Sunday, February 16, 2025—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 254 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (Blayney & The 1769 Oxford Text)

Introduction

- In Lesson 253 we began looking at the editorial work that Benjamon Blayney did for Oxford University Press in preparing the 1769 edition. In summary we observed the following points:

    o Blayney built upon the work of F.S. Parris, spending three to four years on his revision.

    o The 1769 Oxford edition became the standard text for future King James Bibles.

    o Blayney made changes to chapter headings, cross-references, marginal notes, and chronology.

    o The most significant changes were to spelling and grammar, though these were not explicitly mentioned in Blayney's report.

    o A copy of Blayney's edition annotated by Gilbert Buchanan shows thousands of changes from the 1611 version.

- In this Lesson, we will begin looking at the types of changes that Blayney made to the text. In so doing, we will consider the following categories of revision:

    o Changes To The Number Of A Noun

    o Changes In Verb Tense & Usage

    o Restoration Of 1611 Readings

    o Correction of Printer's Errors

- Please note that for all the examples listed below we checked the readings in all of the following editions:

    o 1611 London Folio (H309)

    o 1629 Cambridge Folio (H424)

    o 1638 Cambridge Folio (H520)

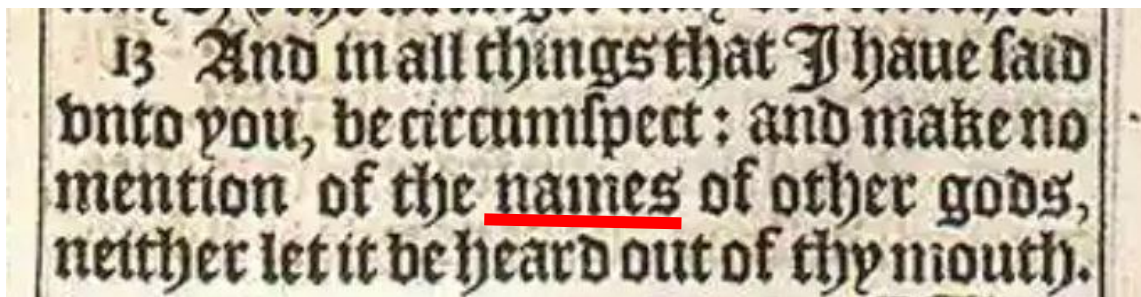   o 1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)

    o 1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)

- o 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

- To save time and space I have not provided photographic evidence for every example from all the editions listed above, but only what is necessary to explain each example. That said, every edition listed was checked for each example.

- Since teaching this Lesson, Christopher Yetzer left a comment on YouTube sharing some additional information that has since been included in these notes.

Changes To The Number Of A Noun

- Gordon Campbell begins his coverage of Blayney's editorial work in *Bible: The Story Of The King James Bible, 1611-2011*, by discussing changes in the number of a noun.

    - o "The changes that Blayney wrought are for the most part an implementation of Parris's principles. On the number of nouns, for example, 'the names of other gods' (Exodus 23:13) become 'the name of other gods', and 'keepe me from the snare' (Psalm 141:9) become 'keep me from the snares'." (Campbell, 138)

- On page 105 of *A Textual History of The King James Bible*, Dr. David Norton includes the following additional examples in changes to "the number of a noun" in footnote 9.

    - o "Exod. 23:13; Lev. 25:31; Num. 1:2 (and vv. 18, 20); 4:40; Ps. 141:9; Isa. 10:34; 1 Esdras 2:8; 1 Macc. 8:26." (Norton, 105)

Exodus 23:13

1611

13 And in all things that I haue said vnto you, be circumspect : and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 13 ¶ And in all *things* that I have said unto you ᵖ be circumspect : and ᵠ make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

- Exodus 23:13 could also be an attempt to harmonize the passage with Joshua 23:7 which reads "name" singular in the 1611. There is a 1743 Cambridge Duodecimo Bible (H1063) with that reading, as well as a 1756 Cambridge, 1765 Cambridge and 1768 Cambridge. The Geneva Bible also read "name" singular in Exodus 23:13. (Yetzer)

    o 1756 Cambridge (Not in Herbert's *Catalog*)

    o 1765 Cambridge Octavo RF (H1163)

    o 1767 Oxford Octavo RF (H1181)

    o 1768 Cambridge Octavo RF (H1191)

