

Sunday, September 18, 2022— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*  
 Lesson 180 Pre-1611 Evidence for the Text: The General Meeting & The Notes of John Bois, Part 2

### **Introduction**

- Last week in [Lesson 179](#), we resumed class by reviewing some content from prior Lessons about the notes of John Bois and our general working timeline.
- In doing so, someone asked a question about the general history of the notes between when they were written by Bois in 1610 and when they were printed by Ward S. Allen in 1969. I will try and outline that history in the next point.
- The notes of Bois represent the only primary source work-in-progress document that we have not yet discussed in detail. After giving it much thought, I have elected to cover Bois's notes in conjunction with a discussion of the General Meeting. Given that Bois' notes are the only known primary source document to record the discussions that took place at the General Meeting this course of action seems appropriate.
- Before discussing the relationship between Bois' notes and the General Meeting I would like to address the history of the notes in a general sense.

### **A Brief History of John Bois' Notes**

- The following history is taken from Ward S. Allen's 1969 book *Translating for King James: Notes Made by a Translator of King James's Bible*. According to Allen's footnote citations, his historical sketch is based on the following:
  - Harleian MS. 7053, foll. 125-129.
  - F.H.A. Scrivener's *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611), Its Subsequent Reprinting and Modern Representatives*. 1884.
  - Alfred W. Pollard's *Records of the English Bible*. 1911.
  - Anthony à Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*. 1848.
- Drawing upon these sources, Allen paints the following historical picture regarding Bois' notes.
  - "In the year of our Lord God, 1643, and in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord the King, King Charles, the 19<sup>th</sup>, John Bois, Senior, "Prebendarie of the Cathedrall Church of Ely, & Rectr of the Parish Church of Boxworth," set his hand and seal to his last will and testament. First, he gave and bequeathed his soul "unto the hands of almighty God, from whom I first received It, nothing doubting but that He will restore It unto me again at the General Resurrection." And he desired for his body decent interment according to the custom in the Church of England. Secondly, he distributed land, money, furniture, silver spoons, and a trunk full of fine linen to a son, a daughter, a daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, and a servant; money to the poor of the Parish of Boxworth, to the Church

of Boxworth for reparation, to the poor sort living it the City of Ely, and those who did service in the choir at Ely.

In the midst of his settlements of all manner of things for all manner of persons, Bois was most elaborate and most specific in guarding the dispersal of his books and papers, for book and papers, “may easily catch Harm.” Two books he gave in thankful remembrance to “St. Johns College in the University of Cambridge.” He listed the books in his library that were borrowed, and he begged that they might be restored to their right owners. Two books were to be returned to the “Right Reverend Father in God Ralph now Bishop of Exeter, who I hope will pardon my Boldness, in filling the Margents of one of His books, with such Notes as came then into My Mind.” The bulk of his books and papers Bois left to his daughter, Anne Bois. However, to the end that they might be “skillfully regarded & duely looked unto,” he intreated his “very Good Friend Master John Killingworth, now dwelling at Boxworth, and Supplying My place there, to be ayding & helpfull to My Daughter in the disposing the Foresaid Books & Papers, to Her best Use and Commodity.”

Among those papers were the notes which Fr. Bois had kept when he served with the company of review which supervised the printing of the Authorized Version of the English Bible. Dr. F.H.A. Scrivener, biblical critic and reviser and editor of English Bibles, has written, “Could these notes be recovered, they would solve . . . many . . . questions of great interest.” He has added wistfully in a footnote to that statement, “They were no doubt sold, and may yet be found in some private collection.” Prof. Alfred W. Pollard, bibliographer and scholar, has speculated, “If the notes which Dr. Boys treasured so carefully to the end of his life had been preserved, it might be possible to trace, if only for single section, the work done at the different stages of the revision.” (Allen, 3-4)

. . . The fine linen mentioned in John Bois’s will has vanished; the silver is gone; for three centuries, the notes which Scrivener hoped to see recovered and Pollard despaired of were believed lost. Had it not been for the care of another clergyman, a skilled antiquarian and collector, so they might be, still.

