Sunday, December 8, 2024—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 248 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (1730-1760)

**Introduction**

- In Lesson 247 we considered the period between 1713-1760 when John Baskett was the primary figure in terms of printing the King James text. By 1713, through a series of acquisitions in England, Scottland, and Oxford University, Baskett had monopoly control over the bible market for the first half of the 18th century or at least until Cambridge resumed printing the text in 1742.

- Baskett is most famous for the 1717 "Vinegar Bible" which misspelled the page heading above the parallel of the Vineyard in Luke 20 (see notes from Lesson 247 for a picture). This edition also affectionately became known as "A Baskett Full of Errors" on account of the many typos and misprints.

- After sampling editions bearing Baskett's name from 1743, 1744, 1752 and 1756 Professor David Norton concluded the following regarding Baskett's editions:

    - "A sampling of Baskett Bibles yields few textual innovations. Three words beginning in 'un' took their modern form ('untemperate', 'undiscreet' and 'unperfit/unperfect', both of which forms had survived), e replaced the apostrophe in 'shamefac'd', and 'wayes side' became 'way side' (Luke 8:5). Three minor changes were made to readings: 'for the press' in place of 'for preasse' (Mark 2:4), 'cast into prison' for 'cast in prison' (Luke 23:19, repeating a 1616 change), and 'but the time cometh' for 'the time commeth' (John 16:25)." (Norton, 101-102)

- In the current Lesson we want to look at how Cambridge reemerged as a publisher of Bibles in the middle of the 18th century as well as the results of the first attempt at stereotyping the text in England.

**A Hundred Years Of Solitude (1660-1760)**

- The following passage from Professor Norton's book *The King James Bible: A Short History From Tyndale To Today* does an excellent job of summarizing old information we have already considered as well as expanding our gaze to include Ireland and the American Colonies.

    - "The major players in the story so far have been the King's Printers (including those in Scotland), the two Universities, the Stationer's Company and the Dutch printers, but Bible printing was spreading elsewhere. In 1714 Aaron Rhames, for William Binauld and Eliphal Dobson, printed the first extant Irish KJB, a folio, and he printed at least two other editions in smaller formats. Regular printing about one edition every three years—in Ireland began in 1739, this time from the King's Printer in Ireland, the Edinburgh-born Dublin book seller and printer, George Grierson. Most eighteenth-century Irish KJB's are the work of Grierson and his heirs. America, meanwhile, depended on important Bibles, Genevas as well as KJBs, until 1777. There may have been American printers in

the middle of the century, and there were several unsuccessful proposals for annotated editions before independence, but the first extant American print is Robert Aitken's duodecimo. There were a dozen NTs in the war period then, in the last two decades of the century, twenty-four Bibles and forty-four NTs." (Norton, *A Short History*, 156)

- For more on the history of the King James Bible in the United States, interested parties are encouraged to check out my book *The King James Bible In America: An Orthographic, Historical, and Textual Investigation*.

- Still others thought they could avoid monopoly infringement by printing the King James text in alterative formats.

  - "Printing was also spreading within England. Attempts to avoid the monopoly became commoner in the eighteenth century. From the time of Henry Hammond's *A Paraphrase and Annotation upon all the books of the New Testament* (1653) [See Lesson 246 for pictures.], some Bible paraphrase and annotations had included the KJB text. Hammond and some of his successors such as Richard Baxter (1685), Samuel Clark (1701), (continued by Thomas Pyle), Daniel Whitby (1702), John Guyse (1739) and Philip Doddridge (1739) were producing substantial new work of which the KJB was a part, and this may have contributed to the view that annotated Bibles were not an infringement on the monopoly, which was held to be for the printing of the text only." (Norton, *A Short History*, 156)

