

Perhaps the method advocated by the late Dean of Chichester will be the most widely acceptable to all. In a now rare work entitled "A Treatise on the Pastoral Office," he speaks at length on the subject, pointing out the use and abuse of commentaries and the inaccuracy of many notes which are considered very clever, but which are really supremely shallow. The point which he contends for is that every one should be his *own* commentator and make the Bible explain itself. Let the reader begin at the beginning with a note-book and Bible and read a portion every day, asking himself continually why we are told this, "what am I to learn from that." Read it as a new book, of which every word is God's, put down with a special purpose. Employ also a concordance and find out what is said in other places about characters and places, and incidents of a similar character. But hear the writer himself: "The Bible is to be read patiently and laboriously, and is to be read consecutively through. Not a single word may on any account be missed; not a single clause slurred over, and when a fresh chapter is begun the concluding words of that which went before should be reconsidered. If a man will be at the pains to find out for himself (which he easily may) how the books of Kings and Chronicles interlace each other, and chooses to read them conjointly, it is not denied that he will do well. Again, if he is disposed to read the prophets in their presumed historical order, it is thought that he will do wisely so to read them. The same may be said of St. Paul's epistles. But let not this principle be carried too far. Above all, let no edition of the Bible be habitually used which professes thus to put the sacred contents to rights. Except in the instances above indicated, to avoid distraction, and to ensure a perfect work, let the several Books of the Bible be read through in the order in which they actually stand; the order into which, by God's good providence (not unmindful, you may be sure, of His own good work), those books are found to have fallen."

"The dignity of the four Gospels, or rather of the one Gospel according to four Evangelists, is so august that the subject claims separate notice. Sooner or later to read them in a harmony, is of course indispensable: in other words, they should by all means be minutely compared together. At the same time, it must never be forgotten that each is complete in itself; has an independent perfectness; and, therefore, claims no ordinary amount of independent study. From the comparison of the four, a fresh set of phenomena is evolved; and, by consequence, a new field of criticism is disclosed. But nothing which a harmony will ever bring to light will compensate for the neglect of what the Gospels severally teach. In the first instance, therefore, let them be studied one by one; and when at last recourse is had to a harmony, let the reader be thoroughly per-