

Sunday, November 3, 2024—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 243 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (Kilburne’s *Dangerous Errors*)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 242](#) we began looking at William Kilburne’s famous tract from c. 1660 titled, *[Dangerous errors in several late printed Bibles to the great scandal, and corruption of sound and true religion](#)*. In this piece, Kilburne chronicles roughly ten printings of the AV between 1631 and 1657 containing gross errors of the press. In doing so we followed the chronological order presented by Dr. David Norton in “Appendix 6 Kilburne’s list of errors” of *A Textual History of the King James Bible*.
- Having looked at seven of these printings in Lesson 242 we will now consider the final three in Kilburne’s list as well as his closing arguments/requests. Where possible we will insert screenshots of the different readings noted by Kilburne.

Kilburne’s Dangerous Errors

1656. Hills and Field, London. 12^o (identification uncertain; ?H660)

- This edition constitutes one of Kilburne’s most lengthy discussions:
 - “In a Bible in 12^o. volume, printed at *London* by *Hen. Hills* and *I. Field*, in *An.* 1656, corrected by one *Mr. Robinson* (a *Scotch Rabbi*,) and published in an Advertisement by *Mercurius Politicus* 6. Nov. 1656. to be incomparable. And in truth I think he was not deceived, (though indeed he abused the Common-wealth;) For I am confident, if the number of the Impression was as (I am informed) 20000 there are as many faults therein, verbal, literal, and in the difference of the *Italic* words, (to the great corruption of the Text) and in false points of distinction: so that besides the base paper, and printing, and abridgement, and perversion of the Contents, and transposing and confounding of words, whereby it is very troublesome to be read, it is the worst of all the rest that are exposed to your view; as appeared palpably to the Parliament, whereby the sale thereof, (*se Idente Parlamento*) was inhibited, but since dispersed very much at Country Fairs, and Markets by Book-binders and petty Chapmen, being no fitting Book for sale by Stationers in *London*; wherein you may observe these faults, viz.
- Gen. 1.21. *Cod.* for *God.* and so in many other places. *Cap.* 7.3. *Cap.* 10.19. *Cap.* 15.3. *Abraham*, before God changed his name, for *Abram.* *Cap.* 18.1. *Cap.* 27.45. *Cap.* 34.21. *Cap.* 46.17. *Exod.* 12.42. *Cap.* 16.19. *Cap.* 19.24. *Cap.* 26.8. *Cap.* 29.22. *Cap.* 40. in the Contents. *A Cloud cloudeth.* for *covereth.* ver. 2. *Lev.* 3.6. *Sacrifice of* left out. *Cap.* 7.38. *Cap.* 8.14. *Cap.* 10.18. *Cap.* 11.3. *Cap.* 13.55. *Cap.* 15.20. *Cap.* 22.12. *Cap.* 23.35. *Numb.* 1.10. *Cap.* 6.14. *Ram.* for *Lamb.* *Cap.* 10.29, *Cap.* 17. in the Contents. *Kept.* for *Left.* *Cap.* 20.12. *Cap.* 23.15. *Cap.* 24.12. *Cap.* 30. in the Contents. *Delivered.* for

Divorced. Cap. 31.30. Sheep for Flocks. Cap. 34.9. Out, for On. Deut. 5.29. Cap. 29.5. waked. for waxen. Cap. 34.7. A grosse fault. Joshu. 3.11. another grand one, Cap. 23, 16. Goods for Gods. Judg. 9.17. And advanced his life. for adventured his life. Cap. 15.10. Samon. for Sampson. 1 Sam. 24.9. 2 Sam. 8.12. grosse faults, 1 King. 20.6.30. the like, 2 King. 3.2. Cap. 8.5. The Chronicles and Ezra are generally false in the proper Names. Nehem. 8.17. Had the Children of Israel done so. for Had not. Esther 4.1. a grosse fault. Job 4.6. Is not this thy feare, thy confidence, the uprightnesse of thy ways, and thy hope? for Is not thy fear, thy confidence, and the uprightnesse of thy ways, thy hope? The Titles of divers Psalms are falsely named. Prov. 29.13. Yea, he shall give delight thy soul, for unto thy soul. Eccles. 1.1, Cap. 8.17. Yet he shall not find it, is wholly left out. In the Prophets are great numbers of verbal faults, and omissions, which I pretermit. In the Evangelists are many egregious faults, viz.

