

① Dr. W., members of the Mosher family, and members and friends of the Dallas Seminary family. It is a privilege and pleasure for me to be here tonight to join with you on this happy occasion of the dedication of the Mosher library. I remember several yrs ago discussing with some of my former colleagues in this institution one evening at the home of one of them the urgent need for a new library. The dream has now become reality, and we thank God for it.

The heart of any school is its faculty--the living faculty and the written faculty. As an administrator I am learning that priority must always be given to these two areas. This is why this is such an important occasion, for the dedication of this fine facility to house the written faculty of DTS is as impt as the addition of qualified men to its living faculty. The emphasis given to the library is a true measure of the alertness of faculty, students, and friends to a proper concept of priorities. And it is of this matter of priorities that I wish to speak tonight.

The most revealing times in a person's life are the times of stress. The emotional strain of a parting, the stress of illness or accident, wrestlings against spiritual temptations are illustrative of such times.

2 But the nearness of death is perhaps the ultimate of all such times, for then non-essentials are easily forgotten, and what the dying person considers important comes quickly to the fore. I remind you of a NT text which illustrates this. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments" (2 Tim 4:9,13).

Here is a pathetic picture of a doomed man. Prison was not a new experience for the apostle Paul. 2/3 of the 6 yrs before he wrote this text had been spent in confinement. Apparently his first imprisonment at Rome had ended because no one showed up to press charges, and acc to Roman law he had been released by default after 18 months. He immediately went to Crete, Macedonia, Spain, Miletus, Troas, and Corinth, and then having been rearrested back to Rome. Only this time he was not permitted the luxury of his own hired house. You see, Nero had celebrated his own kind of independence day in July 64 by burning Rome, and had blamed it on the Christians. Naturally since Paul was one of the leaders of that hated group, he was one of the first to be captured. Evidently he had had his pret<sup>trial</sup> but no man stood with him but all forsook him. Now he was waiting the disposition of his case,

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with no prospect other than death except that of a bleak winter in the Mamartine Prison before being executed. In this climactic moment of stress and in this text he reveals the things he considers most important.

First are his friends. Even the great Apostle felt keenly the need of friends. Paul who had all the intellectual resources which formal training, wide reading, and sensitive observation of life could bring. Paul who had rich spiritual resources. Paul who had the memories of past victories and personal experiences with the Lord. Paul who had even then in that prison the promised presence of his risen Savior. But Paul who was grateful for the presence of Luke and who desired Timothy to leave Ephesus and come quickly to Rome. Paul ~~was thus~~ like his Lord who on that night of betrayal desired with desire to eat the Passover with His friends. "Timothy", he says, "do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. I need the presence of my son in the faith. I need the companionship of my comrade in the work. And you had better come before winter sets in and brings shipping to a standstill. Furthermore, I have a premonition that I may not live to see another spring. Don't worry about the work in Ephesus."

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Sometimes it is God's will to leave the multitude and minister to one. Our Lord commended the visiting of those in prison, so do thy diligence to come shortly."

I hope you students make a lot of friends throughout the years of your lives and ministries, making them as Paul did, by winning them to Christ and helping them spiritually. If you sow friends, you will reap friendships. And on this occasion of dedication, are we not all thankful for the friends who, under God, have made possible this library?

Then there was the cloak. Any tourist today who leaves the guided tours and makes his own way under the brow of the Capitoline Hill in Rome will find himself admitted to a narrow, dark stairway. Descending the winding stone staircase he comes finally to the dismal, dark, low-arched chamber where the apostle lay bound waiting to be offered up. Even on a hot summer day the visitor will ~~sense~~ the constriction of the low ceiling and the dampness of the dungeon. It is no wonder that Paul wanted his cloak before winter.

Look at that cloak for a moment. It was a travelling cloak with long sleeves. Perhaps Paul had woven it himself, and it may have been over its sleeves that other cloaks had been



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draped when Stephen was martyred. It had a rich history in the service of Christ. It had been wet with the brine of the Aegean, yellow with the dust of the Ignatian Way, white with the snows of Galatia and Pamphylia, and crimson with the blood of his own wounds. And now it was to serve its last purpose and keep an aged man warm during a cold winter.

It is a pathetic scene but not an uncommon one. Almost 1500 winters later William Tindale languished in Vilverde prison, and in his only extant letter besought the governor of the castle as follows:

I believe, right worshipful, that you are not ignorant of what has been determined concerning me by the council; therefore, I entreat your lordship and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here in prison during the winter, you will be kind enough to send me from my goods which <sup>[the Prover]</sup> he has in his possession a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerable increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He had a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker

6 cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study. And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if, before the end of winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my LJC, whose spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen.W.Tindale

And so it has been with many servants of Christ. God has never promised us material blessing but all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in X. If He in His good grace also grants us material bounty as well, then let us recognize it as an undeserved token of favor and thank Him for it. So it is with this library. For the excellence, comfort, and convenience of it we thank God; but for ~~what it contains~~ <sup>its contents</sup> we are the most grateful.

7 For Paul it was going to be a long winter as well as a cold one, and to be comfortable physically is never enough. The Apostle recognized the need to have activity for the mind and food for the soul. So he called for his books. You see, Paul was not a man of one book but of many books.

