

error he has committed, if of error he has been guilty at all, is that his plumb-line is meant for deep seas, whereas the plumb-lines of his critics are fitted only for shallow waters. But no prophecy on the one hand, and no history on the other, can be fathomed with such lines. All history is profound, and profoundly prophetic. The history of the Hebrews is either an exception to the rule, and like a circle without a centre; or Christ, the Saviour for the world, is that Centre.

J. MORISON.

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ST. PAUL'S CLOAK, AND BOOKS, AND  
PARCHMENTS.

2 TIMOTHY iv. 13.

TOWARD the close of his ministry—this at least is the most reasonable solution of the problem suggested by the hints concerning the course of his life and literary labours with which the Apostle himself furnishes us—St. Paul was *twice* imprisoned in Rome. During the first term of imprisonment, he seems to have been allowed a certain liberty,—liberty, for instance, to dwell in his own hired hut, and to preach the Word to as many as resorted to him; but in his second term he appears to have been treated with much greater rigour (2 Tim. ii. 9), to have been straightly confined to the dark and miserable dungeon over which the palace of the Cæsars was erected, and to have left it only to meet death at the executioner's hand. Between these two terms of imprisonment he took a long journey, revisiting many of the Churches he had planted in the company

of a few faithful friends, among whom was Timothy, his beloved son in the Lord. Leaving them, or at least leaving Timothy, behind him, he hurried back to Rome, to stand his trial at the Imperial bar; and so soon as he had arrived, apparently before he had rendered himself up, he wrote to Timothy, who was to follow him to Rome, begging him to bring with him when he came part of the baggage which the Apostle had left with a friend at Troas.

Now of all his friends Timothy was, in all probability, the dearest to the Apostle's heart. He seems to have adopted the young bishop as his very "son," as in some sense his heir and successor in the work of the ministry. Once he expressly says of him that he knew no man "of an equal soul" with him. And yet, as we can see from the two letters written to him by St. Paul, Timothy had his defects, and consequently his dangers; and though his very failings "leant to virtue's side," they were none the less likely to impair his usefulness. The conception we infer of him from the Apostolic letters is, that he was a diligent and devout student of retiring habits, somewhat ascetic too, and diffident of himself when called to mix with men and to intermeddle with the conduct of public affairs. It sounds harsh to call these qualities—not too common in young men and ministers—defects in a young pastor or bishop; and no doubt there are many of us in whom they would be virtues rather than defects. And yet St. Paul warns Timothy against them very earnestly, warns him that they are likely to mar the completeness of his character and the success of his ministry. He is a young man, but he is to let no man despise

his youth ; and that they may not despise it, he is to stir up, to kindle and rekindle, the gift that is in him. On three points he is to exercise a special care. (1) He is of an ascetic turn or habit ; he drinks no wine, although to his feeble stomach and overtaxed brain wine would be a wholesome stimulant ; but asceticism is not to be the rule of the Church : let him therefore remember that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving : " let him take a little wine for his health's sake, since weak health means bad work or imperfect work. (2) He is of a studious habit, prone to brood over the philosophical questions and speculations which then engaged the thoughts of men : instead of brooding over such themes as "minister questions rather than godly edifying," let him study the pure and incorrupt Scriptures with an unremitting diligence, and hold fast the doctrines which he has learned of them, remembering always that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (3) In his studious and ascetic seclusion from the world, he has grown shy and diffident, apt to forget his duties as a citizen or to undervalue or forego his rights : let him not forget either his rights or his duties : let him pray, and teach his hearers to make prayer and supplication for all men, for kings and all in eminent place—for the honest and godly, the quiet and peaceable conduct of public affairs : let him be alive to *this* aspect of the world around him, and have the due word to say to the poor and to the rich, to the bond and the free, and to all sorts and

conditions of men. Thus he will prove himself a true bishop, a true son and successor of the Apostle.

These were among the counsels which St. Paul gave his "dear son," the principles by which he begged him to order his life. And, as we might expect from a man of his "incorrigible and losing honesty," these were principles on which St. Paul ordered his own life, down even to its most trivial details—even when he asked Timothy to bring him his cloak and books and parchments.

It has been thought strange, and below the dignity of Scripture, that the verse which embodies this request should have found a place in the New Testament. Yet who would wish that it had been omitted? It is such personal touches as this which quicken attention and gratify the natural desire we entertain to know all we can about such an one as St. Paul. It makes him more real to us, it shews him to be a man of like passions with us, that he should care to get back his old cloak and the books he had often thumbed. And, moreover, the natural interest we feel in such a passage as this is justified the moment we find in it, as we may and ought to find, an illustration of the very principles on which St. Paul acted, and on which he counselled Timothy to act, in the larger relations of his life and ministry.