1743 Cambridge Duodecimo (H1063)

> 13 And in all *things* that I have said unto you, be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

1560 Geneva Bible (H107)

> 13 And ye shal take hede to all things that I haue said vnto you : and ye shal make ᶠ no mencion of the name of other gods,

Leviticus 25:31

1611

> 31 But the houses of the villages which haue no walles round about them, shall bee counted as the fields of the countrey : † they may ee redeemed, and they shall goe out in the Iubile.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 31 But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country : † they may bo redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubile.

- A 1768 Cambridge printing reads "wall" in Leviticus 25:31, once again indicating the need to check every edition to trace the true history of the text. "Walls" is an idiomatic reading. (Yetzer)

  - 1768 Cambridge Octavo RF (H1191)

Numbers 1:2

1611

> 2 *Take yee the summe of all the Congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, euery male by their polle :
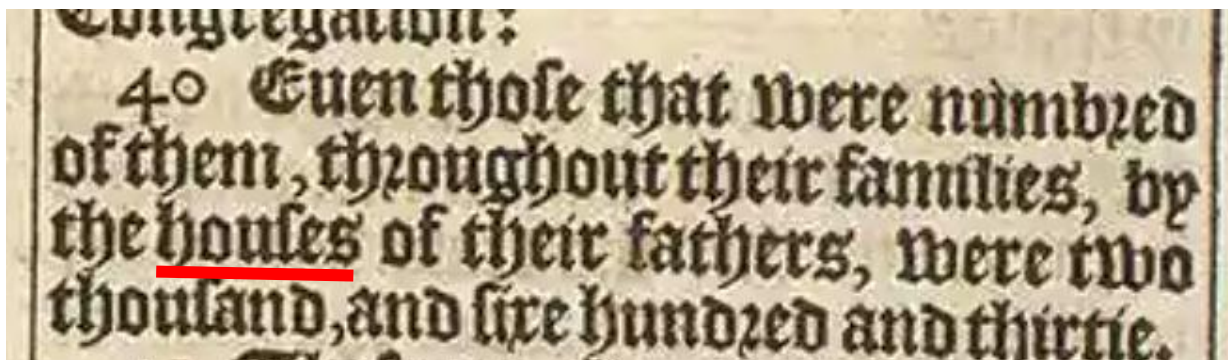
1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 2 'Take ye the ſum of all the congre-
> gation of the children of Iſrael, after their
> families, by the houſe of their fathers,
> with the number of *their* names, every
> male by their polls;

- The same observations would apply to Numbers 1:18 and 20. In both verses the word "poll" was changed to "polls" by Blayney in 1769.

- According to Christopher Yetzer's research, both II Chronicles 23 and Numbers 1:22 had "polls" in 1611, so Blayney's change in 1769 was probably an effort to make these passages more consistent. The word "poll(s)" means "head," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (See entry I.3.a. for Noun1 entry.). In a 1764 London, 1765 and 1768 Cambridge "poll" was changed to "polls" in Numbers 1:18 and 1:20, but not 1:2. (Yetzer)

    o 1764 London printed by Mark Baskett Octavo RF (H1155)

    o 1765 London printed by Baskett Octavo RF (H1162)

    o 1768 Cambridge Octavo RF (H1191)

Numbers 4:40

1611

> 40 Euen those that were numbred
> of them, throughout their families, by
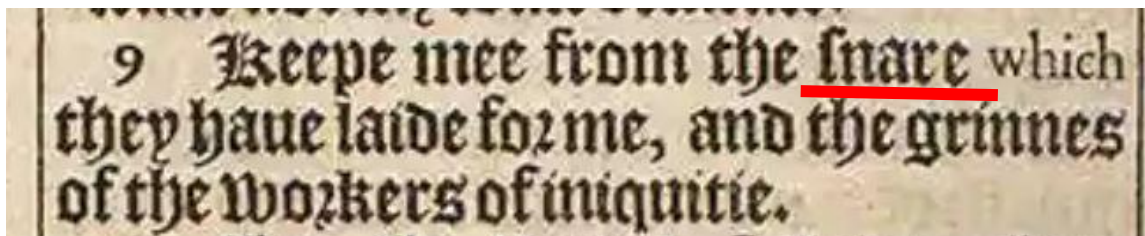> the houses of their fathers, were two
> thousand, and sixe hundred and thirtie.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 40 Even those that were numbered of
> them, throughout their families, by the
> house of their fathers, were two thousand
> and six hundred and thirty.