Luk. 6.22. Cap. 7.43. A base squabble and nonsense. Cap. 9, 13. Loves. for Loaves. Cap. 16.17. Title of the Law. for Tittle. Cap. 19.44. Ioh. 3.17. For God sent not his Sou into the world, for Sonne. ver. 21. Cap. 6.11. Loves, for Loaves. Cap. 18.9, 36. grosse faults, and a dangerous corruption, viz. If my Kingdome were of this Word. for World. Acts 2.27. Because thou wilt not leave my Oul in Hell. for Soul, &c. Cap. 9.36. Cap. 10.14. Cap. 21.2. Nonsense. Cap. 24.24. Iew. for Iew esse Cap. 26.2. Nonsense. Rom. 1.7. Cap. 9.23. Cap. 11.14, 32. A grosse Error, viz. Concluded all in unbelieve. for them all, to wit, the Iews. 1 Cor. 1.2, 14. Cap. 3.15. Cap. 9.22. men. for means. 2 Cor. 8.9. Cap. 11.32. Of the Damascens. left out. 2 Thess. 2.16. Heb. 9.8.15. Cap. 12.1. 1 Pet. 2. Nonsense in the Contents. Exhorteth. for Dehorteth. ver. 21. Leaving us as an example. A dangerous Error. 2 Pet. 1.11.19. 1 Ioh. 2.24. Cap. 4.10. Jude. ver. 4. Rev. 9.18. Cap. 17.4, 14. Cap. 19.10. Cap. 22.17.” (Kilburne)

1656. Dutch 12°, falsely titled *Barker and Assigns of Bill*, 1638 (H529–35; Herbert gives further information about this notorious edition, its varieties and misprints)

- We touched upon this edition in [Lesson 241](#) when we discussed Michael Sparke’s four page tract, from 1641, titled *Scintilla* which sheds light on the inflated price of books during the early 1640s. Please note that we have inserted screenshots of the readings in question cited by Kilburne.
 - “Moreover during the time of the late Parliament, great numbers of Bibles in a large 12° volume were imported from Holland in 1656. with this false Title, (Imprinted at London by Rob. Barker &c. Anno 1638.) wherein Mr. Kiffin and Mr. Hills cannot be excused, (if reports be true,) being contrary to the several Acts of Parliament of 20, Sep. 1649. and 7. Janu, 1652. for regulating of Printing.



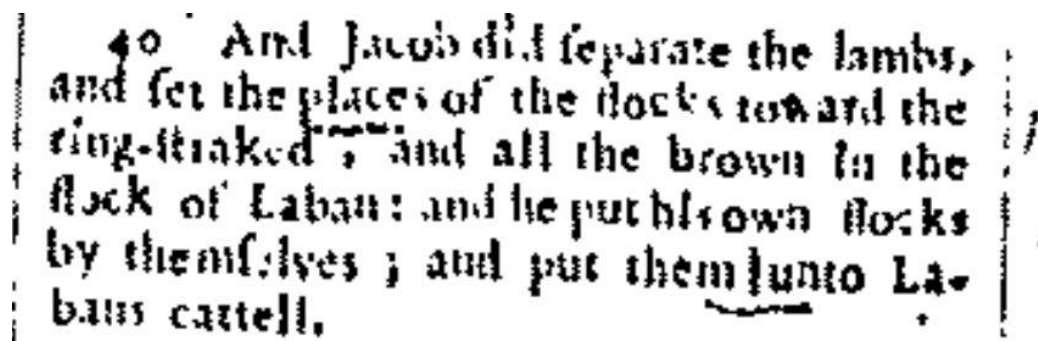
Wherein are so many notorious *Erratas*, false English, Nonsense, and Corruptions, that in reading part of Genesis, I found 30. grand faults, as Cap. 27.16. *Mouth of his neck*, for *Smooth of his neck*.