Let us mark, then, how truly these principles are at work in the verse before us.

(1) St. Paul asks for his *cloak*,—apparently, one of those large, thick, and sleeveless wrap-alls, with an opening through which the head was thrust, then commonly worn by men who were about to expose

themselves to cold and wild weather. Why does he ask for it? Simply because the winter was at hand (2 Tim. iv. 21), and there lay before him the prospect of confinement for some weeks or months in the dismal Mamertine dungeon, and he feels that his large thick cloak will be a comfort to him, that it will give some sense of warmth even to his susceptible and exhausted frame. He was no ascetic; he had warned Timothy against the sin of refusing, without adequate cause, any good creature of God, any lawful comfort, any innocent gratification that fell in his way, and had begged him, both for health and comfort's sake, to drink a little wine. And now he acts on his own principle. His cloak will be a comfort to him in the cold of winter and the damp dreary prison; and so, instead of refusing it, he takes some pains to get it.

Nor is it unworthy of remark that, in all probability, St. Paul cared a good deal more for the *old* cloak that he had left at Troas, and which had done him many a friendly turn in his perilous journeys among the mountains and across the sea, than he would have done for any new cloak his friends could have bought for him in Rome. Commentators, indeed, have grown pathetic over this request, and have bade us observe that St. Paul had only *one* cloak in the world, and that he was too poor to buy another. But surely we need not doubt that among his converts and friends at Rome there were some who would gladly have furnished the aged Apostle with a cloak, had he cared for one, when he gave himself into the jailer's hands. And, therefore, I do not doubt that just as we—at least after we have

lived a little while in the world—like an old coat, or an old hat, better than a new one, so the Apostle thought of his old cloak as an old friend, and felt that he should be more comfortable in that than in the costliest rug or wrapper exposed for sale in Rome. And here, therefore, he shews himself so little of an ascetic that he can not only take pains to get himself the comfort of a cloak, but can also take pains to get himself the additional comfort of the cloak that he likes best.

There may have been another reason why he preferred this cloak to any other. *He may have made it himself.* Professor Plumptre has shewn good reason for doubting that the Apostle took his place “simply among the *ouvrier* class,” that he was a mere artizan; but he admits that the Apostle was master of the manual dexterities of his craft, and that he was often compelled to practise them. And the *kilikia*—the rough cloth woven from the long hair of the Cilician goats—was used for rugs and cloaks as well as for tents and tent-coverings. It is not unlikely, therefore, that St. Paul had woven a cloak for himself, and that he preferred his own handiwork to that of other men.

(2) Besides his cloak, St. Paul asks for his *books*, his *biblia*, which he had also left with Carpus. What were these books? There can be little doubt that they were the sacred writings of the Old Testament,—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms—which were then gathered into separate rolls or volumes. And here, again, it is instructive to note that the Apostle was acting on a principle he had commended to Timothy. He had counselled his

“son” to give himself earnestly to the study of those holy Scriptures with which — thanks to Lois and Eunice — he had been familiar from his youth; and now he lets us see that he himself was bent on studying them down to the last moment of his life and amid all the miseries and distractions of his imprisonment. Yet if any man could have dispensed with these *biblia*, surely St. Paul might have dispensed with them. His memory was richly fraught with the facts of the Hebrew story and with the words of the holy prophets and psalmists. He himself enjoyed an inspiration at least equal to theirs; and how should he who could write Scripture need to study the Scriptures of other men? To him it was always easy to rise into a communion with God and with Christ which brought light into his darkness, order and clearness into his thoughts, peace into his heart. And yet, though his memory was so richly stored, though he was himself inspired, and was familiar with the illuminating joys of a Divine communion, he craved to have with him the Sacred Books which had often been to him a fountain of light and strength and consolation.

Here, too, it is worth while to mark that it was the very copies of Scripture which he had often used that he asked for. Copies of the Old Testament, or of parts of it, were common enough at that period among the Jews; and among the Christianized Jews at Rome there must have been many who could have lent him a copy of any Scripture he wished to peruse. But it was *his own* copies he wanted; and, probably, he wanted them in part because he liked them as we like an old Bible which

has long been the companion of our studious and prayerful hours; because he could find any passage he was looking for more easily in his own copy than in a new one; and, in part, because he had made many marginal notes in his old copies, and had marked many passages which would help him to convince the Jews out of their own Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. For we should gravely mistake the matter were we to suppose that, whether in arguing with his opponents, or in writing his Epistles, which stand thick with citations from the Old Testament, St. Paul found himself so inspired that he could dispense with the toils of thought and research. The Holy Ghost did not bring to his memory every passage that would bear on the topic he had in hand, but rather helped him to see the meaning of the ancient Scriptures as he pondered over them. We know that he possessed both the original Scriptures in the Hebrew, and the Greek translation of them (the Septuagint); for sometimes he quotes from the one and sometimes from the other. And we know that he had studied both; for not only does he commonly use that one of the two which best suits the turn of his argument, but at times he departs from both and puts the thought of the ancient prophet into his own words.

