

Sunday, November 2, 2025—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 265 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (British Text After 1769)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 264](#) we explored how the 1769 Blayney edition of the King James Bible (KJB), prepared for Oxford University Press, became the standard text. We examined key factors such as Oxford’s influence, widespread distribution, and the modernized readability that contributed to its long-term adoption. In summation we considered the following points:
 - Standardization of the Text
 - Oxford’s Influence
 - Widespread Printing and Distribution
 - Modernized Readability
 - Long-Term Inertia
- However, while the Blayney text set a benchmark, subsequent editions did not follow it with exact identicality. In this lesson, we delve deeper into the printed history of the King James Text by assessing the textual variations that have emerged in British printings since 1769. Drawing on the research of scholars like Dr. David Norton and Professor Gordon Campbell, we will examine specific changes in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and word choice across various British editions. These comparisons will highlight the subtle yet significant differences that challenge the notion of a perfectly preserved 1769 text.
- Since the teaching of Lesson 264, new evidence has surfaced regarding the 1769 Oxford Blayney text being revered as “the standard.” My friend and fellow researcher Christopher Yetzer sent me the following screenshots from 19th century sources. The first one is from *Proceedings of the Bible Convention by the American and Foreign Bible Society* in 1837. The second one is something called *Miscellanies* by Stephen Collins in 1842.

An edition of King James’ Bible was printed in 1769, under the superintendence of Dr. Blayney, who bestowed great pains to render it as accurate as possible ; and for many years, this was looked upon as the *standard edition*. The editions, however, of *Eyre & Strahan*, printed in 1806 and 1813, and the quarto Bible printed by the American Bible Society in 1834, are now generally considered *standard editions* of the English version made by King James’ Forty-seven translators.

(7)

Dr. Blayney published, at Oxford, in 1769, an edition of King James' Bible, which, on account of its accuracy, was considered the standard edition until the publication of Woodfall's edition—or, as it is sometimes called, the edition of Eyre and Strahan—at London, in 1806. Several important *errata* were discovered in Dr. Blayney's edition: but, it is said that only one *erratum* has been found in that of Woodfall of 1806. This is a very near approach to an *immaculate text*. In 1820 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, recommended the Edition of Eyre and Strahan to the members of that Church, as the standard edition of the Bible.*

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- More work still needs to be done in terms of gathering historical statements like these. That said, the ones depicted above serve to corroborate the material presented in Lesson 264.
- We will now turn our attention to looking at the changes made in British printings after 1769.

Changes To The British Text After 1769

- Dr. David Norton catalogues changes to the text in British editions after 1769 in *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (2005).
 - “The three official guardians of the text, the two University presses and the King or Queen's Printer, became two when Cambridge took over Eyre and Spottiswoode. So the standard English editions of the text are those currently issued by Cambridge in its own right and as Queen's Printer, and Oxford. They are identical in the Testaments but not the Apocrypha.

Only six new changes to the text have been introduced into them since 1769. In the OT 'LORD' is changed to 'Lord' at Neh. 1:11, and in the NT 'Zaccheus' becomes 'Zacchæus'. In the Apocrypha 'Ioribas' becomes 'Joribus' (1 Esdras 8:44), the verbs following 'alms' are changed to plural at Tobit 4:10, 'generation' is made plural at Eccles. 4:16, and the apostrophe is moved in 'king's sons' (Baruch 1:4), making 'kings' plural (only the last of these is in the Oxford text).” (Norton, 115)

Nehemiah 1:11

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

11 O LORD, I beseech thee, ° let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who ^p desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's ^q cupbearer.

C. 1900 Pure Cambridge Edition (PCE)

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Luke 19:2, 5, & 8

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

C. 1900 PCE

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

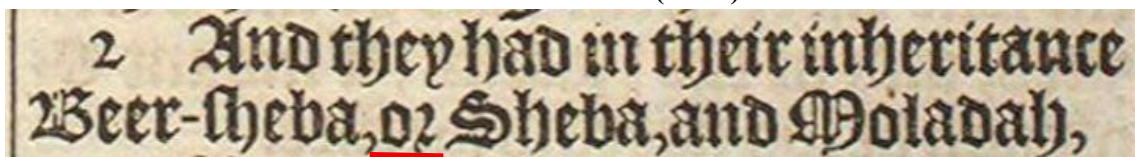
- The spelling differences observed above for Luke 19:2 would also apply to verses 5 and 8 of that same chapter.
- Professor Gordon Campbell also covers this point in *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011* (2010):

