

on no principle, but in a hap-hazard way. A minister's library cannot wisely be made so strictly professional as that of the physician or the lawyer, but he may waste his money in two ways. He may buy a book of slight value, or he may buy a book which his library needs far less than some others. There are then some general principles to be considered before entering on the more specific details.

1. Take plenty of time to decide on every purchase. Do not be hurried by a glowing book notice into sudden acquisition. The edition will not be exhausted at once. If it is, a second edition with possible corrections and additions will probably soon come out. A great name is not always the guaranty of a good book. It may not be the book you want, but if it is, time will make it appear.

2. Buy books which have passed through their probation. Books have their probation. It lasts sometimes a longer, sometimes a shorter period. A year has been suggested as the normal probation of a book. At the year's end it is safe to buy, if the general verdict is in its favor. There are dead books and live books, and for books certainly there is no second probation after death. Books are often made out of other and better books with new titles that would deceive the very elect. So sang Chaucer before the art of printing :

For out of olde feldys, as men say
Comyth al this newe corn from yer to yere,
And out of olde bokes, in good fey
Comyth out this newe science that men lere.

It is well to remember that the larger number of books needed have been already published and have been tested, and that therefore your eye should be mainly on the past as the progenitor of books. Ten to one it is not the book of to-day your library wants so much as the seasoned book of years.

3. Be careful in the matter of editions, typography, etc., etc. Things have greatly improved in this direction. We owe to the Riverside Press a great debt. Ever since its genial founder, Mr. Henry O. Houghton, set it up on the banks of Charles river a generation since, there has been a great advance in the externals of book-making. The eyes of students have been the gainers, if the oculists have not. Their libraries have been the gainers in attractiveness and value. The fact is, that a clear and attractive typography has a great deal to do with getting at an author's meaning in the shortest possible time. I fear I, for one, have failed to appreciate Neander's great church history because my copy is so wretchedly gotten up, on yellow paper and in poor type. When years ago I wanted an edition of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, I foolishly bought an edition in double columns, small type and dingy paper. My money was simply thrown away. The result is that I read Hooker in this edition only when I am forced to, whereas he ought to be in my hands half a dozen times a year. It is a shame to print so noble an author in so sorry a fashion.