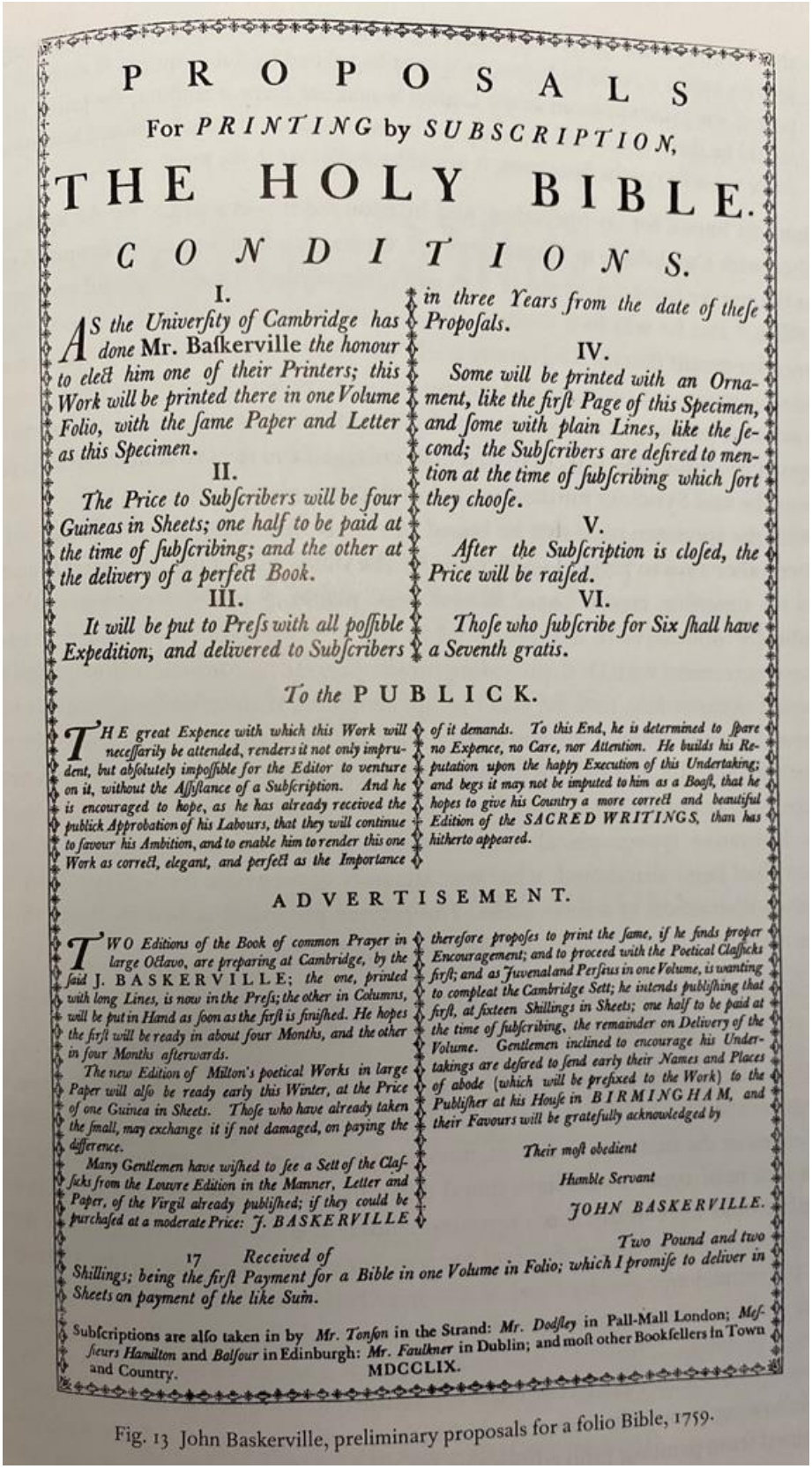
- According to Dr. Norton in *A Textual History of the King James Bible* three folios of consequence were published during the 1760s. The first one was published in 1763 by John Baskerville.

  - "Three outstanding folio Bibles were produced in the 1760s. The most famous was John Baskerville's (1763, H1146), 'one of the finest books ever to have been printed in Britain'; McKitterick adds that 'as such, it must take pride of place in the history of printing in Cambridge' (II, p. 195). Yet, except in a negative way, it is an irrelevance as far as the history of the text is concerned. Baskerville had been appointed University Printer at Cambridge alongside, but not in co-operation with, the incumbent, Joseph Bentham. He was to undertake specific projects, including the folio Bible. His declared ambition was 'to render this one Work as correct, elegant, and perfect as the Importance of it demands'; he would give his country 'a more correct and beautiful Edition of the SACRED WRITINGS, than has hitherto appeared'. This is very much what Baskett's aim had been with his folio Bible, but this was no 'Baskett-ful of errors'. Negatively, what is so striking is that 'correct', while promising freedom from typographical error, does not involve work on the text or the annotations. Baskerville's was a printer's, not a scholar's, Bible." (Norton, 103)

- Gordan Campbell states the following regarding John Bakersville in his 2010 publication *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011*:

- "John Baskerville was one of England's greatest type founders, and type was his passion as well as his profession. His association with the University of Cambridge began in 1758, when he was appointed university printer and granted permission to print two prayer books and a folio Bible. He did not, however, replace the existing university printer Joseph Bentham, who continued to print prayer books and folio Bibles. The prospectus for Baskerville's Bible demonstrated that he was more interested in type than in textual accuracy. Prospective purchasers were, for example, offered a choice between borders with type ornaments on each page or simply 'plain lines'; clearly the preoccupation with decoration offended some potential buyers, and in a revised version of the prospectus Baskerville acknowledged that, "as many Gentlemen have objected to every Kind of Ornament round the Page, the work will be printed quite plain, with the marginal notes all at the bottom'. The Bible that eventually ensued, the folio of 1763, is arguably the most elegant edition of the KJB ever produced. Baskerville aspired to produce a Bible that was 'more correct and beautiful' than any of its predecessors. It was certainly more beautiful, but by 'correct' he meant only free from typographical error; there was no attempt to rethink the text in relation to the original 1611 Bible, and, indeed, this folio, in common with Baskerville's other books, is characterized by textual inaccuracy. Baskerville was a brilliant designer, but he left production to others." (Campbell, 131-132)

- The following is a reproduction of Baskerville's original prospectus as provided by McKitterick's on page 199 of his second volume of *The History Of Cambridge University Press*.



PROPOSALS

For *PRINTING* by *SUBSCRIPTION*,

THE HOLY BIBLE.

*CONDITIONS.*

I.

*AS the Univerſity of Cambridge has done* **Mr. Baſkerville** *the honour to elect him one of their Printers; this Work will be printed there in one Volume Folio, with the ſame Paper and Letter as this Specimen.*

II.

*The Price to Subſcribers will be four Guineas in Sheets; one half to be paid at the time of ſubſcribing; and the other at the delivery of a perfect Book.*

III.

*It will be put to Preſs with all poſſible Expedition, and delivered to Subſcribers in three Years from the date of theſe Propoſals.*

IV.

*Some will be printed with an Ornament, like the firſt Page of this Specimen, and ſome with plain Lines, like the ſecond; the Subſcribers are deſired to mention at the time of ſubſcribing which ſort they chooſe.*

V.

*After the Subſcription is cloſed, the Price will be raiſed.*

VI.

*Thoſe who ſubſcribe for Six ſhall have a Seventh gratis.*

*To the* PUBLICK.

*THE great Expence with which this Work will neceſſarily be attended, renders it not only imprudent, but abſolutely impoſſible for the Editor to venture on it, without the Aſſiſtance of a Subſcription. And he is encouraged to hope, as he has already received the publick Approbation of his Labours, that they will continue to favour his Ambition, and to enable him to render this one Work as correct, elegant, and perfect as the Importance of it demands. To this End, he is determined to ſpare no Expence, no Care, nor Attention. He builds his Reputation upon the happy Execution of this Undertaking; and begs it may not be imputed to him as a Boaſt, that he hopes to give his Country a more correct and beautiful Edition of the SACRED WRITINGS, than has hitherto appeared.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

*TWO Editions of the Book of common Prayer in large Octavo, are preparing at Cambridge, by the ſaid* J. BASKERVILLE; *the one, printed with long Lines, is now in the Preſs; the other in Columns, will be put in Hand as ſoon as the firſt is finiſhed. He hopes the firſt will be ready in about four Months, and the other in four Months afterwards.*

*The new Edition of Milton's poetical Works in large Paper will alſo be ready early this Winter, at the Price of one Guinea in Sheets. Thoſe who have already taken the ſmall, may exchange it if not damaged, on paying the difference.*

*Many Gentlemen have wiſhed to ſee a Sett of the Claſſicks from the Louvre Edition in the Manner, Letter and Paper, of the Virgil already publiſhed; if they could be purchaſed at a moderate Price: J. BASKERVILLE therefore propoſes to print the ſame, if he finds proper Encouragement; and to proceed with the Poetical Claſſicks firſt; and as Juvenal and Perſius in one Volume, is wanting to compleat the Cambridge Sett; he intends publiſhing that firſt, at ſixteen Shillings in Sheets; one half to be paid at the time of ſubſcribing, the remainder on Delivery of the Volume. Gentlemen inclined to encourage his Undertakings are deſired to ſend early their Names and Places of abode (which will be prefixed to the Work) to the Publiſher at his Houſe in BIRMINGHAM, and their Favours will be gratefully acknowledged by*

