

In 1822 English printer Samuel Bagster printed a Bible in eight languages – Hebrew, Greek, English, Latin, German, Italian, French, and Spanish. Bagster’s Polyglott Bible also included over 60,000 Scripture cross-references. The Dunham Bible Museum has at least 25 Polyglott Bibles in its collection – all in English – the King James translation, to be specific. How can that be? Apparently printers published the English of Bagster’s Bible and called it the “Polyglott Bible” or “English Polyglott.” They used this title mainly to focus on Bagster’s notes and cross-references included in the Bible, rather than the number of languages. Calling a Bible “Polyglott” was also a marketing tool. People felt as if they were getting something a little more for their money if they bought a “Polyglott Bible.” The following is from the preface to an 1833 Polyglott Bible, explaining the importance of using Scripture cross-references to explain Scripture.

THE HARMONY AND PERFECTION

OF

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE POLYGOT BIBLE, THE REFERENCES IN WHICH ARE EMBODIED
IN THIS WORK.

In that grand enunciation of the dignity and design of the sacred volume which is given by the apostle Paul, we are told that “ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS; THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS.” 2 Tim. 3:16,17. But it must be evident that the Scripture could not be effectually profitable for these great ends, nor make the man of God perfect, if it were not perfect itself; if its different parts were at variance with each other; if, notwithstanding all the variety of matter, and multiplicity of detail, which such a book required, the doctrines revealed, and the moral duties enjoined, were not substantially and essentially the same throughout; and if all the parts did not concur in the plan of the whole. To exhibit then the harmony of the sacred writers on the subjects of which they treat, has been the primary design of this selection. And as there are some subjects of leading importance, in which all the rest are included, and by means of which the harmony and perfection of the inspired pages are written as with the beams of the sun, to these especial care and attention have been devoted.

I. It has appeared on an object of the first magnitude, that the reader of the holy Scriptures should be assisted by references from text to text, to have constantly in view the connection of all the divine attributes, and the holy uniformity of God in his government both of his church and of the world. A display of *the true character and perfections of God* I, without dispute, one chief design of the inspired volume. Here, as in Isaiah’s miraculous vision, may Jehovah be seen, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; his train fills the temple, and the sacred writers, like the seraphim, cover themselves, and cry one to another, and say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.” It is this which gives to the Scripture its superlative grandeur. By it God is known; his will is promulgated; his purposes are revealed; his mercy is announced; and he is everywhere exhibited as worthy

of the supreme adoration, love, service, and praise of all his intelligent creatures. Little do those who neglect the Bible think what refined delight they lose by thus turning away their eyes from the most sublime, the most glorious, and the most beatifying object of contemplation that the whole universe affords.

II. But this manifestation of the divine character and government is not presented to us as a matter of mere speculation, in which we have no immediate and personal interest. The holy Scriptures are designed to promote the glory of God BY THE SALVATION OF MAN. The peculiar purpose of the whole is to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; to raise them from the ruins of the fall, and to put them in possession of the blessings of redemption; to lead them from sin to holiness; to conduct them through a state of conflict and trial on earth, to a state of rest and felicity in heaven; and so to assist and direct them in all possible conditions in life, that they may not fail of these great ends, except by their own wilful rejection of the counsel of God against themselves. The salvation of his own soul should therefore be the grand concern of every reader of the Scripture. Here the immortality of the soul is brought to light, and placed in unquestionable evidence. Here, its defection from original purity is clearly demonstrated, the means of its restoration are set forth, and its future destiny is declared. It is an awful responsibility which they incur who wilfully neglect this holy book, and devote all their time and the powers of their minds to terrestrial and subordinate objects. They slight the pearl of greatest price, which is nowhere else to be found; and seem as if they were determined to frustrate, as far as respects themselves, all that divine wisdom and goodness have done to rescue the immortal mind of man from spiritual ignorance, error, vanity, vice and ruin. Those, however, who are seeking to enjoy the blessings which the gospel reveals, will, as they are able, *search* the Scriptures; and such persons will receive great help from having references at hand to assist their inquiries. "It were to be wished," says Bishop Horsley, "that no Bibles were printed without references. Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments. . . . It is incredible," he adds, "to any one who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner, without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study them in this manner, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of the Spirit by which these books were dedicated, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake the learned Christian's faith." So great and perfect is the coincidence of every part of the word of God in the grand and merciful design of the whole!

III. This is more apparent, and the harmony and perfection of the holy Scriptures are rendered more peculiarly evident and distinct, by the constant reference of all its writers to *our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. "TO HIM GIVE ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS." Acts 10:43. The things which were written in the law of Moses, and in all the prophets, and in the Psalms, concern HIM, Luke 24:27, 44; and would come to nothing if he were separated from them. He is the bright and morning Star; the true Light that must lighten every man who comes to see the glory of divine revelation. Rev. 22:16; John 1:9. It has therefore been a chief design of this work to connect and to exhibit the testimony which all the sacred penmen bear to the adorable Immanuel; to the proper and

unequivocal divinity of his nature, the necessity of his mediation, the reality and design of his incarnation, his spotless and exemplary life, his unparalleled sufferings, his vicarious death, the verity of his resurrection and ascension into heaven, the sufficiency of his righteousness, the prevalence of his intercession, the spirituality of his kingdom, his sovereignty in the church, his constant care and love of his people, and the certainty of his second coming to raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness: grand and sublime truths, in which every individual of the human race is deeply and eternally interested.

