A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England (2nd ed.; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), pp. 180-181.

³ Ibid., p. 181.

Church of England as seen in the Prayer Book and Articles; (b) To combat Rationalistic propaganda."¹

Early Leaders

The Rev. R. B. Girdlestone was the first Principal of Wycliffe Hall. The evangelical principles taught at Wycliffe were not in favor with many of the leaders at Oxford, and consequently the progress was slow at first. Girdlestone continued and saw some progress and an increase in the number of students. He remained Principal until 1889 when, upon his retirement, the Rev. F. J. Chavasse was appointed Principal.²

Wycliffe grew in numbers and importance under Chavasse. When he resigned in 1900 to become Bishop of Liverpool, he was succeeded by the Rev. Harry George Grey of Wadham. Grey had been serving in India as a missionary and Secretary to the Church Missionary Society until his appointment at Wycliffe Hall. He would again return to India in 1905.³

¹Binns, Evangelical Movement, p. 55.

²Arthur Cleveland Downer, A Century of Evangelical Religion in Oxford (London: The Church Book Room, 1938), pp. 112-113.

³Ibid., p. 91.

Griffith Thomas' Work at Wycliffe Hall

The return of Rev. Grey to India in 1905 created a vacancy in the Principalship of Wycliffe Hall. The Trustees immediately began to search for the best man to occupy the position.¹ Their choice fell upon Griffith Thomas.² The Vicar of St. Paul's Portman Square accepted the new appointment. This new place of service would afford him an even wider opportunity for service. This service was in the area of teaching which had proved to be his special gift from God.³ His ministry while at Wycliffe Hall expanded greatly during the five years he spent there. These five years were the last extended period that he would spend in England, and Clark says of these years, "certainly the most important, at any rate as far as England is concerned, leaving out of account the last 14 years of his life which he spent on the other side of the Atlantic."⁴

¹ Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 15.

² Renfer, "History," p. 67.

³ John McNicol, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 19, 1924), 427.

⁴ Clark, "Griffith-Thomas, Educationist," p. 19.

Teaching Ministry

In preparation for his new responsibility Griffith Thomas read everything that he could acquire on the current theological problem. He devoted special attention to higher criticism. He noted all the objections raised by the critics and would later answer them both in his lectures and on the printed page.¹ Clark narrated the following exchange between Griffith Thomas and a friend. "'Do you mean to say,' said a friend, 'that you have read Driver and others, and you are still a conservative?' 'Yes, I have,' was the reply, 'and that's the reason why I am!'"²

The five years at Wycliffe Hall "not only confirmed Griffith Thomas as an able expositor, but established his reputation as a theological scholar and professor of rare teaching gifts."³ His teaching duties included courses covering the entire theological spectrum, including Higher Criticism, Problems of the Pentateuch, Christian Doctrine, Apologetics, Greek, Old Testament Historical books, the

¹Such as in his excellent work Some Tests of Old Testament Criticism (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1922), pp. 1-230.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 15.

³Renfer, "Giant," p. 742.

Gospels, and Pastoral Theology.¹ It was during this time that Griffith Thomas worked on what was probably the greatest book to come from his hand, his work on the thirty-nine Articles. The Principles of Theology began as his lectures on Christian Doctrine. He continued to work on the manuscript throughout his life, and it was not published until after his death.

In addition to his normal duties at Wycliffe, he conducted a weekly Greek Testament Reading in the University itself.² Griffith Thomas had a unique ability for making the Greek New Testament interesting and vivid. This Reading became very popular with the students at Oxford. Among those who were regular attenders of these meetings were the three Lawrence brothers, one of whom later became known as Lawrence of Arabia.³

While at Wycliffe, Griffith Thomas established a warm personal relationship with his students. Clark establishes this fact when he refers to Griffith Thomas' book, The Work of the Ministry.

. . . it carries the following inscription: "to the eighty-two students of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, with whom it was my privilege and joy to be associated October, 1905

¹Renfer, "History," p. 67.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 16.

³Renfer, "History," p. 67.

to August, 1910." One envies the experience of those four score men, a number of whom have written to me about their old Principal, always affectionately referred to as "G.T." What days! What blessings! What memories!¹

During Griffith Thomas' second year at Wycliffe Hall he completed his work for his D.D. degree. His dissertation for the Oxford D.D. later was published as A Sacrament of Our Redemption. Thus it becomes proper for us to refer to him as the Rev. Dr. Griffith Thomas.

Keswick and Bible Conference Ministry.--The Keswick movement began in 1873 when a number of Americans, including R. Pearsall Smith and his wife Hannah, had an unplanned series of meetings while in England on a visit. The Smiths and many other early leaders of the movement had been heavily influenced by the Oberlin perfectionism that resulted from the teachings of Charles G. Finney.² This series of meetings held at Langley Park, Norfolk, led to others where people were turning to the Lord with the goal of improving their spiritual life. During the summer of 184, a conference of six days' duration was held for a small group at the 'Broadlands,' a country home of the Rt. Hon. W. Cowper-Temple. At this

¹ Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, pp. 14-15.

² Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 178.

conference it was decided to sponsor a larger conference to meet at Oxford from August 29th to September 7th, 1874. Asa Mahon, the former president of Oberlin College, was an active participant in these meetings along with the R. Pearsall Smiths and Mr. and Mrs. William E. Boardman, also Americans who were associated with the holiness revivals in America.¹ Because of the early influence of this objectionable theology of perfectionism upon the Keswick movement, many American conservatives were a little hesitant to become involved with such a movement.² But the evidence will show that these early leaders soon passed from the scene. The influence they had upon the Christian Life teaching was replaced by the low Anglicans who became the leaders of Keswick and held a more orthodox view. A.T. Pierson is quite emphatic when he points out that these early leaders had no subsequent involvement with the Keswick movement.³

One of those who attended the Oxford Convention of 1874 was the Rev. T.D. Harford-Battersby, Vicar of St. John's, Keswick. At this conference he had a deep spiritual experience with the

¹Ibid., pp. 178-179.