17 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the mouth of his neck.

Cap. 29.13. *She*. for *He ran to meet him*.

13 And it came to passe, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sisters son, that she ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, & brought him to his house: and he told Laban all these things.

Cap. 30.40. *Put them unto.* for *Put them not unto Labans Cattle.*

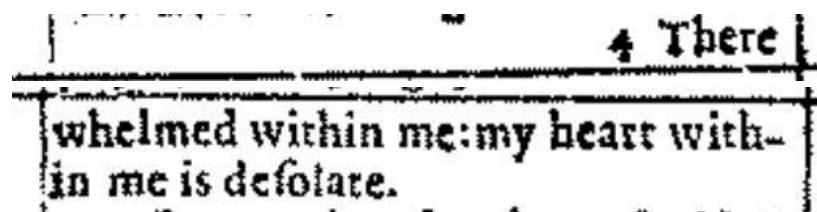


And in reading Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and the first 27. Chapters of Isaiah, I found almost an hundred grosse faults, which I did specifie to the Parliament, and therefore omit them here; The very Importation of the Books being an offence contrary to the said Statutes, and ought deservedly to be suppressed; which notwithstanding are dispersed in the Country as afore said.” (Kilburne)

1657, Field, Cambridge. 8° (H656)

- Kilburne states the following regarding this edition:
 - “In another Minion-Bible in 8° volume, printed by Iohn Field at Cambridge in 1657. which fels very much, and very dear, at least for 8 s. 6 d. per book.

Psal. 143.4. *Therefore is my Spirit over,* is wholly omitted in many of them that I have seen.



And there are many other faults, as I am well informed, of very great notoriety.” (Kilburne)

- Kilburne concludes his *Dangerous Errors* as follows:
 - “**Having thus represented the premises to your own ocular demonstration; and considering the Curse pronounced, Rev. 22. ver. 18, 19.** and other Texts of Scripture to that purpose: as also that the pious and *Orthodox* Ministers do generally complain against the said erroneous Bibles, I submit the whole matter to you; **Praying God to inflame your hearts with a fervent love of the truth, and confirm you in the true faith of**

Christianity; And that it will graciously please his divine Majesty of his infinite goodness, and mercy, to blesse this Common-wealth with the like dispensation of his blessed Word in our own proper Dialect, and speech, as it is in the original *Idioms*, by the Zeal and Patronage of his *Higness*, and the *Parliament*; And that for the private Emolument [OED, † Advantage, benefit, comfort. *Obsolete.*] (how great soever,) the Scriptures may **not be hereafter carelessly, and erroneously printed**, whereby to save the charges of good Correction, and Printing, as may be plainly proved by such Bibles, which have been printed in late years, or else (as is pretended) the profit will not countervail the charge: For (as it is credibly reported,) Mr. *Hills* and Mr. *Field* have several times affirmed, that they are engaged to pay 500l *per Annum*. to some, whose names out of respect to them I forbear to mention, over and above 100l *per Annum*. to Mr. *Marchamont Needham*, and his wife, **out of the profits of the sale of their Bibles**, deriding, insulting, & triumphing over others of the Printing Myserie, out of their confidence in their great Friends and purse, as it is said, as if they were lawless, and free (notwithstanding the truth of the premises and other grand Enormities often committed by them) both from offence and punishment, to the great dishonor of the Common-wealth in general, and damage of many private persons in particular.