- “A comparison of Blayney’s text of 1769 with the twenty-first-century British text of the KJV reveals very few changes indeed, apart from a handful of names that have reverted to the spellings of earlier editions. In the Old Testament the only innovation since 1769 has been the change from LORD to ‘Lord’ in Nehemiah 1:11; in the New Testament the only change has been the introduction of the archaic spelling of ‘Zacchæus’ (replacing ‘Zaccheus’). As Cambridge University is now the queen’s printer (having bought Eyre and Spottiswoode, the previous holder of the privilege), and Cambridge uses the Blayney text for both its own and its queen’s printer editions, all British editions of the KJV are now identical in the Old and New Testament. In the text of the Apocrypha, however, there is a difference. Since Blayney’s edition, four changes have been introduced, of which three have been adopted by both presses: ‘Ioribas’ has become ‘Joribus’ (I Esdras 8:44), ‘doth’ becomes ‘do’ in Tobit 4:10 (so treating ‘alms’ as plural), and ‘generation’ has become plural in Ecclesiasticus 4:16. The fourth change, and the one that differentiates the modern texts, relates to the placing of an apostrophe: at Baruch 1:4 the Cambridge and queen’s printer texts treat ‘king’ as a plural, and so print the ‘the kings’ sons’; the Oxford text treats ‘king’ as singular, and so prints ‘the king’s sons’. These are changes that reflect policy, but there have also been corrections of more than 100 printing errors in Blayney’s text, of which the most serious was the omission of a clause (‘And no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee’) in Revelation 18:22. A few of Blayney’s errors still pop up in modern editions: at Joshua 19:2, for example, Blayney printed ‘and Sheba’ instead of ‘or Sheba’, and the misprint has proved to be remarkably difficult to extirpate.” (Campbell, 141-142)
- On page 115 of *A Textual History of the King James Bible*, at the end of the quotation cited above, David Norton states the following regarding differences between the Blayney edition of 1769 and modern British printings:
 - “Besides these [the ones noted in the citation above], at least thirty old readings, of which twenty-two are spellings of names, were reintroduced.”
- The following is a screenshot of footnote 1 from page 115 in which Norton lists the thirty readings that have changed since 1769.

¹ Readings other than names: Josh. 19:2; 2 Chr. 33:19; Job 30:6; Ps. 148:8; Nahum 3:16; Zech. 11:2; Matt. 26:39 (and Mark 1:19); John 14:6. Names: Gen. 10:7; 25:4; 46:12; Exod. 23:23; Josh. 10:1 (and 3); 19:19 (two readings); 2 Sam. 5:14; 21:21; 23:37; 1 Chr. 2:49; 5:11; 7:19; 23:20; 24:11; 2 Chr. 20:36; Ezra 4:10; Neh. 7:30; Esther 1:14; Amos 2:2; 1 Esdras 5:55; 1 Macc. 3:16 (and 3:24; 7:39; 9:50).
- Since twenty-two of the readings cited by Norton are the spelling of proper names like the Zaccheus/Zacchæus example noted above, we will forego looking at similar examples in favor of the eight passages dealing with “readings other than names.” To accomplish this task, we will compare the readings in the 1611 London Folio (H309), 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194), and circa 1900 Pure Cambridge Edition (PCE).

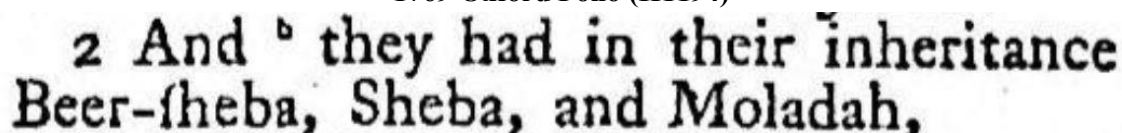
Joshua 19:2

1611 London Folio (H309)



2 And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, or Sheba, and Moladah,

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)



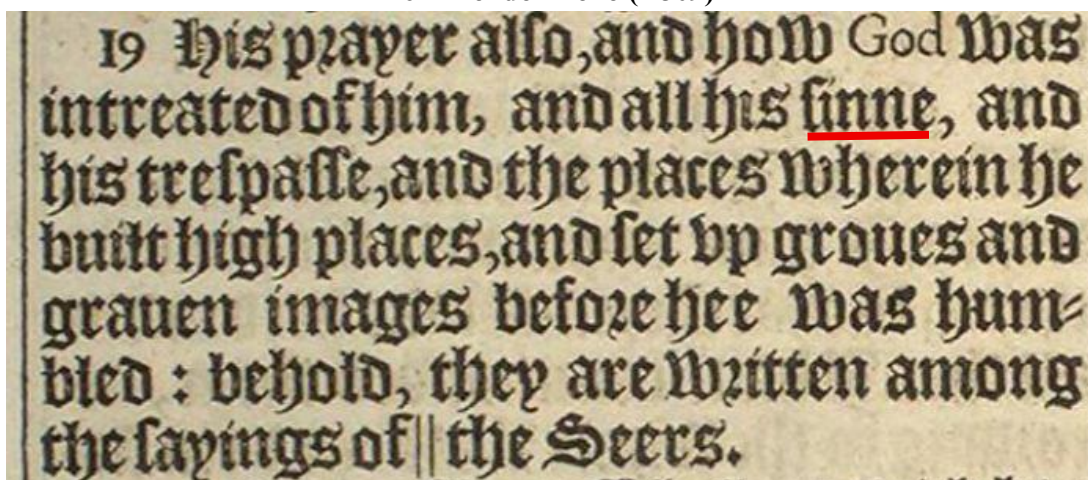
2 And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, or Sheba, and Moladah,