What were these books which P so greatly desired? Exegetical and historical works on the OT, and undoubtedly non-religious but nonetheless great literature of the world, for we know that P was acquainted with such. Now this is a most intriguing request to my way of thinking for many reasons. First, here is a widely travelled missionary who felt the need of a personal library. Second, here is the great homiletician who had barrels full of sermons <sup>and wrote Project 7 Preaching them</sup> who still needed to read and study. Third, here is a man who was not content merely with a file full of notes or a library full of books unless they were used. Fourth, here is the man who under the superintendence of the HS wrote a fifth of the inspired books of the Bible but who still sensed his need of learning from the writings of mere men. I think every student and preacher should often remind himself of the well-chosen, though sarcastic, words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said:

8 In order to be able to expound the Scriptures, and as an aid to your pulpit studies, you will need to be familiar with the commentators: a glorious army, let me tell you, whose acquaintance will be your delight and profit. Of course, you are not such wiseacres as to think or say that you can expound Scripture without assistance from the works of divines and learned men who have laboured before you in the field of exposition. If you are of that opinion, pray remain so, for you are not worth the trouble of conversion, and like a little coterie who think with you, would resent the attempt as an insult to your infallibility. It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the HS reveals to themselves, should think so little of what He has revealed to others.

And finally, P's example reminds all of us not to neglect the ancients. Do not by-pass the worthies of yesterday for the lessers or even greaters of today. I shall never forget the thrill when I began to study in the National Library of Scotland. It was surpassed perhaps only by the occasions when I used the library of the British Museum in London. Practically any book that has ever been published in the English speaking world, plus many others, can be found in those two libraries, and it is a genuine thrill to feel that you are sitting at the feet of all those whose books are contained in those 2 places.



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Barth  
T. Tillik  
Stewart

We do all too little reading today. TV, illustrated magazines, that which is euphemistically called visual education, discussion groups have all taken the place of plain, ordinary, but rewarding, reading. <sup>Discussion = 100 words</sup> Discussion reaps the limited knowledge of the participants. Reading reaps the limitless knowledge of the sages and of the ages. Give your mind the thrill of a discussion with Warfield or Hodge. Be challenged by Bengel or Orr. Listen again to the sermons of Spurgeon or Finney. Do not content yourselves with less than these greats. And you will find them in books. Make much of the Mosher library. And incidentally, students of theology, pattern your personal libraries after this one, and build a quality library of your own while you are here. When you leave it is far more important that you have boxes of books than boxes of furnishings or clothes. <sup>hats</sup>

But though <sup>ugh</sup> friends are first, the comfort of a cloak expedient, and books so necessary, the most important thing in P's mind was the parchments. Most especially, he says, using the superlative and giving top priority to these parchments. What were they? Well, parchments were dressed skins used for writing which were first made at Pergamum.

10 That they were used in the first century is attested to by no less an authority than Sir Frederic Kenyon. <sup>& what they were used for</sup> He declares: "It is true that skins had been used for the reception of writing in Palestine and elsewhere at an earlier date, and from the tradition recorded in the Talmud, which required all synagogue rolls to be so written, it is fair to conclude that the OT books were habitually written on skins in the first century." Thus altho papyrus was the common material used for writing, parchment was reserved for important and precious documents, like the Scriptures. The parchments which P was calling for, then, were his own personal copies of OT books and perhaps some NT fragments. These had undoubtedly been carefully collected over the years and were probably annotated in the margins by his own hand. We who can buy a Bible in any dime store can scarcely appreciate how valuable these were to P, though anyone who has had to discard a favorite Bible which he has carefully marked for many years can begin to understand. One thing is perfectly clear: Paul considered the sacred Scriptures his most important possession. Do you?

Why should it be so? Why should a condemned man want to spend his last few months on earth studying these parchments? Because of what the Scriptures are and what they say.

This is God's Word to man, inspired by the HS, and accurate in every way.

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Amid shifting standards it is the absolute standard; it is unchanging truth. Further, the Bible sheds light on every problem of life. Men may swagger and boast that they have no need of God or His truth while they are young or at least healthy, but some time all of us must think about death and what lies thereafter. Men may put faith in their works or their minds or their church, but God declares in this book that the only way to heaven is through faith in His Son who died for our sins. If it is important to know how to gain entrance into heaven then it is important to study this book.

Though Paul had settled this basic question long ago, he still wanted his parchments. For the Bible also brings comfort to a prisoner or anyone else with a problem. Overwhelmed by the oppressive power of Rome, Paul could read "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. God bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." Perplexed by the prospect of his case he remembered that "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

But most of all his precious parchments showed him his Savior whom he had served so zealously for more than 30 years; the Savior who had been spoken of in these OT books but whom he had not recognized until he saw Him on the Damascus Road, and the Savior whom the trained rabbi then saw everywhere in the pages of the OT. And now lying in the Mamartine Prison he wanted to become even better acquainted with Him through His written Word before being ushered into His presence.

And soon he was; for a few months later the guards dragged P from the dungeon; his eyes fell on the columns, altars, and temples of the nearby Forum; he was taken outside the city wall; he bowed his head; the executioner's sword flashed for a moment in the sunshine; and P went to be with Christ.

But he being dead yet speaketh. To all of us he says: What do you consider most important in life? If you had 6 months to live how would you spend the time? I hope all can respond: I would want to use as much of it as possible to study the Word so that I may know the Savior revealed in it and live a life that reflects His glory. Whether we have 6 months or 6 years to live; whether in prison, in hospital, in business, in home, or in school, this is the most important thing in life.



And on this dedicatory occasion P reminds us once again of the importance of books to lead us into a full, deep, and personal knowledge of the one supreme book of all, and the importance of that Bible to show us the person of the LJC. May this ever be the use of the Mosher library of DTS.

*But* [It is to this purpose that we dedicate The Mosher library.  
 & pray that it will be<sup>so</sup> used ~~to~~ until Jesus comes.]