*Their moſt obedient*

*Humble Servant*

*JOHN BASKERVILLE.*

17 *Received of* *Two Pound and two* *Shillings; being the firſt Payment for a Bible in one Volume in Folio; which I promiſe to deliver in Sheets on payment of the like Sum.*

Subſcriptions are alſo taken in by *Mr. Tonſon* in the Strand: *Mr. Dodſley* in Pall-Mall London; *Meſſieurs Hamilton* and *Balfour* in Edinburgh: *Mr. Faulkner* in Dublin; and moſt other Bookſellers in Town and Country.

MDCCLIX.

Fig. 13 John Baskerville, preliminary proposals for a folio Bible, 1759.

- In the following citation from *A Textual History Of The King James Bible*, Professor David Norton summarizes the history of Cambridge University Press regarding Bible printing in the later 17th and early 18th centuries.

    - "Though Baskerville could designate himself 'Printer to the University' on the title page, he was in competition with the Press's main commercial activity, as Bible printing now was - a major change since the beginning of the century. Cambridge's printing had been in a parlous state. The Press was refounded in 1698 but did not begin to re-establish itself as a successful printing – and, to a much lesser extent, publishing – house until the 1740s. John Hayes, Printer to the University until his death in 1706, effectively worked for the Stationers' Company, and he printed no Bibles after 1683. From 1706 on the Press entered into covenants of forbearance with the Stationers' Company; among the items it forbore to print was the New Testament.

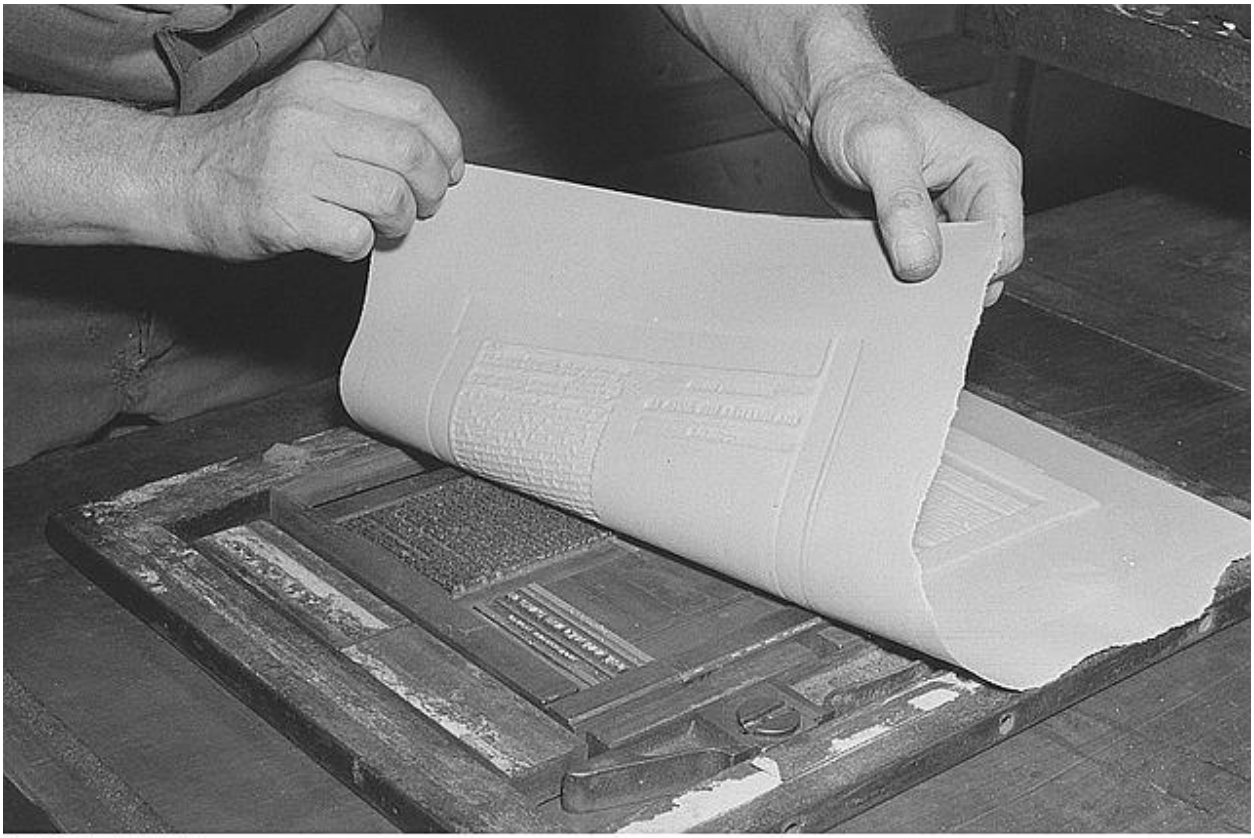
      Only once during the time of Hayes's successor, Cornelius Crownfield (retired 1740), did the University lease the right to print the Bible. This says much of a decay in commercial competence, and the episode has both illustrative value for what it shows of the power of compositors and a real historical significance." (Norton, 103-104)