In 1643, when Bois was testifying to his will, William Fulman, born in a place famous as the home of Sir Philip Sidney—Penshurst, in Kent—was ten years old. He was the son of a carpenter. According to his contemporary and friend, Anthony à Wood, Fulman came to the notice of Dr. Hammond, the local parson, who procured him a chorister’s place in Magdalene College, Oxford, where the lad was well grounded in school learning. He became a scholar at Corpus Christi College. Being a zealous son of the Church of England, he was ejected “by the parliamentary visitors,” but was eventually restored upon the King’s Restoration. He was created master of arts and made fellow of his house. Finally, Fulman was presented “to the rectory of Meysey—Hampton, where he finished his course.”

“He was a most excellent theologist,” Anthony à Wood writes, “admirably well vers’d in ecclesiastical and profane history and chronology, and had a great insight in English history and antiquities: but being totally averse from making himself known, and that choice worth treasured up in, his great learning did in a manner dye with, him.”

But his learning did in a manner live, also: for after his death, “early in the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of June in sixteen hundred eighty and eight,” William Fulman left behind him “a great heap of collections, neatly written with his own hand, but nothing of them perfect.” These he bequeathed to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Among the papers are chronicles, antiquities, genealogies, calendars, lives of churchmen, memorials of learned and famous men and of poets; a collection, in all, of twenty-two volumes.”

Among the papers are thirty-nine pages of notes “taken by John Bois one of the Translators of the Kings Bible.” (Allen, 8-9)

- These notes copied by Fulman lay dormant until the publication of Gustavus Paine’s 1959 book *The Learned Men*, which contained a photo of the Fulman Manuscript. It was this photo of Bois’ notes in Paine’s book that prompted Ward S. Allen to search the archives at Corpus Christi College, Oxford for the missing notes. Finally, in 1969 Allen published *Translating for King James* for Vanderbilt University Press.
- Olga S. Opfell wrote a short history of Bois’ notes for her chapter on the General Meeting in her book *The King James Bible Translators*. Opfell’s paragraph reads as follows:
  - “The Bois notes disappeared for centuries. Then in 1958 in *The Learned Men*, Gustavus Paine quoted several excerpts from a manuscript, “Notes by John Bois,” at the Bodleian Library. It was, he claimed, a copy of 39 pages of Bois’s notes. Some ten years later Ward Allen tracked down the manuscript (CCC-312-Fulman), which belongs to Corpus Christi College, and published it together with annotations and translations of the Greek and Latin words. The copier was William Fulman, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Oxford scholar, rector, and antiquarian. But apparently he had worked at second hand, for at the end of the notes proclaimed, “Transcribed out of a copy taken by some unskilled hand, very confused and faulty especially in the Greek.” (Paine suggests that the Greek is abbreviated.) The notes run only from Romans to Revelation, with addenda on I Corinthians through Revelation. They are a mixture of English, Latin, and Greek, with many references to patristic and classical sources.” (Opfell, 102)

### **Bois’ Notes & The General Meeting**

- In *Manifold Greatness: The Making of the King James Bible* editors Helen Moore and Julian Reid paint the following overview of what transpired at the General Meeting at Stationers’ Hall in London in 1610.
  - “After the six companies had finished their work, the General Meeting comprising twelve (or, in some accounts six) translators delegated from the companies met at Stationers’ Hall in London. The review process probably took place over nine months in 1610. One of the members of the final review committee was John Bois of the second Cambridge company, which translated the Apocrypha.” (Moore & Reid, 108)
- A “general meeting” such as this was called for in the rules set forth by Archbishop Richard Bancroft at the inception of the project to govern its progress. Rule 10 stated the following:

- “If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, doubt or differ upon any place, to send them word thereof, note the place, and withal send the reasons, to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.” (MS. Harley 750)
- Olga S. Opfell, author of *The King James Bible Translators* offers some additional perspective on the size and scope of the General Meeting.
  - “In 1610 all was in readiness for the critical board of review to meet at Stationers’ Hall in London. . .

Wrote Anthony Walker, the biographer of John Bois: “. . . the whole work being finished, and three copies of the whole Bible sent from Cambridge, Oxford, and Westminster to London; a new choice was to be made of six in all, two out of every company to review the whole work; and extract one of all three to be committed to the press. For the dispatch of which business Mr. Downes and Mr. Bois were sent for up to London.”

