

The heart of

any school is its faculty--the living faculty and the written faculty. To see the way the written faculty is being cared for in this fine and tastefully done library is a great credit to the board, administration, donors, counselors, designers, and builders. It is something for which we can all be grateful, ~~for~~ not only today but for many years to come.

What I want to do in these few moments is to remind all of us how books and libraries affect civilization and us. With respect to civilization, I focus on the last 550 years since the invention of printing in the western world. Though manuscript books before Gutenberg covered a wide range of subjects, most were in Latin, many were full of errors due to careless or incompetent scribes, and because titles were not available in large quantities, they could be easily suppressed. But when printed books were published in many different languages, errors could be more readily controlled, and the sheer numbers of copies made it difficult if not impossible to suppress books which politicians or clergymen did not approve of. Two important ramifications of printing were that many secondary schools began to spring up, first in larger cities, then in other places, and literacy spread more rapidly, though not universally.

Dr. Babb, friends & family of P.C.B. Thank you for asking to be here & to join in this significant occasion.

In the first 45 years of printing, the period of the incunabula, that is books printed before 1501, many subjects were represented.

Gutenberg's Bible

The Bible in German

Justinian's work on law which became the basis of our legal system

Dante's Divine Comedy

a book on Arabic medicine

Aesop's Fables

an Italian-German dictionary

Euclid's Geometry and

several books on medicine, music, and architecture

All of these have affected civilization to one extent or another to this day.

Let me remind you of some other books that have had significant effect on us.

Newton on gravity, 1687

Benjamin Franklin on electricity, 1751

Encyclopedia Britannica, 1st ed., 1771 (before our Declaration of Independence)

Braille's invention so the blind could read, 1829

Dickens' Christmas Carol, 1863

Alexander Bell on the telephone, 1877

Herzl on Palestine as the Jewish homeland, 1896

Mme. Curie on radium, 1903

Fleming on penicillin, 1929

But not all books have affected civilization for good. For example:

Marx, Das Kapital, 1867

Science and Health, Mary Baker Glover, 1875  
(Patterson, Fry, Eddy)

Mein Kampf, 1925 and a host of others

Most of us will never write a landmark book, but we all look at books, papers, TV which affect our minds, perspectives and goals. Then, in turn,, we affect the areas of civilization we touch with our lives in our days.

Great libraries have existed from ancient times. The 370 14th century B.C. Amarna clay tablets enlighten us about conditions in Palestine during the time of Joshua's invasion of that land. The 22,000 tablets from the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal, 662 B.C.

*A Vindication of the Rights of Women 1792*

furnish invaluable background material of O.T. studies. The thousands of tablets from Nuzi dating from the 2nd millennium B.C. give us a picture of daily life during the time of the patriarchs, particularly events in the life of Jacob. The library at Qumran which yielded the treasures of the Dead Sea scrolls. The great library at Alexandria, and the one at Caesarea used by Origen. Libraries in the dark ages which preserved and painstakingly copied precious manuscripts. In our own day, the magnificent British Library and the Library of Congress.

Had there been no library in Persia, King Darius would not have discovered a copy of the decree of Cyrus which permitted the Jewish people to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and which discovery silenced the opponents of that project. Had there been no library from which King Ahasuerus could read of Mordecai's warning which saved the king's life, Mordecai might have been hanged and Haman promoted, instead of the other way around. And, I might be bold to add, this PCB library can save some students from academic hanging <sup>The only hitch is you have to use it</sup> if it is used. Had there been no scrolls in the synagogues of our Lord's day, He could not have read from Isaiah and affirmed that He was the Messiah. In our own

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day we remember how eagerly people in eastern Europe and Russia grabbed for books and Bibles that had been so long unavailable to them. Once, on the other side of the Berlin wall before it came down, I lived and slept in a room <sup>for 10 days</sup> in which were piled a number of boxes of books that had been brought in from the West (I did not ask how), and I watched the grateful reactions of those to whom they were given.

Books can and do change people. They are like food. Some contain poison. Sometimes we have to read such books, but see them for what they are and visualize a skull and crossbones emblazoned on the covers. Others provide a healthy, wholesome diet. Many contain only empty calories, junk food, junk books. Yet that is the kind too often published, even by evangelical publishers, and too much read even by evangelical people.

I hope you students will have libraries, however small, in the homes you <sup>and teach your children to love to read.</sup> establish. If you cannot afford many books, then I hope you will use the public libraries. We do all too little reading today. TV, illustrated magazines, videos, even discussion groups have usurped the place of reading. TV sows what the writers and producers want us to reap in our lives. Discussion exposes the limited knowledge of the participants. Reading <sup>Knowledge of the ages</sup> reaps the limitless

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But above everything else, do not neglect to give top priority to the greatest library ever assembled. I mean the library we call the Bible. The name Bible comes from Biblia, a neuter plural word, meaning books, and was early applied to the Bible. But the word biblia later became to be regarded as a feminine singular word, meaning the book, and it was in this singular form that it passed into the languages of modern Europe. This providential change could not have been more on target, for the Bible is truly a library of books unified in one book. In other libraries you can find reproductions of great art from museums you may never visit; detailed maps of cities you may never see; music you may never be able to hear in a concert hall; thinkers you may never meet, but from whom you can learn and with whom you can dialog through their books; and tons of other information you could never absorb in multiple lifetimes. But only in the Bible can you find the truth about creation, the truth about the mighty acts and miracles of God, the truth about how to live properly in this life, the truth about what's going to happen in the future, and most important of all, the truth about how to have sins forgiven, the gift of eternal life, and the assurance of heaven through faith in the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul was in a Roman prison awaiting execution. He asked Timothy to bring his books and especially his parchments (2 Tim. 4:13). What an intriguing request. Here is a widely traveled missionary who felt the need to have a personal library. Here is a great preacher who had barrels of sermons and little prospect of ever preaching them again, but who still felt the need to read and study. Here is a man who though he wrote one-fifth of the books of the Bible wanted to see books others had written. But he especially wanted his parchments. Parchment was the dressed skin of animals on which important and precious books were written, rather than on papyrus the more common but much less durable material. Paul evidently had collected some O.T. books on parchment and especially wanted them. Lying in that dark, dank hole in the Mamartine prison, Paul longed to become even better acquainted with his Lord through those <sup>biblical</sup> parchments before being ushered into his Lord's presence.

So on this dedicatory occasion I remind you again of the influence of information. May this facility be heavily used. May its contents broaden horizons, enlighten minds, sharpen discernment, promote maturity, enhance spiritual growth, and may PCB always keep central the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the <sup>Word</sup> of the