C. 1900 PCE

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II Chronicles 33:19

1611 London Folio (H309)



19 His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sinne, and his trespasse, and the places wherein he built high places, and set by groves and grauen images before hee was humbled : behold, they are written among the sayings of || the Seers.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

19 His prayer also, and *how* God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they *are* written among the sayings of || the seers.

C. 1900 PCE

19 His prayer also, and *how* God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they *are* written among the sayings of the seers.

Job 30:6

1611 London Folio (H309)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in † caves of the earth, and in the rockes.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in † caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

C. 1900 PCE

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

Psalm 148:8

1611 London Folio (H309)

8 Fire and haile, snow and vapour: stormie wind fulfilling his word.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

C. 1900 PCE

8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

Nahum 3:16

1611 London Folio (H309)

16 Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the starres of heauen; the canker worme || spoileth & flieth away.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

16 Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm || spoileth, and fleeth away.

C. 1900 PCE

16 Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and fleeth away.

Zechariah 11:2

1611 London Folio (H309)

2 Howle firre tree, for the cedar is fallen; because all the || mighty are spoiled; howle D yee okes of Bashan, for the || forrest of the vintage is come Downe.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

2 Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the || mighty is spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; ^b for || the forest of the vintage is come down.

C. 1900 PCE

2 Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.

Matthew 26:39

1611 London Folio (H309)

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup passe from me: neuerthelesse, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

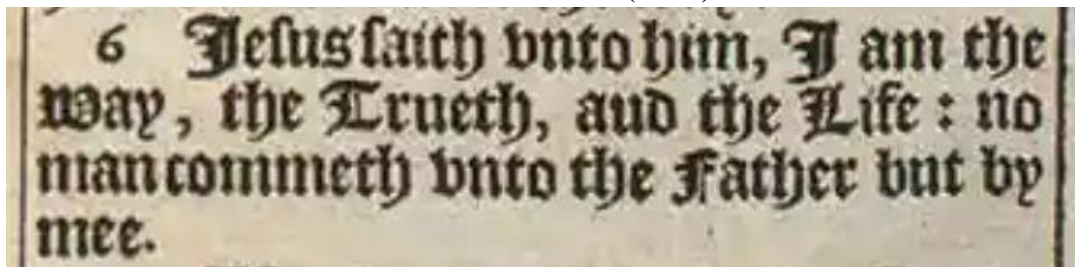
39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and ^l prayed, saying, ^m O my Father, if it be possible, ⁿ let this cup pass from me: nevertheless ^o not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

C. 1900 PCE

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

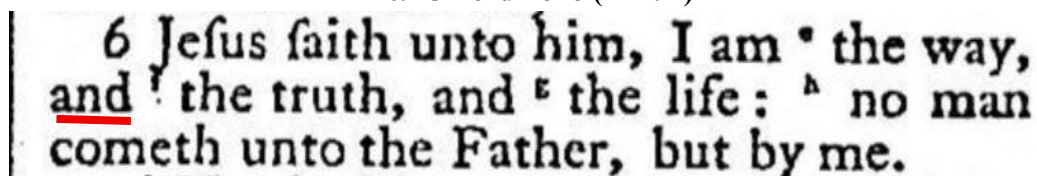
John 14:6

1611 London Folio (H309)



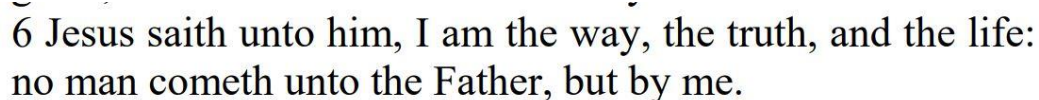
6 Jesus saith vnto him, I am the way, the Trueth, and the Life: no man commeth vnto the Father but by mee.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)



6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

C. 1900 PCE



6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

- I checked all eight of these verses against my *Scofield Reference Bible* (SRB) published by Oxford University Press. In these eight passages the SRB agrees with the PCE against the Blayney Oxford text of 1769.
- While my Oxford SRB agrees with the PCE in the eight verses above, there are other verses that are not in agreement across the various Oxford printings. Oxford and Cambridge editions of the King James Bible are nearly identical, but they do have a few minor textual differences, mostly involving spelling, punctuation, and word choice.
 - Spelling Variations
 - “intreat” vs. “entreat” (Exodus 8:8, Ruth 1:16, Genesis 25:21, 2 Corinthians 8:4)
 - “vail” vs. “veil” (2 Chronicles 3:14, Exodus 26:31, Hebrews 9:3)
 - “musick” vs. “music” (Daniel 3:5, Ecclesiastes 2:8)
 - “plaister” vs. “plaster” (Lev. 14:42, Duet. 27:2,4; Is. 38:21; Dan. 5:5)
 - “rasor” vs. “razor” (Num. 6:5; Judg. 13:5, 16:17; I Sam.1;11; Ps. 52:2; Is. 7:20; Ez. 5:1)
 - “grey” vs. “gray” (Proverbs 20:29)
 - Word Choice Differences
 - “sins” vs. “sin” (2 Chronicles 33:19)

- “he” vs. “ye” (Jeremiah 34:16)
 - “fleeth” vs. “flieth” (Nahum 3:16)
 - “at a gnat” vs. “out a gnat” (Matthew 23:24)
 - Capitalization Differences
 - “Spirit” vs. “spirit” (Matt. 4:1; I John 5:8)
 - “Counsellor” vs. “counsellor” (Isaiah 9:6)
- While my Oxford SRB agreed with the PCE in 2 Chronicles 33:19 and Nahum 3:16 (see above) there are other Oxford printings that do not. This of course means that the text is not printed with uniformity by Oxford after 1769.
- Matthew Verschuur (Bible Protector), the primary propagator of the Pure Cambridge Position (a position we will discuss in detail in the future) presents the following list of hallmark readings to determine if a given edition of the KJB is consistent with the PCE.
 - Joshua 19:2 — “or Sheba” (not “and Sheba”)
 - 2 Chronicles 33:19 — “sin” (not “sins”)
 - Job 33:4 — “Spirit of God” (not “spirit of God”)
 - Jeremiah 34:16 — “whom ye” (not “whom he”)
 - Ezekiel 11:24 — “Spirit of God” (not “spirit of God”)
 - Nahum 3:16 — “flieth” (not “fleeth”)
 - Matthew 4:1 — “Spirit” (not “spirit”)
 - Matthew 26:39 — “further” (not “farther”)
 - Matthew 26:73 — “bewrayeth” (not “betrayeth”)
 - Mark 1:12 — “Spirit” (not “spirit”)
 - Acts 11:28 — “spirit” (not “Spirit”)
 - 1 John 5:8 — “spirit” (not “Spirit”)

(Verschuur, [Statement to all King James Bible \(KJB\) supporters concerning the Pure Cambridge Edition \(PCE\).](#))
- The above list is used by Verschuur to distinguish between “perfect” and imperfect editions of the 1769 text.
 - “It is important to have the correct, perfect and final text of the King James Bible, since there are correctors (e.g. publishers) who have changed some aspects of King James Bible texts. The final form of the King James Bible is the Pure Cambridge Edition (circa 1900), which conforms to the following;” (Verschuur, See the list above)
- My Oxford SRB is consistent with the PCE in all but the following three readings:
 - Matthew 4:1 — “Spirit” (not “spirit”)
 - Acts 11:28 — “spirit” (not “Spirit”)

- 1 John 5:8 — “spirit” (not “Spirit”)
- Therefore, based upon the evidence furnished in this Lesson, readers of the KJB in the 21st century are not utilizing a 1769 text in every detail. Put another way, there is not *verbatim identity of wording* across all British printings of the 1769 Blayney text.

Conclusion

- The examination of post-1769 editions of the King James Bible reveals that while the Blayney text served as a foundational standard, it has not been reproduced with perfect uniformity across all subsequent British printings. Minor differences—ranging from spelling and punctuation to word choice and capitalization—demonstrate that textual variation persists even among editions claiming fidelity to the 1769 standard.
- By comparing key passages across the 1611 London Folio, the 1769 Oxford Folio, and the circa 1900 Pure Cambridge Edition (PCE), we see that modern readers are not engaging with a text that is *verbatim identical* to Blayney’s original printing from 1769. This reality challenges assumptions about textual purity and highlights the importance of understanding the history and transmission of the printed KJB.
- As we move forward, these insights will provide the groundwork for evaluating the Pure Cambridge Position and its claims regarding textual consistency and authority.

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.
- Verschuur, Matthew. [“Statement to all King James Bible \(KJB\) supporters concerning the Pure Cambridge Edition \(PCE\).”](http://bibleprotector.com) at bibleprotector.com.