

A Minister's Library.

I AM often asked by students, "What books am I to buy?"—especially when they stand at the threshold of a pastorate, and some useful fund, public or private, enables them to ask the question. I generally reply by saying that it is like the question, "What food am I to eat?" put to a doctor. He would want to know the man and his constitution, his work and his resources, for not every one can assimilate the same food. So it is with books. A library is not a second-hand book shop. It is a unity and has a spirit, reflecting the mind and purpose of the man who forms it, and is the slow product of his own development. Before I can confidently recommend a book to any given man, I must know the man himself. A list of recommended books is always likely to persuade people to buy what is of little use to *them*. It is easy enough for a book-buyer and book-user of experience to give some plain and definite rules about the formation of a library, though with the melancholy conviction that few will follow them. Here are a few that will save both time and money to those who have the strength of mind to obey:—

1. Never buy a book simply because it is cheap, but only because you *need* it, and are going to use it before long.
2. Get the best book, though it is the dearest, and in general avoid buying "little" books as much as possible.
3. Never grudge money spent on dictionaries and works of reference and source-books; they are the most permanent investment, and pay the best dividends.
4. A good book once mastered (and this is usually done only by a written analysis) will hardly ever be superseded, for *you*, and is worth keeping for life, if only because *you* know it.
5. Buy the books that are central to your main purpose and interest, and borrow those on the circumference.

A minister who has had an adequate college training, has learnt to use the well-known dictionaries and works of reference. He is wise to get as many as he can afford of such works as the Oxford *Hebrew Lexicon* (Briggs-Driver-Brown), the *Greek Lexicon* of Liddell and Scott, the *Latin Dictionary* of Lewis and Short, the *Analytical Concordance* of Young, the *Concordance to the Greek Testament* of Moulton and Geden, the *Epitome and Index* of the Dictionary of National Biography (a most useful volume), and the well-known series of dictionaries edited by the late Dr. Hastings. The *Encyclopaedia Biblica* is also a very valuable book—for

those who know how to discriminate between the wheat and the chaff. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, and the *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, by Skeat, should also be named. Commentaries require more space than is at my command, and they depend even more than most books on the capacities of their users. But it is usually a mistake to buy a complete series of any issue (the *Expositor's Greek Testament* is an exception). Buy commentaries on the strength of the author's name, whatever the series. If you have and use good dictionaries, you need buy far fewer commentaries. As a well-known commentator once said to me, "Commentaries are not much good," and they are of most value to those who use them least—who use them chiefly to answer the questions which their own diligent work on the text has raised.

A few well-selected biographies, especially of ministers, such as the recent *Life of Alexander Whyte*, by Dr. Barbour, and a few classics of devotion, such as the *Private Prayers of Lancelot Andrewes* (Brightman's edition), and Law's *Serious Call*, are essentials. A shelf of favourite poets may well rank with the books of devotion; they should have become our constant friends in the early days. After all, how many books we can do without! I asked a colleague of mine what he would put into his kit-bag, if he were leaving for an indefinite stay on a desert island. He answered, *The Greek Testament*, the Septuagint, Plato and Shakespeare." I think my own selection would be, a Hebrew Bible, a Greek Testament, Augustine's *Confessions*, Browning, Bunyan, and *The Oxford Book of Mystical Verse* (India paper editions would just make this possible!). But I should certainly *not* take either Peake's *Commentary* or Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*.

With these warnings and general principles, I append a list of some sixty or seventy books, all of them worth buying by those who know how to use them. They are arranged under the five leading divisions of the theology, and with the recommendations made above, would probably represent an outlay of a hundred pounds.

A. THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION.

Moore, *History of Religions*; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*; Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*; Frazer, *The Folklore of the Old Testament*; Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*; Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*; Macnicol, *Indian Theism*; Toy, *Introduction to the History of Religions*.

B. THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; Dewey &

Tufts, *Ethics*; Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*; Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, and *Pluralism and Theism*; Hoeffding, *History of Modern Philosophy*; Galloway, *Philosophy of Religion*; Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*; Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*; Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*.

C. CHURCH HISTORY.

Von Schubert, *Outlines of Church History*; Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*; Newman, *A Manual of Church History*; Ayer, *A Source-Book for Ancient Church History*; Gwatkin, *Early Church History*; Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*; Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*; Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*; Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*; Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*; Dale, *History of English Congregationalism*; Newman, *History of Anti-pedobaptism*; Whitley, *History of British Baptists*; Hobhouse, *The Church and the World*; Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*.

D. BIBLICAL INTRODUCTION AND THEOLOGY.

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*; Sellin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*; Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*; H. P. Smith, *Religion of Israel and Old Testament History*; Browne, *Early Judaism*; Bevan, *Jerusalem under the High Priests*; Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*; Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*; Charles, *Eschatology*; Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*; Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*; Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*; Headlam, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*; Denney, *Jesus and the Gospels*; G. A. Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*; Stevens, *The Theology of the New Testament*; E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*; Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*; Peake, *The Quintessence of Paulinism*; Moffatt, *The Theology of the Gospels*.

E. THEOLOGY.

Mackintosh (H. R.), *Person of Christ, and Some Aspects of Christian Belief*; Oman, *Grace and Personality*; Humphries, *Holy Spirit in Faith and Experience*; Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*; Forrest, *The Christ of History and Experience*; Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*; Denney, *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*; McGregor, *Christian Freedom*; W. P. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*; Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*; Adams Brown, *Christian Theology*; Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON.