



THREE VERSIONS OF THE “WICKED” WHITGIFT PASSAGE

Ghost Yea he, that incestuous wretch, wonne to his will
O wicked will, and gifts! that haue the power (with gifts,
So to seduce my most seeming vertuous Queene,
But vertue, as it neuer will be moued,
Though Lewdnesse court it in a shape of heauen,

In Quarto 1, published in 1603, in the harrowing scene in act 1 in which the Ghost reveals to Hamlet his murder, there is no word play on Archbishop John Whitgift's name.

Ghost. I that incestuous, that adulterate beaſt,
With witchcraft of his wits, with trayterous gifts,
O wicked wit, and giftes that haue the power
So to ſeducẽ; wonne to his ſhamefull luſt
The will of my moſt ſeeming vertuous Queene;
O *Hamlet*, what falling off was there

In Quarto 2, published in 1604 after the archbishop died, the pun is created by substituting “wit” for “will” twice.

Ghost. I that incestuous, that adulterate Beaſt
With witchcraft of his wits, hath Traitorous gifts.
Oh wicked Wit, and Gifts, that haue the power
So to ſeducẽ? Won to to this ſhamefull Luſt
The will of my moſt ſeeming vertuous Queene:
Oh *Hamlet*, what a falling off was there,

In the First Folio of 1623, capitalizing “Wit” and “Giftes” makes the word play more explicit (though overall many more words in this edition are capitalized).