IV. The chief purpose of Christ's mission being that such as believe on him might be *saved from sin*, which is the transgression of the divine law, and from the punishment due to it, it has been thought important frequently to connect those texts which speak of transgressions, with those in which the law concerning them is to be found, and in which punishment is threatened; and sometimes with those in which the atonement is set forth, and pardon is proclaimed, or in which sanctification is promise or enforced; and these again with such as relate to the future happiness and glory which is promised to the faithful, or the punishment and misery denounced against the impenitent. A small body of divinity is sometimes comprised in a few texts connected together in this way. Thus, from those words in Ezek. 23:49, "Ye shall bear the sins of your idols," the reader is referred first to Num. 14:34 as a parallel passage, showing God visiting sin upon the transgressors themselves; then to Num. 18:23, to show the typical visitation of it upon the Levitical priesthood; then to Isaiah 53:11, to show the prophetic declaration of its being laid on Christ; and lastly, to 1 Pet. 2:24, to show the actual fulfillment of that prophecy, and the end to be answered by it; for there we are told that He that judgeth righteously, "his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live to righteousness."

V. *The concurrence of the Old and New Testaments with each other*, and the relation of the types before and under the Mosaic law to their completion under the gospel, have been studiously regarded, so as to render it evident, that whatever variations may have been made in the form and administration of external worship, true religion, under the former dispensations, was always essentially the same as true religion under the present; that "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." For "in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." Rom. 2:28,29; Acts 10:35. In this, the revelation made before the institution of the Levitical priesthood, that made during its continuance, and that which has been made since its termination, all agree. The Mosaic ritual was the shadow of good things to come; so were the priesthood and kingdom of Melchizedek: and the body is Christ, who is essentially "the same," both in his person and in his government, "yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Heb. 13:8.

VI. But the instruction diffused through the Scriptures respecting the gracious and indispensable operations of *the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier*, has not been forgotten; and the references on this article will show that, as to his sacred influence on the minds of the inspired penmen we are indebted for all the truths they have taught us, so to his influence on the minds of those who receive and regard them must such persons be indebted for all

the have learned or can learn of them. His work completes the great design of the whole; and his assistance and blessing are distinctly promised to all who sincerely ask them.

VII. As the Scriptures harmonize in their primary and general objects, so do they with regard to the *particular subjects* comprehend in their plan. Historical accounts are verified by other coincident ones, or by accounts of the persons or places to which they refer. The prophecies of one prophet concerning events which were to take place, relating either to kingdoms, families, individuals, or the world at large, are consistent with those pronounced by other prophets. The accounts of the Jewish polity under its various vicissitudes, are confirmed by the writings of the prophets who lived during or after those vicissitudes; while the former ten reciprocally to establish the authenticity of the latter. The histories of the four evangelists have a regular connection and parallelism, especially those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The recital of the transactions of the apostolic epistles: and Archdeacon Paley has well shown the confirmation which the epistles of St. Paul derive from the circumstances recorded by St. Luke in his book of the Acts. Prophecies are connected with their accomplishments as far as those accomplishments are included in the Scripture history. Promises and threatenings are connected with their respective fulfilments; precept with example, and with supplication; and the prayers of believers with the answers they have received. All these relations have been carefully regarded in this compilation.

VIII. Further, the Scriptures are not merely intended to lead men to godliness, they are intended also to *exemplify it*. Repentance, faith, hope, charity, and devotion, are here exhibited in the most perfect models; and it has therefore entered into the design of this work to show the corresponding emotions and conduct of the saints, both of the Old Testament and the New, when under the influence of those dispositions, contemplations, and emotions which are more peculiarly characteristic of true piety; and also to connect the devotional parts of Scripture with the occurrences which gave rise to them, as far as they can be ascertained. Thus is religion known by its fruits; not as a thing merely of times and circumstances, but a living principle in the mind, which times and circumstances call into action and contribute to display.

IX. The *aphoristic and poetical* parts of the sacred writings are also connected, so as to illustrate and enforce each other, that the reader may be constantly impressed with those momentous truths, and that sublime language with which they abound, and which afford perpetual food for the best exercises of the understanding and the finest emotions of the heart; at once furnishing materials for the most rational entertainment, and the most solid instruction. In this respect, the Scriptures will be found to resemble the garden of Eden, in which the Lord God has made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for spiritual food. But no cherubim or flaming sword are here to prohibit access to the tree of life. The children of the second Adam may freely, and without fear or interruption, now put forth their hands to its soul-reviving fruit, and take, and eat, and live forever.

X. The agreement of the sacred writers with each other will be found not only to exist in the subjects on which they treat, but to extend to their own *individual characters*. It will appear that they were all animated by the same Spirit; that they were all holy men, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, calling men to holiness—men nevertheless of like passions with ourselves, conscious of their own natural infirmity and sinfulness, and of the mercy of God through Christ Jesus, as their only refuge from his

just displeasure. In short, they were men fearing God; loving God; loving his character, his laws, his will; admiring his great and wonderful purposes, and voluntarily, deliberately, and determinedly devoting themselves to his service, whatever it might cost them, and to whatever it might expose them. On all these accounts, they are held forth as examples, whose faith, patience, and practice, Christians are to follow. 1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7; James 5:10.

It is thus that the Scriptures are PROFITABLE to all the purposes for which they are destined, and are calculated to make the man of God “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” To the inspired pages at large may be applied the remarks of the excellent Bishop Horne on the Psalms: “Indited under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrantcy; but these unfading plants of Paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened, fresh odors are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellences, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best.”

Happy in having labored to facilitate the acquaintance of the Christian with this invaluable treasure, the editor has now only to implore the blessing of Him by whom its exhaustless stores have been bestowed on sinful man; and to hope that his feeble endeavors may be instrumental in advancing the reader’s edification, and in their humble measure tend to promote that happy state of things so long foretold, and so ardently to be desired, in which “THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA.” Hab. 2:14; Isa. 11:9.