1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)

> 40 Even those that were numbred of
> them, throughout their families, by the
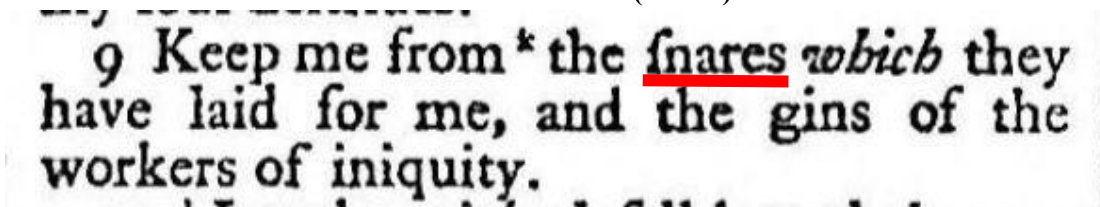> house of their fathers, were two thousand
> and six hundred and thirty.

- The expression "by the house of their fathers" is found 22 times in the King James Bible. The 1611 had "houses" in Numbers 4:40 alone, all the rest the occurrences were singular. (Yetzer)

- Here is yet another example of where Campbell and Norton overlooked something by not checking the lesser editions. Christopher Yetzer uncovered a 1625 edition that has the correction prior to Blayney in 1769. Moreover, the 1683 Cambridge Quarto edition (H780) records the change from "houses" to "house" 86 years before Blayney.
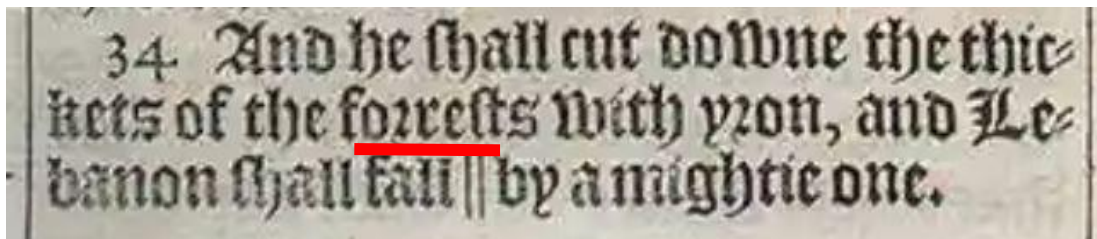
- 1625 Amsterdam? Octavo RF (H399)

Psalm 141:9

1611

9 Keepe mee from the <u>snare</u> which they haue laide for me, and the grinnes of the workers of iniquitie.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

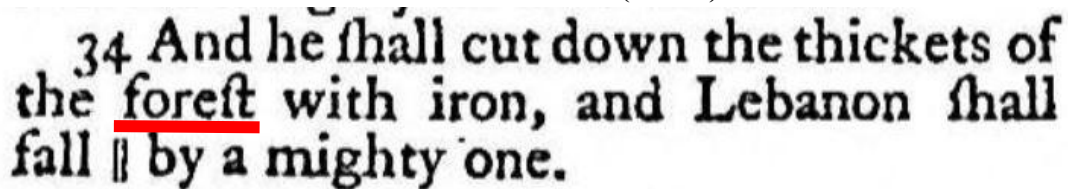9 Keep me from * the <u>snares</u> *which* they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

- Regarding Psalm 141:9 Brother Yetzer reports that "snares" was in some early 1600s editions of the Psalms in rhyme.

Isaiah 10:34

1611

34 And he shall cut downe the thickets of the <u>forrests</u> with yron, and Lebanon shall fall ‖ by a mightie one.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the <u>forest</u> with iron, and Lebanon shall fall ‖ by a mighty one.