There were, however, two companies each at Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford. If Walker was correct in his number, each place rather than each company sent two men. But when Samuel Ward gave his report to the Synod of Dort in 1618, he said simply, “After each section had finished its book, 12 delegates chosen from them all, met together and reviewed and revised the whole work.” Since Ward had been a member of the Second Cambridge Company, he must have had special knowledge of the proceeding. Walker was not such a close contemporary of the learned men.” (Opfell, 101)

- Put another way, Opfell believes that Ward’s testimony regarding the size of the General Meeting (twelve) is to be believed over Walker’s (six) given Ward’s status as a translator and close connection with the project.
- Dr. David Norton also discusses this subject matter in *A Textual History of the King James Bible*:
  - “Walker had his information from Bois; nevertheless, what he gives us is second hand, and comes from much longer after the work than does the report to the Synod of Dort. So the report is more likely to be correct about the number of translators involved in the general meeting.

The cause of Walker’s error, if that is what it is, seems straightforward: he did not know that two companies worked in each place, and so presumed there were only three companies. If so we may take him as adding a minor detail to the report to the Synod of Dort, that each company sent two delegates, but we must set a question mark against all his evidence.” (Norton, 18)

- Dr. Norton then speculates as to how Walker could also be correct despite giving a different number from Samuel Ward.

- “Yet it is possible that Walker is, in his own way, true. First, it is a well-based assumption, but still an assumption, that there were six companies. This rests on the unequivocal evidence of the lists of translators that there were two groups working in each place. The individual groups could have been thought of as divisions of single companies, subcommittees of a committee (I have already noted the possibility that there were further subdivisions). While we are accustomed to reading rules 8 to 10 as using ‘company’ to refer to each of the six groups, rule 13 may be read as referring to three companies, each with two heads: ‘the directors in each company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for that place, and the King’s Professors in the Hebrew and Greek in each University’. It is also possible that, for some parts of the work, the two groups in one place acted as a single company. Another of Walker’s details fits with this, that three copies of the Bible were sent to London, that is, one from each place. If this is true, the pairs of companies put their work together. This may have been a simple matter of binding together the sheets of their master copies of the Bishops’ Bible, which would have been enough to give each pair of groups a single identity. In short, Walker’s understanding of what was meant by ‘company’ may not be as wrong as it appears.

This would be trifling were it not that it suggests something of the way the translators may have worked. There still seems to be the numerical problem that either there were six men or there were twelve. We could solve this at a stroke if we changed our idea of the general meeting: what if it too subdivided its work? This strains Walker’s statement that the meeting was ‘to review the whole work’ but might account for his confusion in a different way from that just attempted. It might also fit with Bois’s notes themselves and with Walker’s further statement that the work took nine months, a statement that has been widely questioned.” (Norton, 18-19)

- As far as we know, Bois alone took notes on what transpired at the General Meeting. The fact that Bois’ notes only cover Romans through Revelation has caused some to wonder if the General Meeting occurred in multiple sessions with different men attending each session. According to this theory, Bois only took notes on Romans through Revelation because that was the only portion, he was present for. It does seem strange that, if Bois were present for the entire General Meeting, why did he only take notes on Romans through Revelation. Professor Norton speculates that a series of meetings could account for the different number of attendees in the accounts of Walker (six) and Ward (twelve).
  - “Allen has shown that Bois’s notes are consistent with the idea of nine months work taking place in 1610. The notes contain page references to a volume of Chrysostom that appeared in 1610 but not to a volume that appeared in 1611, showing that the notes were made in 1610 and so lending credibility to the nine months (*Translating for King James*, pp. 9–10). This is, I think, beyond doubt. It raises a major question: what happened in 1609, the year that Eyre’s letter suggests is when the general meeting convened? If the meeting was not as general as has been previously supposed, the answer could be this: that it did different parts of its work at different times involving different people. This idea has the further attraction in that it would help to account for puzzling features of Bois’s notes.

Bois's notes are remarkably incomplete if the general meeting involved all who attended it in working through the entire text and, in so doing, making at a minimum one sixth but possibly as much as a half of the textual changes that were still to be made. The notes cover discussion of the Epistles and Revelation only, forcing one to ask whether he was present only for this part of the work: either he took no notes on the bulk of the work or he was only involved with this part of it.