For redress of which inconvenience, and for that I am informed by a Gentleman of Eminence, that upon his own reading of one of their late printed Bibles, he hath noted and observed above 6000. faults therein, **I humbly propose (out of my unfeigned respect to the public good,) that the future printing of Bibles may neither be solely appropriated to Mr. Hills & Mr. Field, on pretense of their purchasing the translated copy, made in An. 1611^o.** [Referring to a 1656 advertisement claiming to have “corrected and amended” the AV text “according to the Original Manuscript Copy of the Translators.] **and unduly entering it lately as their private Copy, and for their sole propriety in the Stationers Register;** For that it is neither rational, nor political, **that the State should be devested of the Patronage, and protection of the word of God, translated into English primitively at their charge, & permitted to be printed only *cum privilegio Regali*** [with the king's permission] (being the national and common Evidence of our Religion, and like an Elysian flower of Supremacy) & that we should make our defense thereof by and under the private and personal Title of Mr. *Hills* and Mr. *Field*, and their Assignees for perpetuity. Nor secondly, that the Bible-printing may be left again so loosely, and irregularly, (as of late years it was, and is now in design and project again) to the liberty of any persons free of the Stationers Company, or qualified to print, for that then a greater mischief will ensue, than at present, as common reason will demonstrate. **But thirdly, that such Printers only, as have heretofore discharged themselves with the greatest care and conscience, & for the honor, and best accommodation and service of the Common-wealth either at *London* or *Cambridge*, and have also had the full approbation, and allowance of Parliament, in and for printing of Bibles, & such others as shall be thought meet (not exceeding in the whole, some competent number of able Master-printers) may be hereafter authorized, and permitted to print the Bible, under the States privilege only, and not as their own private Copy, under such qualifications, and provisions for good**

Correction, Workmanship, and price, as shall be expedient for the better ordering and accomplishing of such an honorable, laudable, and weighty work and employment.” (Kilburne)

- In summation, Kilburne concludes his piece by making the following arguments:
 - Based upon the evidence furnished in his pamphlet outlining “gross errors” in the printings of the AV and the warning found in Revelation 22:18-19 action needs to be taken to rectify the situation.
 - Prays that God move the king’s “divine majesty” and “parliament” to act on behalf of the commonwealth of England to ensure the printing of the scriptures in their proper dialect, speech, and idiom.
 - Does not want the scriptures to be carelessly and erroneously printed to the “private Emolument” i.e., advanced of certain parties.
 - Kilburne does not want the future printing of Bibles to be “solely appropriated to Mr. Hills & Mr. Field” [Appointed by Cromwell] who are trying to assert private right or ownership of the original manuscript work of the King James translators.
 - The state should not be “divested” of the patronage and protection of the word of God.
 - Bible printing should not be left again to those outside of the oversight of the Stationers Company.
 - Only competent master printers should be permitted to print the text under the oversight of Parliament most notably London & Cambridge.
 - No private printing rights should be allowed in the AV.

Conclusion

- True printer’s errors are easy to spot when compared to the standard received AV text because they are almost always wacky and obvious. In contrast, editorial changes are measured and generally serve to improve the text. Most of the textual differences in the printed history of text are clearly the result of printer errors. There are also, however, editorial changes that do not meet the definition of a printer’s error:
 - Printer’s Error—“an error introduced into typeset copy by the compositor, so that the printer cannot charge for correcting it.” ([Collins English Dictionary](#))
 - Printing Error— “a misprint or misspelling in a text” ([Collings English Dictionary](#))

- Compositor—“a person who sets the text or type for printing.” (WordReference.com)
 - Author’s Alteration—“a correction or change made in typeset copy that is not a correction of an error introduced by the compositor. Abbr.: AA, A.A., a.a., aa Cf. printer's error.” (WordReference.com)
- By definition, a printer’s error is an error made by the compositor in the setting of the type. This is different from an author’s alteration or a later editorial change i.e., a change made to a text that is not the result of an error introduced by the compositor.
 - The reordering of the words in Job 4:6 (see [Lesson 237](#)) stands out as a case in point of editorial change not the correction of a printer’s error. See our YouTube video “[4\) “Of The Weight” In Numbers 7:31: Printer’s Error Or Editorial Change?](#)” as another case in point.
 - Editorial changes and printer’s errors are both realities when studying the printed history of the King James text. Studying Kilburne’s *Dangerous Errors* highlights the reality that printer’s errors are generally easy to spot because they so clearly lead to nonsense readings. When a printer’s error is not obvious, honest inquiry is open to the possibility that an editorial change has occurred.

Works Cited

Kilburne, William. *Dangerous errors in several late printed Bibles to the great scandal, and corruption of sound and true religion / discovered by William Kilburne*. University of Michigan.
<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A47359.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>