²Ibid.

³Arthur T. Pierson, The Keswick Movement (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1903), pp. 14-15.

Savior.¹ Battersby also attended the great Brighton Convention from May 29 to June 7, 1875. D. L. Moody was closing his evangelistic campaign in London at this time, and said to his audience, "Let us lift up our hearts to seek earnestly a blessing on the great Convention that is now being held in Brighton, perhaps the most important meeting ever gathered."²

At this meeting Battersby and his friend, Mr. Robert Wilson, decided to hold a similar conference at Keswick later that summer. The Keswick conference became a yearly affair, and the name Keswick has ever since been associated with the message of the Victorious Christian life. The early emphasis upon the eradication of sin and other objectionable perfectionist doctrines "dropped away and the Keswick teachers substituted an emphasis upon the power of the Spirit to lead the believer away from evil towards righteousness."³

Dr. Griffith Thomas first spoke at Keswick during the summer of 1906. He was an extremely popular speaker and returned in 1907 and 1908. From this time on Dr. Thomas became identified with the Keswick message and the Victorious Life Movement both in

¹ Steven Barabas, So Great Salvation (Westwood, N. J. : Fleming H. Revell Company, n. d.), pp. 19-22.

² Ibid., p. 23.

³ Sandeen, Roots, p. 179.

his native land and later America. In addition to speaking at many different Bible Conferences in England, he was invited by Prince Bernadotte of Sweden to address the Sodertelje conference in 1908.¹ Also in that year he addressed the Pan-Anglican Congress on the subject of the training of candidates for Holy Orders.² In 1910, Dr. Thomas went on a summer long lecture tour in Canada where he was to be called to serve a few months later.

His Literary Ministry.--The five years Dr. Griffith Thomas spent at Wycliffe Hall saw few books published by this great man. However, his pen was not silent. During these years he wrote a weekly column in The Record called "In Conference." In this column he would answer questions on spiritual or theological matters for subscribers who wrote in to the paper. He wrote his dissertation for his Oxford D.D. He was the editor of The Churchman. He was the editor of a series called Anglican Church Handbooks, to which he contributed his book, Christianity Is Christ. It was at this time that he wrote a series of lectures on the Holy Spirit for the Bampton

¹Renfer, "Giant," p. 742.

²Clark, "Griffith Thomas, Educationist," p. 19.

Foundation. They were not accepted, but later were given at the L. P. Stone Lectures at Princeton.¹

Dr. Thomas was also a regular contributor of scholarly articles and book reviews to such London periodicals as The Life of Faith, The Christian, and others. The books that were published by Griffith Thomas during this period include The Apostle Peter and Royal and Loyal.² During this time Griffith Thomas also kept up a very great deal of correspondence. The Archives of Dallas Seminary contain letters from such men as B. B. Warfield, David Smith, J. C. Ryle, H. B. Swede, Henry G. Weston, and Marcus Dods. All of these letters (with the exception of one from Ryle) indicate that they were written during this period of Dr. Thomas' ministry. Also in the Archives can be found many letters to Griffith Thomas, and copies of his replies to people who wrote to him having had no previous or very little contact with Dr. Griffith Thomas.³

One short series of letters calls for special notice as they illustrate Dr. Thomas' loving way of dealing with his students. In

¹ Ibid.

² This book was also published in Germany as In des Konigs Diensst.

³ In the Dallas Theological Seminary Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers, there are many examples of letters such as those referred to above.

December, 1908, Dr. Thomas received a letter from C.H.E. Freeman, a recent graduate of Wycliffe Hall. The letter informed Dr. Griffith Thomas of Freeman's successful passing of the bishop's exam for ordination. The letter is primarily devoted to an expression of Freeman's thankfulness to Dr. Thomas for the years he had spent at Wycliffe Hall under Dr. Thomas. One sentence called Dr. Thomas' attention to a possible lack of devotional attitude at Wycliffe Hall.¹ He replied,

December 10, 1908

My dear Freeman,

. . . Thank you, too, for speaking so candidly about the "conspicuous" absence of a devotional atmosphere at Wycliffe. This, to me, is very sad reading, because if there is one thing above all others I desire and pray for Wycliffe, it is that it shall be a place where God is realized and where men feel the need of a truly devotional life and ministry.

Your words will of course lead me to pray more earnestly that there may be nothing in me personally to hinder this devotional atmosphere. . . . There is, however, another thing to be remembered. As a chain is never stronger than its weakest link, so a Theological College necessarily depends on: . . . the men who are in it, . . . its devotional life will never be much higher than that of the most undevotional member in residence.

¹ Letter, C.H.E. Freeman to Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas, December 9, 1908, Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

Now let me also speak in all brotherly candour. In view of what other men have written to me of the spiritual help they have received at Wycliffe, I wonder your own consciousness of lack has been in some sense a personal matter?¹

Dr. Thomas in a very gentle but firm manner went on in his letter to enumerate several times and several incidents that Freeman's behavior was far from being that of a Christian gentleman. Dr. Thomas explained what others felt concerning Freeman and how he, as Principal, had tried to bring this to Freeman's attention during Freeman's time at Wycliffe.²

Freeman responded in a letter dated December 15, 1908, in which he acknowledged much of his fault and truly agreed to take the matter to the Lord in prayer.³ Thus Griffith Thomas' wise way of dealing with his ex-student possibly moved this young man back onto a right road, having deviated from it.