- "Forest" was singular in Isaiah 9:18 in the 1611. Therefore, it seems that Blayney was trying to make Isaiah 10:34 consistent with Isaiah 9:18. Furthermore, there is a 1690 Bible by which had this change as did a 1766 commentary by Thomas Haweis. (Yetzer)

    o 1690 London Folio RF (H814)

o <u>1766 Commentary</u> (Not in Herbert's *Catalog*)

- I elected not to include screenshots of the two Apocryphal examples cited by Norton in these notes. Interested parties are encouraged to look at I Esdras 2:8 and I Maccabees 8:26 on their own.

  - o I Esdras 2:8— "tribes of Benjamin" in the 1611 was changed to "tribe of Benjamin" in the 1769.

  - o I Maccabees 8:26— "shall keep their covenant" in the 1611 became "keep their covenants" in the 1769.

Changes In Verb Tense & Usage

- Regarding this category of change Professor Campbell writes:

  - o "Blayney sometimes prefers grammatical coherence to fidelity to the original, so 'he **calleth** [present tense] unto him and the twelve, and began' (Mark 6:7) becomes 'he **called** [past tense] onto them the twelve, and began'; similarly, 'and said, Where have ye laid him? They **say** unto him' (John 11:34) becomes 'and said, Where have ye laid him? They **said** unto him'." (Campbell, 138)

- Norton provides the same two examples (Mark 6:7, John 11:34) in footnote 14 on pages 109 of his *Textual History*. Regarding these verses, Dr. Norton wrote the following in the body of the text.

  - o "Blayney, more justifiably, occasionally makes a tense consistent where the translators chose to follow the inconsistencies of the original." (Norton, 108-109)

Mark 6:7

1611
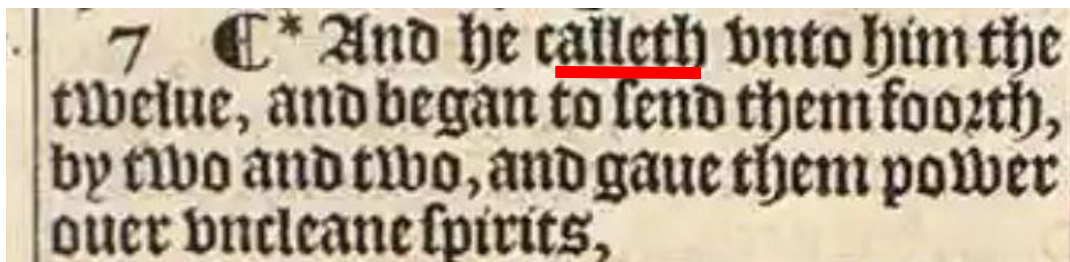
1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 7 ¶ ¹ And he _called_ _unto_ _him_ the twelve, and began to fend them forth by two and two ; and gave them power over unclean fpirits ;

- "Called" is in the 1611 in the parallel passages of Matthew 10:1 and Luke 9:1. A 1633 Edinburgh printing had it changed as did a 1745 Oxford printing. Interestingly the verb at Mark 6:7 is present tense in the TR. Every previous English Bible had "called" in Mark 6:7. It is the same word used in Mark 3:13 in the present "calleth." There again, everyone had "called" but the 1611 chooses the present tense. The verb is the same in the Critical Text and yet most translations seem to do the past tense. (Yetzer)

    o   1633 Edinburgh Octavo RF (H476)

    o   1740 Dublin Octavo RF (H1046)

    o   1745 London Octavo RF (H1070)

    o   1746 Oxford Quarto RF (H1073)

John 11:34

1611

> 34 And faid, where haue ye laid him: They fay vnto him, Lord, come, & fee.
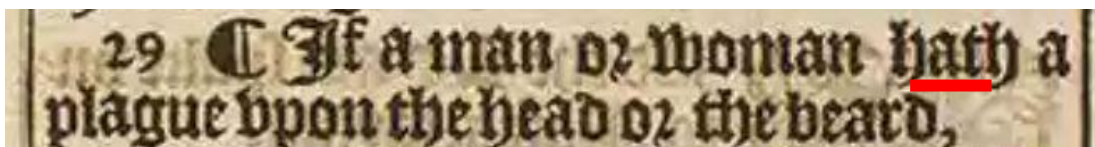
1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 34 And faid, Where have ye laid him ? They faid unto him, Lord, come and fee.