The second puzzling feature of Bois's notes is that they do not account for all the work that had to be done on the Epistles and Revelation. Much more work happened between the preparation of MS98 and the printing of the text than his notes account for. 2,974 changes were made independently of the preparation of MS 98, but Bois records just under 500 items of discussion, the majority of which concern the originals rather than particularities of English translation. Even if each of these items of discussion led to a change in the text (which did not happen), they would account for less than a twelfth of the changes. It may be that he did not record all the discussions he was present at, but somewhere and somehow there is significantly more work to be accounted for." (Norton, 19-20)

- Despite their importance as a primary source witness to what transpired at the General Meeting, Bois' notes do not offer a complete picture. Simply stated, even with Bois' notes, there are still details related to the General Meeting that we simply do not know.
- One such question is the identities of all the translators who took part in the General Meeting. Olga S. Opfell addresses this question in *The King James Bible Translators*.
  - "Of the men who met at Stationers' Hall, whether six or 12, only three names are known with certainty—John Bois and Andrew Downes of the Second Cambridge Company and John Harmer of the Second Oxford Company. The notes contain some scattered initials, which are identified only in one case. At the end, the manuscript says, "A.D., so often occurring signifies Andrew Downs, Greek professor in Cambridge." Such frequent mention might well signify enthusiasm if not extreme diligence, but Walker reported that Downes "would not go to Stationers' Hall unless he was either fetched or threatened with a pursuivant."

Besides A.D., the initials B., C. H., and D.H. appear at various times. Several of the translators bore one or the other of these initials. H. might well stand for John Harmer. D. Hutch. and Hutch, also occurring, may indicate notes left by Dr. Ralph Hutchinson of the Second Westminster Company, who died in 1607." (Opfell, 102)

- Ward Allen also comments upon the initials noted in Bois' notes in *Translating For King James*.
  - "Further evidence of the authenticity of the notes comes from scattered jottings of names and initials of translators. Most frequently mentioned is A.D. A note at the end of the manuscript identifies these initials as those of Andrew Downes. Until the discovery of these notes, Bois and Downes were the only two translators known to have sat with the company of review. In addition to the initials A.D. and the personal references to Bois in the notes, the following notations appear: C. (Rom. 4:11), H. (Rom. 9:5), D.H. (I Tim.

1:16, Heb. 2:7-9) D. Hutch. and Hutch. (Heb. 5:15, Apoc. 13:8, and “Addenda,” I Cor. 6:4), B. (Heb. 12:23), and D. Harmer (I Pet. 2:24, Apoc. 13:5). D. Harmer is Dr. Harmer of the Oxford Company which translated the Gospels, the Acts, and the Apocalypse. Dr. Hutchinson is not Dr. Ralph Hutchinson of the Westminster company which translated the Epistles of St. Paul and the Canonical Epistles, for if the records be accurate, Ralph Hutchinson had died some four years before the company of review assembled. From the wording of the note to the “addenda,” “D. Hutch. *quaerebat*,” it seems unlikely that the comments represent notes which Dr. Hutchison left upon his death. Most likely another “Hutch.” had been appointed to the body of translators. It is impossible to ascertain from the single initials which of the translators may have been designated, for more than one translator bore each of the single initials cited. The three known translators of the Authorized Version conferring as these notes were assembled were John Bois, Andrew Downes, and John Harmer.” (Allen, 11)