Evaluation:--During this time at Wycliffe Hall Dr. Griffith Thomas revealed himself to be "A man of wide experience, deep

¹ Letter, Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas to C.H.E. Freeman, December 10, 1908, Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

² Ibid.

³ Letter, C.H.E. Freeman to Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas, December 15, 1908, Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

understanding, true godliness, and rippling humour, he must have been as nearly as possible an ideal Principal."¹ He was a man of God who taught not only through his formal sessions of instruction but also,

. . . the impact of his consecrated personality was even deeper. All his great powers of intellect and heart were fully yielded to God, and then the Holy Spirit wielded him as a teacher of the Truth and as a holy man of God.²

It was only five years in duration but those years at Wycliffe Hall were reflected in Dr. Thomas' ministry on the North American Continent by his tremendous ability to integrate the personal and the theoretical. He came from an intellectual center in Europe to the countries of the United States and Canada which were at the time of his arrival undergoing some tremendous struggles, trying to integrate theology and science. Thus, it was in this context that God took Dr. Griffith Thomas from Oxford and widened his ministry by transplanting him onto the North American continent.

¹ Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 16.

² Ibid., p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

MINISTRY IN NORTH AMERICA

During Dr. Griffith Thomas' visit to America in the spring of 1910, he spent March 21-27 in and around Wycliffe College on the University of Toronto campus.¹ During this time he was approached by Mr. H.W. Hoyles, the President of Wycliffe College, and by Canon O'Meara, Principal of the College. It was their desire that Dr. Griffith Thomas join their staff as the Professor of Apologetics. At this time Griffith Thomas turned the offer down.²

On his return to England, the matter was again opened in a formal manner by means of a letter from Hoyles, O'Meara, and other staff members. Again Dr. Griffith Thomas was offered the chair of Apologetics. This time,

. . . on the receipt of this letter Dr. Griffith Thomas felt it to be desirable to consult with friends at home in whose judgment he had full confidence, and they all,

¹"Notice of a Series of Lectures," n.d., Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

²"Dr. Griffith Thomas: Appointed Professor of Apologetics, Wycliffe College, Toronto," The Record (London), May 20, 1910, p. 485.

without exception, came to the conclusion that the circumstances pointed to a Divine call which must receive the most earnest attention.¹

One of those to whom Dr. Thomas wrote concerning this appointment was the Dean of Canterbury. The Dean encouraged him to take the opportunity, then concluded his letter with the following kind words, "We should relinquish you with much regret in England, but we should not grudge you the large and important sphere which providence seems to offer you . . . God speed you."²

Dr. Griffith Thomas decided that the call to Toronto was truly from God and that he dare not turn it down. Therefore, he resigned his Principalship of Wycliffe Hall and prepared to sail for America. He was succeeded at Wycliffe Hall by Rev. Harry George Grey who had just returned from India due to poor health.³

It is unclear at this point as to the exact reason the following happened. Sometime between Dr. Thomas' acceptance of the appointment to the chair of Apologetics, and his sailing for Canada,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Arthur Cleveland Downer, A Century of Evangelical Religion in Oxford (London: The Church Book Room Press, n. d.), p. 91.

the offer was rescinded and Dr. Thomas was asked to take the chair of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis.¹ Winifred Griffith

Thomas Gillispie has referred to this as a "raw deal" and indicated that her father, and the family, was upset at the change.² The chair of Apologetics had been given to a Wycliffe College graduate.³

When Dr. Griffith Thomas and his family left England, his former congregation at St. Paul's held a farewell dinner for them in London. At this dinner Dr. Griffith Thomas was presented with a check for 500 guineas and an illuminated citation, the original of which is now in the archives of Dallas Theological Seminary.⁴

In Canada

Wycliffe College

During the 1850's it became evident to the Evangelicals in the Protestant Episcopal Church of Canada, that the Tractarian Movement within the Church of England was beginning to become a

¹There are several press clippings in the Griffith Thomas Papers in the Archives of Dallas Theological Seminary which record the change in September, 1910.

²Winifred Griffith Thomas Gillispie, Lecture given at Dallas Theological Seminary, March 2, 1971.

³M. Guthrie Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas (London: Church Book Room Press Ltd., 1949), p. 21.

⁴Citation, n. d., Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

major teaching in Canada. In particular, the controversy centered around Trinity University where the evangelicals looked for men to be their ministers. The controversy continued through the sixties and into the 1870's. The Evangelicals were levelling attacks at Trinity, and Trinity was attempting to show that the teachings it espoused were in accord with the original teachings of the Church of England.¹

Establishment

By the late 1870's, there were two distinct parties within the Church of Canada. The Evangelicals considered "Trinity College an inefficient and unsafe institution."² Therefore, In October, 1877, the Evangelical Party founded Wycliffe College upon the following principles. First, they held the Bible to be the sole Rule of Faith. Second, they held to Justification by Faith in Christ alone. Third, they stood for the sole and exclusive Priesthood of Jesus Christ. Fourth, they held to a statement on the Lord's Supper that allowed no one to bring any shade of Roman meaning to it. Fifth,

¹S. M. Blake, Wycliffe College: An Historical Sketch (Toronto: Wycliffe College, 1910), pp. 5-9.

²Ibid., p. 15.

they included several statements on the church universal and visible that excluded the views that leaned towards Rome.¹

In 1879, Wycliffe College was incorporated, and in 1885, it became officially united with the University of Toronto. The University provided education in all the fields of instruction outside of theology for the Wycliffe Association. It was at first thought that it would be necessary to provide for only twenty-five students at any one time. The school quickly grew beyond that limit and a period of financial crisis came upon the young school.²

Possible Merger

Several delegations went from Wycliffe to Trinity to seek a merger that would allow Wycliffe to maintain its distinctive instruction based upon evangelical principles. All offers were rebuked by Trinity. Wycliffe weathered the crisis and continued its tremendous growth under the leadership of Rev. James Paterson Sheraton who served as Principal from the beginning of the School in 1877 until his death in 1906.³

¹ Ibid., p. 16.