- John 11:34 is similar to Mark 6:7 in that the verb is present tense but everyone translates it as past tense. This is more of a function of English. (Yetzer)

- On pages 110 and 111 of his _Textual History_, Dr. Norton discusses some additional examples of Blayney making changes in verb tense and usage in the Apocrypha section of the 1769 edition.
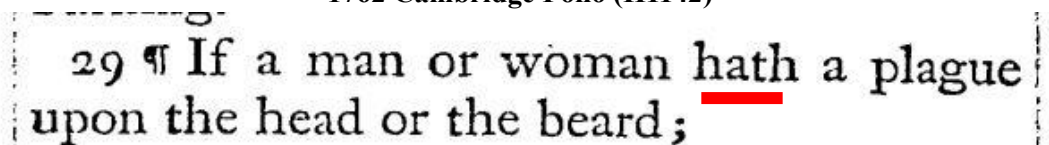
- o "Blayney changes four of the Apocrypha's five uses of the modern third person singular 'he stickes', and the like, to the old fashioned form used everywhere else, 'he sticketh' and so on.[18]" (Norton, 110)

- o "[18] 1 Esdras 4:21; Ecclus. 44:12; Baruch 6:9, 21. He missed Ecclus. 22:2; consequently 'every man that takes' remains as the one modern third-person singular in current texts of the KJB." (Norton, 110)

- A couple of additional examples are given on page 111.

  - o "Blayney makes two changes [in verb tense] that are less justifiable. At Lev. 13:29 he takes 'a man or woman' as a plural subject and so alters 'hath' to 'have', and he treats 'people' similarly at 2 Esdras 3:35." (Norton, 111)

    - II Esdras 3:35—'or what people **hath** so kept thy commandements' in the 1611 was changed to 'or what people **have** so kept thy commandements' in the 1769.
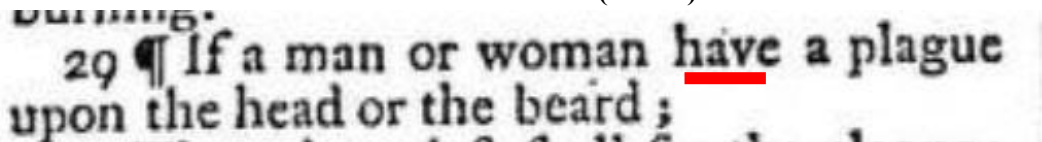
Leviticus 13:29

1611

> 29 ¶ If a man or woman hath a plague vpon the head or the beard,

1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)

> 29 ¶ If a man or woman hath a plague upon the head or the beard;

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 29 ¶ If a man or woman have a plague upon the head or the beard;

- Leviticus 13:29 is a change in plurality. Either referring "if a man has or a woman has" or "if they have." See the Geneva Bible in Leviticus 20:27 where there is a similar grammatical construct reads "if a man or woman haue". (Yetzer)
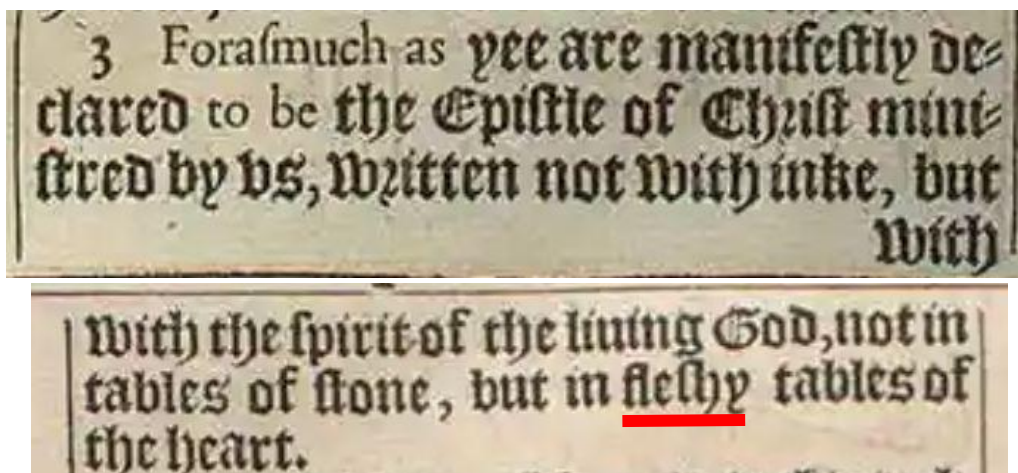
Restoration Of 1611 Readings