- When Cambridge did lease the right to print in the 1730s it was to a group proposing to use the relatively new technology of stereotyping to print the Bible on English shores for the first time.

- Wikipedia defines stereotyping as follows:

    - "In printing, a stereotype, stereoplate or simply a stereo, is a solid plate of type metal, cast from a papier-mâché or plaster mold taken from the surface of a form of type. The mold was known as a flong." (Wikipedia Entry)

    - "English sources often describe the process as having been invented in 1725 by William Ged, who apparently stereotyped plates for the Bible at Cambridge University before abandoning the business. However, Count Canstein had been publishing stereotyped Bibles in Germany since 1712 and an earlier form of stereotyping from flong was described in Germany in 1702. It is even possible that the process was used as early as the fifteenth century by Johannes Gutenberg or his heirs for the *Mainz Catholicon* [Latin Dictionary]. Wide application of the technique, with improvements, is attributed to Charles Stanhope in the early 1800s. Printing plates for the Bible were stereotyped in the US in 1814." (Wikipedia Entry)



Quelle: Deutsche Fotothek

THE

# HOLY BIBLE,

CONTAINING

## THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS:

TRANSLATED OUT OF

## THE ORIGINAL TONGUES,

AND WITH THE

FORMER TRANSLATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED.

STEREOTYPE EDITION.

NEW-YORK:

STEREOTYPED BY E. AND J. WHITE,

FOR "THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY."

1819.

- David McKitterick discusses the backdrop of these developments in his *A History of Cambridge University Press, Volume II*. In discussing the English Bible market emanating from the Netherlands in the 1730s McKitterick states, "In view of the fact that Bibles, and other books, were printed from plates in Holland, it is remarkable that similar techniques do not appear to have been applied in England until the 1730s." (McKitterick, 177) He goes on to state the following:

- "This was the background against which in 1731 the University leased out its right to print Bibles and prayer books, to a consortium who appeared to offer an answer to a difficult problem, and a fresh approach to printing the most reliable of all books.

  William Ged, who was the first printer in Great Britain to print from stereotypes, and who has been credited in much of the secondary literature with the invention of the process, was an Edinburgh goldsmith, born in Dunfermline in 1690. His interest seems to have moved to the printing trade in the mid-1720s, and after a brief partnership in Edinburgh formed to develop his scheme for printing from cast metal plates, in 1729 he agreed with a London stationer, William Fenner, to enter into another partnership for twenty-one years. In 1730, these partners brought in first the London typefounder Thomas James and then James's brother John, a successful London architect who had a few years earlier been responsible for alterations in the chapel of Gonville and Caius College. John's connections with Cambridge seem to have been critical in Fenner's obtaining the University's license. The partnership also seems to have been thus extended to meet the need for money and materials wherewith to develop the intervention. Thomas James was to provide the type, while John, who subsequently showed himself to be particularly aware of the financial implications, was perhaps the principal investor. By early in 1730 the partnership was strong enough to challenge the London trade. It was not clear why John Baskett did not enter into an agreement with the partners at this stage. As King's Printer he had an obvious interest in a method that would reduce his printing costs for Bibles. Instead, and perhaps in the hope of better profits, Ged, Fenner and their partners negotiated an agreement with Cambridge, who thought it had the right to print Bibles had not exercised it since the previous century.