² Ibid., p. 20.

³ Ibid., pp. 21-25.

During the early part of 1910 a generous friend from the Church of England in Canada offered a large sum of money (reports vary between \$200,000 and \$250,000) to the two schools if they would effect a merger. Trinity made several proposals in 1910 that would have Wycliffe and Trinity merge into one college. In each case, Trinity and its Boards would control the new institution. This was clearly unsatisfactory to Wycliffe. By this time Wycliffe was a healthy institution with over 110 students, a fair sized endowment and an acceptable physical plant on the grounds of the University of Toronto. While Wycliffe could use the money that would be given if a merger took place, they would only be interested in the merger only if they would be permitted to maintain their control over the teaching.¹

This discussion and debate was going on as Dr. Griffith Thomas considered the call to Toronto. That he was interested in this controversy is evidenced by the numerous newspaper clippings concerning it among his papers, many of which contain careful notes scribbled in the margins.²

By the time Dr. Thomas arrived in Toronto, the issue had been settled. At least it seemed to be. A merger would again

¹ Ibid., pp. 26-30.

² Newspaper clippings, n. d., Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

become an issue after Dr. Griffith Thomas left the staff. Wycliffe College desired to maintain a distinctive evangelical education because it realized that there were issues that divided the two camps, and that the issues were just as real as they had been thirty years earlier.¹

His Role in the School.--It must have been an exceedingly difficult assignment to change the role of Principal of Wycliffe Hall for the subordinate role of Professor within the school at Toronto. But Dr. Griffith Thomas proved to be a faithful servant throughout his time at Wycliffe College.² Mrs. Gillispie recalled that this period was especially hard on her father, because of subtle and not so subtle attacks upon Dr. Griffith Thomas from other faculty members. She attributes most of it to academic jealousy that naturally might arise in a situation where one as qualified as Dr. Griffith Thomas was in a subordinate role.³

Dr. Thomas was given a lot of elementary work to do at the college while men much his junior, both in age and academic ability, were assigned to the upper level classes. This seemed to

¹ Blake, Wycliffe College, p. 43.

² Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 21.

³ W. G. T. Gillespie, lecture given at Dallas Theological Seminary, March 2, 1971.

upset his family more than it did him. Clark says, "To all such arrangements, however, Griffith Thomas submitted with Christian grace, and never lost sight of his call to Canada."¹ Mrs. Gillespie confirms this when she recalls how unconcerned her father was when such a situation came up.²

Dr. Griffith Thomas became very popular with the students at Wycliffe College. Every week he and his wife would hold an "At Home" or open house where the men could come for fellowship and discussion.³ These times of fellowship developed a closeness between the students and their professor that can only be grasped by an examination of the subsequent correspondence between Dr. Thomas and these students. One series is especially enlightening due to its length. In the Griffith Thomas Papers in the archives of Dallas Theological Seminary there exists a portion of the correspondence between Dr. Griffith Thomas and one of his ex-students from Wycliffe College, Toronto. The ex-student is a Rev. A. C. Silverlight, a German Jew who was sent to Toronto by a Pastor Dolman

¹Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, p. 22.

²W. G. T. Gillespie, lecture given at Dallas Theological Seminary, March 2, 1971.

³M. Guthrie Clark, "W. H. Griffith-Thomas (sic)--A Great Christian Educationist," The Evangelical Christian, LIX (September, 1961), 20.

of Hamburg, Germany, specifically to study under Dr. Thomas. There are ten very lengthy letters from Rev. Silverlight to Dr. Thomas, and about half as many carbon copies of Dr. Thomas' replies. They concern a wide range of topics including Silverlight's personal relationships with those under whom he was ministering. Dr. Griffith Thomas' advice seemed to be warmly received and the correspondence extended over a period of years, during which Silverlight twice changed his place of ministry.¹

Concerning this unique relationship that Griffith Thomas was able to achieve and maintain with his students, Clark writes,

. . . letters from all over the world show that this side of his work was appreciated as much as any other. These contacts were maintained afterwards and men in their parishes and the Mission Field used to write to their old Professor for counsel and guidance. Here is one who has drifted but not lost a sense of Christ's friendship. Griffith Thomas writes urging him to go back to the centre of gravity in the New Testament-- Redemption in Christ.²

During the nine years at Wycliffe College, Dr. Thomas' lecturing assignments were primarily in the area of Old Testament,

¹This correspondence is in a file folder marked "Silverlight" by this author. Dallas Theological Seminary, Archives, Griffith Thomas Papers.

²Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, pp. 22-23.

Church History, and Doctrine.¹ It was unfortunate that during this period he was not able to turn his energies to other subjects as well. Clark reports, "his advanced New Testament and Prayer Book notebooks remained unopened."² But, no matter what he taught, the lectures were clear and they had the definite ring of truth. "Never once did he raise a doubt or an equivocation," writes one who was greatly helped. "All the latest material was incorporated into his work and carefully examined but there was never any uncertainty as to where he stood in his loyalty to Holy Scripture."³

His Wider Ministry

Although Dr. Griffith Thomas' schedule during the school year was as heavy as the other professors', still he found other ways to serve his Lord. In addition to his duties at Wycliffe, Dr. Griffith Thomas was a regular lecturer at a Presbyterian seminary in Toronto and at the Toronto Bible College.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 22.