And, no doubt, when he asked for the *biblia* he had left with Carpus, he was intending to continue his study of them in the Mamertine, and hoping that in his own copies he would find much that would help him in his study—many marks or notes which would recall former investigations and set him on pondering them anew.

(3) In addition to his cloak, and his books, St. Paul besought Timothy to bring him his *parchments*, literally, his *membranes*, or, as we may call them, his *documents*. What these parchments were is a question that has been much discussed. Some scholars have conjectured that they were note-books (*adversaria*) in which the Apostle jotted down for future use any valuable thought or suggestion that occurred to him; and that these note-books, as being in constant use, and exposed to wear and tear, were made of parchment instead of papyrus—a very reasonable conjecture. Others have concluded that they were copies of the Apostle's own writings—copies, *i. e.*, either of the Epistles he had already sent to the Churches, or of Scriptures that he intended to give to the Church if life were spared him. Still others have conjectured that the *biblia*, the books made of papyrus (paper), as the slighter and cheaper material, contained the Apostle's own writings, and that the *parchments* contained copies of Old Testament Scriptures. Something might be said for each of these conjectures were there not another which instantly commands attention, and approves itself the more the more it is considered.

The word *biblia* would very well cover all the books, all the writings or copies of writings, which St. Paul cared to carry about with him wherever he went. But what else was there from which he would never like to be separated, and of which he would feel a very pressing need when he wrote to Timothy, a need so pressing as to account for the emphasis, "Bring my cloak, and the books, but *especially* the parchments"? We know very well that next to his

Jewish blood he prized his Roman citizenship. He was forward to assert it, and even a little eager to shew that he held it in its most honourable form. Other men had purchased this "freedom" for a great sum of money, or had earned it by military service, or had stooped to pick it up from the mire of an Emperor's favour, or even from the grace of "a favourite;" but he was "freeborn," and was proud of the honour. We may be sure, therefore, that he would never willingly be without "the documents" which certified him to be a Roman citizen; and that he would bitterly regret that, in a moment of forgetfulness, he had left them behind at Troas. He had had frequent occasion for them in his eventful life, when he was haled before magistrates and judges. And he had very special occasion for them now, when he was to be tried for his life, and he would need every evidence in his favour he could produce. Even if the trial went against him, as he foreboded it would and as we know it did, these "parchments" might still be of use to him; for no Roman citizen could be legally put to torture or condemned to the cruel and ignominious forms of death to which the alien and the slave were exposed. And as it would be in vain for him to assert his citizenship unless he could produce the documents which formally attested it, we can well understand his anxiety to recover his parchments, and his desire that Timothy would use all diligence to bring them to him.

But if this be the true interpretation of St. Paul's phrase, he is but once more illustrating a principle on which he had counselled his son Timothy to act. He had urged him not to live the life of a recluse,

but to mix with men ; not to forget his duties and claims as a citizen in his devotion to study : and now we see that he himself was bent on affirming his rights as a Roman citizen to the last ; and that in his devotion to his *biblia* and to the Church, he was not unmindful of the duties he owed the State and the State owed to him.

It is pleasant to find that even in penning a request for his cloak and books and documents, St. Paul was consistent with himself, and was really, though unconsciously, giving expression to great principles on which he moulded his life. But of course the most profitable use we can make of his words is to learn the lessons they imply ; to take from them (1) a warning against asceticism, (2) an exhortation to constant and earnest study of the Scriptures, and (3) an incentive to the faithful discharge of civic and political duties.

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### THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

MUCH light is thrown upon the Pauline Epistles by a recognition of the order in which they were probably composed. The two Epistles to the Thessalonians were the earliest fragments of the New Testament, and they pulsate with the impetuosity and ardour which characterized Paul's first visit to Europe. They are comparatively reticent as to the doctrines of the Cross, but they disclose the hostility of unbelieving Jews and the alarm of Roman officials at the proclamation of the royalty, the coming, and the judgment-seat of the Lord Jesus Christ.