- Regarding this category Professor Campbell wrote the following in *Bible: The Story Of The King James Version, 1611-2011*:

- o "He [Blayney] occasionally restores 1611 readings: 'fleshy tables of the heart' (2 Corinthians 3:3) had since 1617 been misprinted as 'fleshly tables of the heart', but Blayney restored 'fleshy'." (Campbell, 139-140)

- Dr. Norton also comments on this category of changes made by Blayney. In footnote 15 on page 109 of *A Textual History* Professor Norton provides two additional examples to the one cited by Campbell, II Corinthains 8:7 and I Timothy 4:16. Regarding these examples, he states the following in the text:

  - o "Finally, it is worth noting that Blayney restores three 1611 readings,[15]"

  - o [15]"2 Cor. 3:3 (but 1617's 'fleshly' is still found in some editions); 8:7; 1 Tim. 4:16." (Norton, 109)

II Corinthains 3:3

1611

> 3 Forasmuch as **yee are manifestly de-clared** to be **the Epistle of Christ mini-stred by vs, written not with inke, but with**

> With the spirit of the liuing God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

1629 Cambridge Folio (H424)

> 3 For as much as ye are manifestly declared *to be the* epistle of Christ, ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, nor in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

1638 Cambridge Folio (H520)

known and read of all men.
3 For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.
And such trust have we through Christ to

1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)

,3 For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not c in tables of

stone, but d in fleshly tables of the heart.

1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)

3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, d ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not c in tables of stone, but f in fleshly tables of the heart.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ d ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not c in tables of stone, but f in fleshy tables of the heart.

- II Corinthians 3:3 reads "fleshly" was in the Geneva, Bishops, Tyndale and Matthews Bibles. There is a 1631 Barker printing that had "fleshy" and a 1658. It seems it just depended on which edition you picked up it could have been "fleshy" or "fleshly." (Yetzer)
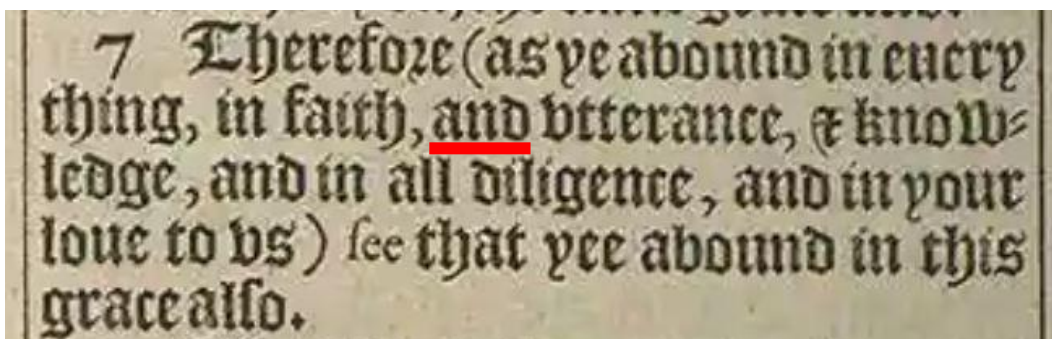
The following have fleshy still:

- [1629 London Octavo RF](#) (H426)

- [1631 London Octavo RF](#) (H443)

- [1648 London Quarto RF](#) (H604)

- [1658 London Duod. RF](#) (H661)

II Corinthians 8:7

1611

1629 Cambridge Folio (H424)

1638 Cambridge Folio (H520)

1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)

> 7 Therefore, as ᶜ ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)

> 7 Therefore, as ᶜ ye abound in every thing, *in* faith, *in* utterance, and *in* knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us; *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 7 Therefore, as ᵈ ye abound in every *thing*, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us, *see* ᵉ that ye abound in this grace also.