³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴Frank S. Weston, "Present with the Lord," The Evangelical Christian, XX (July, 1924), 275.

When Griffith Thomas came to North America, the churches here were involved in the struggles of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Because he had a scholarly grasp of the theological issues involved, he became widely sought after as a speaker and proponent for the cause of the Evangelicals. Dr. James M. Gray, later Dean of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, felt that Griffith Thomas had "a great advantage" as he moved about in this struggle because of not only his breadth of knowledge, but of "his experience as an evangelical leader in the Anglican Church."¹

These years twice saw Dr. Griffith Thomas called back to England. In 1912, he was one of the featured speakers at the Westminster Bible Conference, Mundesley,² and in 1914, he spoke at the great Keswick Conference.³

In 1913, an interdenominational group of Christian leaders banded together as "The Victorious Life Testimony" to sponsor conferences similar to "Keswick" in England. Dr. Griffith Thomas

¹ James M. Gray, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 28, 1924), 395.

² Westminster Bible Conference, Report at Sermons and Lectures (London: The Bookstall, 1912), pp. 128-188, 195-242.

³ Herbert F. Stevenson, ed., The Ministry of Keswick (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), pp. 195-242.

was one of the early leaders of this movement. In 1913, the Victorious Life Testimony sponsored one conference during that summer. The response to this conference was good, and in succeeding years, more and more conferences were sponsored by the Victorious Life Testimony in order to accommodate those who desired to be exposed to teachings on the Christian Life. These conferences were held throughout the United States and Canada and by the early 1920's, Victorious Life meetings were held throughout the calendar year.¹

Dr. Griffith Thomas' literary ministry was also growing during this period, but will be dealt with in the next section. Toward the end of his nine years at Wycliffe College, Toronto, the opportunities for a wider ministry were continually presenting themselves to Dr. Griffith Thomas. Finally, Dr. Griffith Thomas severed his relationship with Wycliffe College and turned to the United States as his base of operations for the next and final phase of his life.

In the United States

Dr. William Henry Griffith Thomas moved his family and his base of operations from Toronto to Philadelphia in the latter part of 1919. He had already established a warm friendship with many in

¹The Victorious Life Council, "The Victorious Life Testimony, Its Doctrinal Position," The Sunday School Times, LXIII (March 12, 1921), 144-145.

Philadelphia, through his contact with the Victorious Life Testimony, and The Sunday School Times, both of which were headquartered in Philadelphia. This would prove to be his last earthly home, since he would be called to a heavenly home after five short years of ministry from Philadelphia. These five years of ministry would prove to be an especially busy and spiritually profitable time in Dr. Griffith Thomas' ministry. He was not tied down to a specific geographical location as he had been previously. He was free to travel far and wide to teach and preach the Word of God.¹

In order to better understand Dr. Griffith Thomas' ministry during these last five years, it will be necessary to consider his ministry in three areas. These areas are: (1) his Bible Conference Ministry; (2) his literary ministry; and (3) his role as a fundamentalist leader. As will become evident, these three areas are not mutually exclusive and there will be some overlap in the following discussion. Also, in some cases it will be necessary to discuss events prior to his move to Philadelphia in order to set his contributions into proper perspective.

¹ Clark, William Henry Griffith Thomas, pp. 23-24.

Bible Conference Ministry

Dr. Griffith Thomas was a widely sought-after speaker at the Bible conferences that became prominent during the first quarter of the twentieth century. He first spoke at the great Northfield conference in 1903.¹ He was also associated with the Keswick conferences while he was still ministering in England, speaking there in 1906, 1907 and 1908.² When the Victorious Life Testimony held its first Conference at Oxford, Pennsylvania, in 1913, Dr. Griffith Thomas was a featured speaker.³ From that date on, he always led the Bible Hours at its major conference each July, with the exceptions of the 1914, 1921, and 1922 conferences, when he was not in America.⁴

He was a frequent teacher at the Montrose Bible Conferences sponsored each year by Dr. R.A. Torrey. At Dr. Griffith Thomas' death, Dr. Torrey said, "I can think of no one who will be more

¹R.A. Torrey, "What Dr. Griffith Tomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 5, 1924), 412.

²Rudolf A. Renfer, "A History of Dallas Theological Seminary" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1959), p. 68.

³J. Harvey Borton, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 19, 1924), 437.

⁴Ibid., p. 438.

greatly missed at these gatherings at Montrose than Dr. Griffith Thomas."¹ Dr. Torrey gave three reasons why he felt that Griffith Thomas was such an outstanding teacher in the Bible Conference movement.

The first thing that impressed me about Dr. Thomas was his sound, wide, thorough, sane, well-balanced scholarship. His interpretations of Scripture were always scholarly and dependable. This cannot be said of all of those who have been prominent leaders in the modern Bible Conference movement. . . . But with this accurate and thorough scholarship there was coupled a remarkable clearness of spiritual vision, a clearness of scholarship. . . . Along with his scholarship and his clearness of vision there went a very unusual ability to state profound truth with a clearness and a simplicity to which very few attain. Many scholars find it difficult to make themselves understood by common men and women. This was never true of Dr. Thomas; even a child could understand him and could grasp his exact meaning.²

Dr. Griffith Thomas' Bible Conference ministry also included teaching at various schools across the North American Continent. He gave lectures at Xenia Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Toronto Bible College, among others.³ Special note should be given to Dr. Griffith Thomas' visit to Princeton University, to give the L. P. Stone lectures. At the invitation of the

¹Torrey, "Griffith Thomas," p. 412.

²Ibid.

³Clark, "Griffith-Thomas, Educationist," p. 21.

Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary and of Dr. B. B. Warfield in particular, Griffith Thomas was able to give the lectures he had originally prepared for the Bampton lectures on the Holy Spirit.¹ These lectures later became the basis of Dr. Thomas' book, The Holy Spirit of God.

It has proved possible to reconstruct Dr. Griffith Thomas' itinerary for the last several years of his life by frequent reference to The Sunday School Times. During an era when travel was much harsher physically on the traveler than it is today, his schedule of speaking engagements truly illustrates Dr. Griffith Thomas' willingness to go anywhere at any time to minister the Word of God.²

Literary Ministry

Throughout the fourteen years that Griffith Thomas was on the North American Continent, his pen was busy. His books are well known. He wrote devotional commentaries on the books of Genesis, Romans, Colossians (Christ Pre-Eminent) and Hebrews. The work on Hebrews came from his lectures at Keswick, England,

¹W. H. Griffith Thomas, The Holy Spirit of God (5th ed.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. ix.

²See Appendix for his itinerary for 1923.

1922.¹ It was during this period that Griffith Thomas wrote The Principles of Theology. This work was published posthumously in 1930.²

He wrote devotional books such as Grace and Power and The Prayers of St. Paul. His biographical works on the Apostle Peter and John are still read today with the reader deriving many spiritual blessings. Other books and pamphlets include Evolution and the Supernatural, The Christian Life and How to Live It, Life Abiding and Abounding, Strongholds of Truth, The Grace of God, and many more.⁴

Griffith Thomas contributed the articles on "Adam in the New Testament," "Ascension," and "Resurrection of Jesus Christ" to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Additionally, Dr. Griffith Thomas contributed material to many periodicals. Canon Dyson Hague has written:

His literary output, from week to week, was in itself a marvel . . . four or five columns weekly in . . . The Toronto Globe, . . . continuous articles covering two to four columns in The Evangelical Christian, the

¹ W.H. Griffith Thomas, Let Us Go On (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1923), p. vi.

² W.H. Griffith Thomas, The Principles of Theology (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), p. xi.

³ Renfer, "History," p. 73.

Moody Institute Monthly of Chicago, the Bible Champion, and the English Church Record, of London.¹

He also contributed articles to Our Hope,² The Bible To-Day,³ and The Sunday School Times.⁴

His contribution to The Sunday School Times calls for special notice. From 1913 until his death in June of 1924, Dr. Griffith Thomas wrote two columns weekly on various parts of the "International Sunday School Lesson Helps." During this time he wrote material covering almost the whole Bible. In addition this writer has counted sixty-three major signed articles by Dr. Thomas from January, 1913, through December, 1923. More than half of these were published in the four years after Dr. Thomas left Toronto. Additionally, Dr. Thomas wrote most of the unsigned book reviews for The Sunday School Times during the time he was living in Philadelphia.

¹Dyson Hague, "Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas," The Evangelical Christian, LXVI (July, 1924), 276.

²Arno Clemens Gaebelein, "One of God's Noblemen, Dr. Griffith Thomas," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 26, 1924), 450.

³Don O. Shelton, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 5, 1924), 412.

⁴Philip E. Howard, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 29, 1924), 395.

Dr. Thomas also was the editor of The Canadian Churchman, an associate editor of Bibliotheca Sacra, and contributing editor for the Bible Champion.¹

Renfer suggests that an adequate evaluation of Griffith Thomas as a writer may be had by viewing some of the tributes of his friends and associates in the publications to which he was a regular contributor.² Among those was an editorial statement of the Toronto Globe which wrote of him, "a theologian of international reputation who had the faculty of lucidity to a remarkable degree."³ Another has written, "I can with utmost confidence say that the reading of Dr. Thomas' books creates in one a deeper love of and desire for God as revealed in His Word, and that is more than can be said of much which the Christian press of to-day is turning out."⁴

His Role as a Fundamentalist Leader

When Griffith Thomas came to America, the issues of the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy were already developing. He

¹ Renfer, "History," p. 75.

² Ibid.

³ "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," Toronto Globe, as quoted in The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 5, 1924), 412.

⁴ W. Graham Scroggie, "Dr. Griffith Thomas--Scholar, Teacher, Friend," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 21, 1924), 383.

was very well prepared to enter this controversy on the side of the conservatives because of his thorough grasp of the theological and scholarly issues involved. And Dr. James M. Gray pointed out that merely by having experience as an evangelical leader in the Anglican Church, he was qualified to defend the faith on a new battle ground.¹

In his work, The Conflict of Ideals in the English Church, Dr. Griffith Thomas clearly sets forth the evangelical position with regard to varying views on the church, the sacraments, and other areas that were vital in this struggle.² Renfer writes:

He was familiar with the basic tensions between faith and reason and the conflict between naturalistic and the supernaturalistic views of the Bible as they existed in America. He knew the literature and understood the issues of the conflict as few other men of his time.³

Because he was recognized as a leader in the reaction to the modernism of the day, Griffith Thomas was among those who initiated the call for the massive World Conference on Christian Fundamentals of 1919.⁴ Dr. Thomas had been invited by W.B.

¹ Gray, "Griffith Thomas," p. 395.

² W.H. Griffith Thomas, The Conflict of Ideals in the English Church (Toronto: Wycliffe Association, 1910), p. 16.

³ Renfer, "Giant," p. 743.

⁴ George W. Dollar, A History of Fundamentalism in America (Greenville, South Carolina: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), p. 160.