- A more recent essay by Mordechai Feingold in the 2018 anthology titled *Labourers in the Vineyard of the Lord: Scholarship and the Making of the King James Version of the Bible* suggests the possibility that Dr. Ralph Hutchinson had not passed away and was present at the General Meeting. Specifically Feingold writes:
  - “In a similar manner, we learn of the contribution of Ralph Hutchinson, prebendary of St Paul’s. John Bois’s notes suggest his involvement in the revision committee, which is substantiated by a document date 29 February 1611/12 acquitting Hutchinson of the charge of simony, where it is mentioned that he had been ‘lately employed in the translation of the Bible.’” (Feingold, 6)
- This assertion by Feingold is odd and goes against the prevailing opinion that Dr. Hutchinson passed away in 1606. Feingold cites the *Historical Manuscripts Commission Calendar of the manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury, presented at Hatfield House Paper, Hatfield House* as support for this assertion. Christopher Yetzer sees no way around concluding that Ralph Hutchison passed away in 1606, stating in personal correspondence, “Another person took over at Saint John’s College and a specific date of his death is given.” My own research turned up a “William Hutchison” matching the description mentioned by Feingold. I found the following in a list of entries dated 29 February 1611-12, on a website titled [British History Online](#).
  - “A pardon to William Hutchinson, Doctor of Divinity (one lately employed in the translation of the Bible) and parson of Ken in the diocese of Exon., in respect of a simony objected against him, for that some friends of his having agreed with the patron of the said parsonage for 300l to present Dr Hutchinson to the said parsonage when void (as it is said) he, Dr Hutchinson repaid to those his friends the said 300l, whereby his institution and induction into that parsonage is by law void and himself disabled to hold that benefice. All which are pardoned and he dispensed with (notwithstanding the law in that behalf) to retain that benefice during his life. Subscribed by Dr Marten, Procured by Sir Thomas Lake.” ([British History Online](#))
- It appears that Feingold may have confounded William Hutchison with Ralph Hutchison. Gordon Campbell states the following in his book *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011*.

- “Bois’s notes also refer to ‘Hutch.’, which cannot refer to Ralph Hutchison, who had been appointed to the Second Westminster Company but had died in 1606, before work had begun [at the General Meeting]. It therefore seems likely that the reference is to Lancelot Andrewes’s colleague William Hutchinson, a prebendary of St Paul’s (and archdeacon of St Albans) who had not been one of the translators, but who had been brought in at a late stage for the revision committee. No other names are known.” (Campbell, 61-61)
- My collation of Bois’ notes reveals at least 97 occurrences (I am not claiming this figure is exact,) of the initials A.D. (Andrew Downes) found therein. Downes is the most frequently mentioned translator in Bois’ notes by a long shot. Initials for other translators do not occur more than five times in Bois’ notes.
- Walker’s statement about Downes being “fetched or threatened” raises an interesting question regarding the grounds upon which Downes could have been forced to comply or report to Stationers’ Hall if summoned. It is believed, based upon statements from Walker, that participants in the General Meeting were paid by the Stationers’ Company to partake in this portion of the work. Opfell states the following regarding the matter:
  - “This time there were concrete financial arrangements. Walker noted: “They went daily to Stationers’ Hall, and in three quarters of a year, finished their task. All which time, they had from the Company of Stationers xxx shillings [each] per week duly paid them.; tho’ they had nothing before but the self-rewarding, ingenious industry. [It has been suggested that the mony came from the “Bible Stock,” a company within the Stationers’ Company, or from Robert Barker, the king’s printer.]” (Opfell, 101-102; Allen, 140-141)
- Assuming the veracity of Walker’s statement we can deduce the following, only the translators who participated in the General Meeting received compensation for the work on the project. To this Gordon Campbell adds, “The Stationer’s Company contributed to the project by paying each of the revisers thirty shilling a week, which was a generous rate.” (Campbell, 61)
- In conclusion, please consider the following summary statement from the pen of Helen Moore and Julian Reid in *Manifold Greatness: The Making of the King James Bible*.
  - “Bois made notes concerning points of interest arising from the meetings discussion; a record of these notes survives in a seventeenth-century copy-of-a-copy made by the theologian and antiquarian William Fulman of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Fulman left his papers to Corpus, and it was among these that Bois’s notes were discovered in the 1950s. Bois’s notes are in Latin, and relate to the General Meeting’s discussion of the Epistles and Revelation; they reflect his own scholarly interest in points of linguistic detail, and made frequent reference to the opinions of his former Cambridge tutor and Religious Professor of Greek, Andrew Downes, also a member of this review committee. Bois’s notes constitute ample proof of the pair’s renowned learning in Greek, and provide a fascinating insight into the process of revision that shaped the final text of the KJB, although they do not account for all of the changes that took place in these final stages of the translation. As well as recording the translators’ intricate scholarly debates, Bois’s



notes also reveal a degree of attention to the matter of English idiom and some concern with the style and register of the translation.” (Moore & Reid, 108)

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