- II Corinthians 8:7 was corrected in a 1637 Edinburgh Bible, the 1641 NT printed by Barker and a 1655 printed in London.

I Timothy 4:16

1611

> 16 Take heed vnto thy selfe, and vnto the doctrine : continue in them : for in doing this, thou shalt both saue thy selfe, and them that heare thee.

1629 Cambridge Folio (H424)

> 16 Take heed vnto thy self, and vnto thy doctrine; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both save thy self, and them that heare thee.

1638 Cambridge Folio (H520)

16 Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both save thy self, and them that heare thee.

1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)

16 Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy doctrine ; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both ¶ save thy self and ʳ them that hear thee.

1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)

may appear ‖ to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both ᶻ save thyself, and ᵃ them that hear thee.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

16 ᶜTake heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both ᶠ save thyself, and ᵍ them that hear thee.

- 1 Timothy 4:16 is back to the 1611 in a 1738 Oxford printing
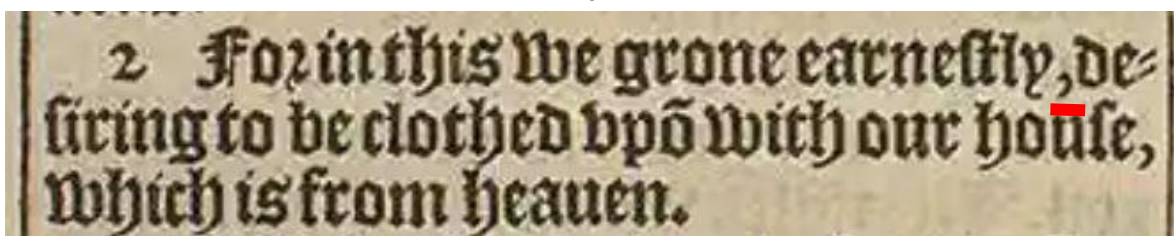
Correction of Printer's Errors

- Campbell also comments on the correction of a printer's error by Blayney.

  o "One particularly insightful correction of an error that is almost certainly the fault of the printer rather than the translators is the shift of a comma: 'For in this we grone earnestly, desireing' (1611) is corrected to 'For in this we groan, earnestly desiring' (2 Corinthians 5:2)." (Campbell, 140)

- Norton also comments on this example while adding an additional one from the Apocrypha.

- o "... he spots two genuine errors that arguably go back to the original compositor rather than the translators. 1 Macc. 16:14 is corrected from 'threescore and seuenth' to 'threescore and seventeenth' (1602 was correct here), and 2 Cor. 5:2 is corrected from 'we grone earnestly, desiring' to 'we groan, earnestly desiring'." (Norton, 109)

- It is interesting to consider that by 1769 there are only two examples in Blayney's work that Campbell and Norton consider to be printer's errors that survived from the original printing in 1611.

II Corinthains 5:2

1611

1629 Cambridge Folio (H424)

1638 Cambridge Folio (H520)

1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)

1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)

> 2 For in this ᵇ we groan earneſtly, deſir-
> ing to be clothed upon with our houſe
> which is from heaven:

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

> 2 For in this ᵇ we groan, earneſtly deſir-
> ing to be clothed upon with our houſe
> which is from heaven:

- II Corinthians 5:2 was changed in a 1643 concordance which Featley wrote the preface for. There were also many commentaries which printed it in the correct way throughout the years. No previous English Bible including "earnestly" for either groan or desire, however Diodati's 1607 Italian had "desire earnestly". He removed it from his 1641. The same Greek word was translated in 2 Timothy 1:4 as "Greatly desiring."

- In the next Lesson we will continue our look at the editorial work of Benjamin Blayney.

Works Cited

Campbell, Gordon. *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011.* Oxford University Press, 2010.

Norton, David. *A Textual History Of The King James Bible.* Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Yetzer, Christopher. YouTube Comment 2/16/25. FTGF Lesson 254 | Assessing The Printed History Of The King James Text (Blayney &1769 Oxford Text)