Riley and A. C. Dixon to join them and five other men in issuing the invitation to this historic conference.¹ Dr. Thomas was assigned the chairmanship of the Resolutions Committee and therefore was very greatly involved in molding the thought of the first convention of the organization.² Dr. Thomas remained active in the World Christian Fundamentals Association throughout his life, but after the first conference he played a minor role, with men such as W. B. Riley, T. T. Shields, and J. Frank Norris taking the lead.³

Dr. Griffith Thomas was himself in the center of a debate between fundamentalists and modernists resulting from a trip he took to the Far East. In the summer of 1920, Dr. Thomas and C. G. Trumbull of The Sunday School Times went to China and Japan to visit the missionaries and to strengthen them by means of Bible Teaching. While there Dr. Griffith Thomas saw many undeniable evidences of modernistic teaching among the missionaries. Realizing that the church at home was largely ignorant of the real situation, Dr. Griffith Thomas, upon his return, wrote an article in the

¹ Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 298.

² Renfer, "Giant," p. 743.

³ Dollar, History, p. 161.

Princeton Theological Review explaining the situation as he saw it.

This created quite a stir and the exchanges became quite heated at times. A full account of this situation is related in Griffith Thomas' pamphlet, Modernism in China.¹

At the 1923 meeting of the World Christian Fundamentals Association in Fort Worth, Texas, the assembled convention stated its desire to see the establishment of an evangelical seminary that would be suited for the training of men to fill the pulpits of the conservative churches of North America.² One year later such an institution was started in Dallas, Texas. But it was started outside of the framework of the Association.

On March 7, 1922, Dr. Griffith Thomas met with L. S. Chafer and A. B. Winchester in a hotel room in Atlanta, Georgia. They brought together two years' work and many years of dreams, and for the first time concretely set down plans for the establishment of a new theological seminary.³ The three men left Atlanta with

¹W. H. Griffith Thomas, "Missions in China: Their Strength and Weakness," The Sunday School Times, LXIII (April 16, 1921 and April 23, 1921), 211, 224-225.

²John A. Witmer, "'What Hath God Wrought'--Fifty Years of Dallas Theological Seminary," Bibliotheca Sacra, CXXX (December, 1973), 295.

³Renfer, "History," pp. 113-122; and Witmer, "Seminary," pp. 295-296.

high spirits and high hopes that their plans would soon materialize.

There were major obstacles to overcome before the school could open. One major problem centered upon the location of the new school. Dr. Griffith Thomas desired it to be in Philadelphia. Winchester preferred a city on the West Coast, perhaps in Seattle or Portland. At one time during their planning, they considered having two locations, one on each coast. The impracticality of this option was finally seen and a decision was made to locate in Dallas, a central city, through the efforts of William M. Anderson, Jr., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas.¹

Because Dr. Griffith Thomas was reluctant to move to Dallas for the 1924 school year, he was unable to serve as the Professor of Theology as had been anticipated throughout the planning process.² It was decided that he would serve as a visiting Professor of Bible until he could arrange his move to Dallas.³ This, too, was not to be, because on June 2, 1924, Dr. Griffith Thomas was called home to be with the Lord.⁴

¹Witmer, "Seminary," pp. 296-297; and Renfer, "History," pp. 122-135.

²Witmer, "Seminary," p. 298.

³Renfer, "History," pp. 152-153.

⁴"Dr. Griffith Thomas Called Home," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 14, 1924), 369.

Dr. Thomas left his impact upon the seminary in a number of ways, not the least of which was his constant demand for academic excellence coupled with willing and loving service to the Master. To Dr. Griffith Thomas, evangelicals owe a great deal, and those of us at Dallas Seminary in many ways owe the most.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As I have traced briefly the course of Dr. Griffith Thomas' life, a few factors have continually bombarded me. I hope that they will become evident in this conclusion as a number of his friends, associates, and acquaintances note these factors in tributes written shortly after his death. W. Graham Scroggie wrote:

Among the noblest of the Christian graces are simplicity and humility, and these, like his dear friend the late Bishop Moule of Durham, Griffith Thomas had in large measure. . . . He was one of the most approachable of men. . . . How rare a thing is humility and how welcome where it is found!¹

W. Leon Tucker was the editor of the Wonderful Word. Dr. Thomas spent eight weeks in hotels across America during his last year of life, with Tucker as they traveled to various Bible Conferences together. Tucker wrote:

His mind was great; his heart was greater; his soul was greatest. . . . When I was taken sick at Macon, Ga., he came to my bedside day after day, tenderly

¹W. Graham Scroggie, "Dr. Griffith Thomas--Scholar, Teacher, Friend," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 21, 1924), 383 [italics mine].

caring for me, and at evening time would sit at the foot of my bed and tell me of the glories that in Christ did dwell.¹

His good friend from Toronto, Canon Dyson Hague, wrote:

He read most widely and was a many-sided man. He loved music, sang well, and had a repertoire of good stories unexcelled by many of the best storytellers of this continent. His sense of humor was vivid and keen, and his delight in men and things, in flowers, children, in the open life of the sea and the hills, shows that he could have written himself down as a lover of his fellow-men.²

The President of the Sunday School Times Company wrote:

There was a graciousness about him, a happy freedom from any pride of attainment or knowledge that helped wonderfully to make him accessible and satisfying to the timid inquirer, and a boldness and certitude resting squarely on God's Word in any hour when either open or insidious attack upon the truth aroused him to a defense of the faith.³

N. F. Douty, after declaring himself to be a very ordinary person and not a "Great" like Scroggie, Torrey, or Gray, said of Dr. Griffith Thomas, "While his spirituality and scholarship were patent to all who heard him, the genuine humility of the man is

¹W. Leon Tucker, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 29, 1924), 395.

²Dyson Hague, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 29, 1924), 395 [italics mine].