  The approach had been made by April 1730, when Conyers Middleton reported events to Lord Harley:

  > There is now a proposal made to y$^{e}$ University of purchasing a lease of use to print Bibles & Common Prayer books from our Press, a power we have reserved out of ye last lease granted to y$^{e}$ Stationer's Company; tis made by persons who pretend to be Masters of a new discovery & rare secret in y$^{e}$ Art of Printing of Plates of a hard metal cast for each Page, w$^{ch}$ is contrived chiefly for book of constant & standing sale, & will make y$^{e}$ impressions vastly cheaper than in y$^{e}$ common way, & as they say, more beautifl too, & do no question but ye when their method is once experienced in their Bibles, it will be made use of in the other great Works: one of ye Proposers is Mr James y$^{e}$ Architect, & most people here seen to present disposed to embrace y$^{e}$ offer.

  Middleton, who as the most recent authority on the work of Caxton had a special interest in print, spoke with a prescience that would have astonished him, in that within a century the University Press depended on stereotyped Bibles, and various versions of the technique were transforming the printing trade as a whole. But Ged and his partners rapidly found themselves in difficulties. Their agreement with the University excluded

> Crownfield, the University Printer; and instead, the University was to receive £100 per annum [$27,653.23 per year, according to Eric *Nye's Pounds Sterling to Dollars: Historical Conversion of Currency*] in return for licensing its right to print the bible and the Book of Common Prayer. The partners found premises in Cambridge, recruited printers from Holland, bought one or more presses and appears to have begun to print two books; a Bible in nonpareil and a Book of Common Prayer. Their optimism was premature. Disputes with the workers, disagreements between the partners themselves, the inconvenient distance between Cambridge (where a foreman was in charge) and London, the inevitable clash of interests between traditional typefounding and a process that was designed to reduce the need for new type, and the manifestly poor quality of what was printed ('done in so bad a manner, and so far inferior to those sold by the King's Printer'), combined to bring the experiment to a premature end." (McKitterick, 177-178)

- Thus, nothing came of the first attempt to print a stereotyped Bible in England. It was a failed economic enterprise. Dr. Norton calls the first attempt at stereotyping the Bible in England, "abortion." (Norton, 104) The process was discussed by Edward Rowe Mores, in *A Dissertation upon English Typographical Founders and Founderies*, in which he states:

    - "about the y. 1736. and I apprehend that The Univ. condescended to their request: for I remember to have been told some years ago by a straggling workman who had wrought there, that both bibles and comm.pr. books had been printed, but that the compositers when they corrected one fault (which was only to be done by perforation ) made purposely half a-dozen more, and the pressmen when the masters where absent battered the letter in aid of the competitors: in consequence of which base proceedings the books were suppressed by authority and condemned to *et piper & quicquid , &c*. and that all the chandleries in Cambr. were full of James's bibles, and that the plates were sent to the King's printing h. and from thence to Mr Caflon's founding h. to be melted; an inspector standing at the furnace to see the order fully executed." (Mores, 60)

- This piece cited above from Mores about how the composites sabotaged this first attempt at stereotyping underscores a point that Professor Norton has been making throughout our discussion of the printed history of the text.

    - "This confirms what has been apparent in a number of instances as far back as the Printer's and the Wicked Bibles, that the text was at the mercy of the compositors' malice as well as their mistakes." (Norton, 104)

- Regarding this first attempt at stereotyping by Cambridge, Dr. Norton wrote:

    - "In short, they were to use stereotyping, which was before long to prove the most important development in the printing of the Bible. Eliminating the need for standing type, constant resetting and proofing (with all their attendant costs and the inevitability of error), stereotyping made Bible printing cheaper and uniform. It also had a significant

bibliographical consequence: where previously continuous reprinting made it difficult to keep precise track of individual editions, now it becomes impossible." (Norton, 104)

- Dr. Norton concludes his discussion of this stage in the reemerging of Cambridge University Press with the following remarks.
    - "With the retirement of Crownfield in 1740, reform of the Press began. Bible and Prayer Book printing was the central element (McKitterick, II, p. 175). Besides commercial motivation and a desire to bring honour to the University by doing the work well, the Press wanted 'to serve the Public with a more beautiful and correct Edition than can easily be found'. While 'correct' probably means free from typographical errors, as in Baskerville's later advertisement, from the beginning there was care for the text." (Norton, 104)

- In the next Lesson we will consider how these sentiments took shape around the editorial work of F.S. Parris at Cambridge beginning in the year 1743.

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