³Philip E. Howard, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (June 29, 1924), 393 [italics mine].

uniquely understood by us who had least claim on him."¹ Douty goes on with illustrations of Dr. Griffith Thomas' humility when around very ordinary people. Arno Clemens Gaebelein, the editor of Our Hope, wrote:

He was very unassuming. He never boasted of his scholarship or spoke of his attainments, nor mentioned the positions of honor and responsibility he held in Europe and on this continent. His was a true humility. . . . May the Home-call of our beloved brother stimulate us to great consecration and greater service.²

R.V. Bingham, editor of the Evangelical Christian and Missionary Witness, Toronto, wrote:

If I were asked to sum up the life of Dr. Griffith Thomas as I have known it from the time he gave his first public utterance in America fourteen years ago, until I stood beside his open grave, in utmost brevity, I should use the one word "Graciousness," because it expresses both his life and his ministry.³

J. Harvey Borton, Chairman of the Victorious Life Testimony Council, of which Dr. Thomas was a member from its inception in 1913, said:

¹N.F. Douty, "One of God's Noblemen, Dr. Griffith Thomas," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 26, 1924), 450 [italics mine].

²Arno Clemens Gaebelein, "One of God's Noblemen, Dr. Griffith Thomas," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 26, 1924), 450 [italics mine].

³R.V. Bingham, "One of God's Noblemen, Dr. Griffith Thomas," The Sunday School Times, LXVI (July 26, 1924), 450 [italics mine].

No matter how busy he was, he never hesitated a moment to take on additional work, if by doing so, he could serve the Master he loved so well. . . . He was approachable and friendly, and gave you the impression that he was glad to have your company. He was the most selfless man I have ever known.¹

Don O. Shelton, editor of The Bible To-Day and president of the National Bible Institute, New York, wrote:

Assertive in our thought of him is the remembrance of his kindness and friendliness. . . . Uncompromising with erroneous teachings, he was not unloving in his reference to erroneous teachers. . . . His diligence was habitual.²

There are many more remembrances of Dr. Griffith Thomas. Almost all of them refer to his humility, gentleness or approachableness. This was evident as I was allowed the privilege of looking into bundles of correspondence to and from Dr. Griffith Thomas. The names of the great and the unknown appear. But again and again Dr. Griffith Thomas' character comes forth. There was something about that man that made people trust and confide in him. That quality is to be desired and cultivated in all

¹J. Harvey Borton, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," *The Sunday School Times*, LXVI (July 19, 1924), 437 [italics mine].

²Don O. Shelton, "What Dr. Griffith Thomas Meant to Us," *The Sunday School Times*, LXVI (July 5, 1924), 412 [italics mine].

Christian leaders and Dr. Griffith Thomas is a challenge to each one.

APPENDIX

DR. GRIFFITH THOMAS' ITINERARY

1923

January 7-14, 1923	Bible Conference in Macon, Georgia
January 16-20	Special Services in Chambers-Wylie Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.
January 16 - February 9	Lectures at National Bible Institute, Philadelphia, Pa. (mornings)
January 28 - February 2	Bible Conference in Moorestown, New Jersey (evenings)
February 4	J. Addison Henry Memorial Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.
February 11-16	Bible Lectures, First Methodist Episcopal Church, Port Huron, Michigan
February 18-25	Bible Lectures, Church of the Ascension, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
March 4-16	Bible Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee
March 18-25	Bible Lectures at The Tabernacle, Atlanta, Georgia
March 26-30	Bible Lectures at St. James Church, Richmond, Virginia
April 14-22	Lectures at National Bible Institute, New York City

April 23 - May 4	Lectures at National Bible Institute, Philadelphia, Pa.
May 5-13	Bible Conference at Vandergriff, Pa.
May 15-28	Lectures at National Bible Institute, Philadelphia, Pa.
May 27	Preaching at Chambers-Wylie Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.
May 29 - June 10	Bible Conference at a Presbyterian Church at Webster Groves, Mo.
June 17, 23	Baccalaureate Sermon and Commencement address, Wheaton College
July 8	Preaching at a Presbyterian Church, Upper Montclair, N.J.
July 10-14	Lectures at Moody Bible Institute, Chicago
July 15-22	Featured Speaker at the Victorious Life Conference, Stony Brook, Long Island
July 24-26	Bible Conference at Erieside, near Cleveland, Ohio
July 27 - August 5	Featured speaker, Montrose Bible Conference
August 7-12	Bible Conference, Cedar Falls, Iowa
August 13-19	Victorious Life Conference, Linwood Park, Ohio
August 22-26	Bible Conference, Winona Lake, Indiana
August 28 - September 5	National Bible Institute (mornings only) Philadelphia, Pa.
August 31 - September 3	Darby, Pa. Bible Conference

- September 9, 23, 30 Preaching at Calvary Baptist Church,
New York City (morning and evening)
- September 16 Fourth Presbyterian Church, New York
City (mornings only)
- September 16 Evening Service at the Church of Rev.
T.S. Alspach, Lancaster, Pa.
- September 17-18 Bible Conference, Lancaster, Pa.
- October 6-10 Lectures at the National Bible Institute,
Philadelphia
- October 14-28 Memphis, Tennessee. Bible Conference
- October 30 - November 2 National Bible Institute, New York City
- November 4-16 Bible Conference at Richmond, Va.
- November 18-23 Bible Lectures at St. Andrew's Church,
Norfolk, Va.
- November 28 - December 9 Bible Conference at the church of Rev.
Dyson Hague. Church of the Epiphany,
Toronto, Canada
- December 11-20 Lectures at the National Bible Institute,
Philadelphia, Pa.
- December 12, 13 Services at Emmanuel Reformed Church,
Philadelphia, Pa.¹

¹The Sunday School Times, LXV (January 1 through
December 31, 1923).

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