

THROUGH A GLOSS DARKLY: BIBLICAL ANNOTATIONS AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION IN MODERN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BIBLES

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This article represents a first effort at characterizing the theological and interpretive functions of biblical annotations in modern Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles. It argues that annotations are not simply subservient to their texts, but typically express a theological agenda. This became clear in the battle over annotations among Protestants and between Protestants and Catholics during the 16th and 17th centuries. It is also evident in the present examination of both Bishop Richard Challoner's annotations (1750) to the English-language Catholic Bible and the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible (1909). The article concludes with a discussion of five basic functions that biblical annotations serve.

I went this morning to your Church for mass
And preached according to my simple wit;
It wasn't all on texts from Holy Writ
For that's too hard for you as I suppose,
And I prefer to paraphrase or glose.
Glosing's a glorious thing, and anyway
"The letter killeth" as we clerics say.

— The Summoner, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*¹

TODAY ANYONE WHO SETS OUT to buy an English-language Bible will find a bewildering range of options. The sober, dark-clad volumes of the 1950s and 1960s that lacked annotations and illustrations have given

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¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, The Summoner's Tale, in *The Canterbury Tales*, trans. Nevill Coghill (Baltimore: Penguin, 1952) 322–23.

way to specialized editions with annotations and artwork tailored for specific readers. Among these are the *Catholic Youth Bible*, *Men's Devotional Bible*, the *Original African Heritage Bible*, the *Orthodox Study Bible*, the *Woman Be Loosed! Bible*, the *Life Recovery Bible*, and literally hundreds of others. In fact more than 300 annotated English-language Bible editions were published in the United States during the 20th century, many of them since 1980. Publishers are now marketing their Bibles in surprisingly small niches. There is a *Defender's Bible* for adherents of "scientific creationism" and a *True Love Waits Bible* that encourages teenagers to preserve their virginity until marriage. To be sure, a multiplicity of Bible editions is not new; Paul Gutjahr has documented the trend in 19th-century America.² Much earlier, hand-copied medieval Bibles usually included glosses that explained unfamiliar terms, inserted the opinions of church fathers, and discussed hard sayings. Biblical annotations appeared in printed English-language Bibles from the 1500s onward, including William Tyndale's versions of the Pentateuch (1530) and the New Testament (1526, 1534), the *Matthews Bible* (1537), and the *Geneva Bible* (1560), and the Roman Catholic *Rheims New Testament* (1582). Other more recent annotated Bibles have been widely disseminated, such as the many editions of the English-language Catholic Bible with Bishop Richard Challoner's notes (since 1750), and *The Scofield Reference Bible* (since 1909) that did much to spread dispensational, premillennialist theology in the English-speaking world. Today's tailor-made Bibles, along with the earlier annotated Bibles, raise intriguing questions, such as: What role do annotations perform in Bibles? What are their hermeneutical and theological functions? What arguments favor the inclusion or exclusion of annotations from Bibles? And why have biblical annotations been increasingly in vogue during the last generation or so?

Scholars have given surprisingly little attention to biblical annotations. Professors in theological studies, biblical studies, and religious studies have all neglected the lowly footnote. Historically trained, linguistically qualified researchers may take note of the text but no note of the notes. Yet the humble biblical annotation may sometimes have as much influence as the biblical text itself in the mind of a reader, though this influence is difficult if not impossible to establish or document. A part of the argument presented in this article is that the humble footnote may not be so humble after all. Annotations may be either subservient or subversive in relation to the text they accompany. Some annotations and annotators are cheeky and

² Paul Gutjahr estimates that by 1880, nearly two thousand different editions of the Bible were available to Americans (*An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1999] 3).

assertive, and intend to make the biblical text serve the cause they espouse. The debates over the legitimacy of annotations in English-language Bibles during the 1500s are proof of this. Contending ecclesiastical parties during the Reformation era in England sought to conscript the biblical text and enlist it in battle against their adversaries. To have the Bible on one's side was a boon for theological debaters. If annotations had had no influence on the interpretation of the sacred text, there would have been no reason to fight over them in the 1500s. Similarly the American Bible Society (ABS) from its founding in 1816 until quite recently set a firm policy of publishing Bibles "without note or comment" because American Protestants viewed annotations as a potential source of dissension. There is good reason to believe that annotations have significance for biblical interpretation. For masses of nonacademic Bible readers, annotations play a crucial role in the interpretation of a given text.³

This article surveys biblical annotations as a potential field of theological research. After considering the varying interpretations of annotations among contemporary literary scholars, I will treat their contested place in the early modern English Bible. Following this, I will examine the marginal notes in two widely distributed annotated English Bibles—the Roman Catholic version with Bishop Richard Challoner's notes (since 1750) and the *Scofield Reference Bible* (since 1909). My argument will conclude with the outlines of a general theory regarding the varied hermeneutical functions of annotations. The academic study of biblical annotations in modern or contemporary English-language Bibles seems to be a novel pursuit, not hitherto attempted by other researchers. For this reason my article is suggestive rather than definitive. It is a kind of Lewis-and-Clark expedition into the terrain of modern biblical annotations.

THE AMBIGUITIES OF ANNOTATIONS

Literary scholars, more than theologians or biblical scholars, have attended to annotations and their relationship to the texts that they accompany. One of their far-reaching claims is that the impact of a literary work derives from the *entirety* of its printed form in all its physical and textual features. "Texts" and "books" are not synonymous terms, notes Evelyn Tribble, and yet "often the book is treated merely as an accidental, a

³ My own experience indicates that many laypersons do not clearly distinguish biblical texts from biblical annotations—a point confirmed in my conversations with representatives of the Zondervan Company, a major publisher of annotated English-language Bibles. Years ago, in leading a home Bible study on the Sermon on the Mount, I became frustrated with those who, instead of wrestling with hard passages, would read aloud to the group the words of an annotation: My Bible says. . . . Some annotations, to my consternation, turned the text on its head.

historically shifting and therefore insignificant container for an essential and unchanging text.” In contrast, Tribble is “concerned with books, the text embodied. More than embodied: dressed, bedecked, adorned—with prefatory matter, illustrations, and most importantly, marginal notes.” Similarly, D. F. McKenzie proposes that we consider “the idea of a *text* as a complex structure of meaning which embraces every detail of its formal and physical presentation in a specific historical context.”⁴ Often the specific layout of the text provides clues to its meaning in historical and social context. Tribble writes: “Attention to the printed page reveals the struggle, now invisible, over the question with which I began: whose text? That is, who had authority over the text; who owned it? By what means was this authority constructed?” “Authority,” she adds, is “always potentially plural, unstable, and contested . . . Reading the margin shows that the page can be seen as a territory of contestation upon which issues of political, religious, social, and literary authority are fought.”⁵ John Lennard argues that typography, spelling, punctuation, and word division contribute to a text’s meaning and should not be regarded as mere accidental features of a text.⁶ If we apply this idea to Bible editions, then an interpreter might need to examine such things as print size, the use of cross-references, the space given to notes as compared with the main text, the placements of notes (below, above, alongside the text, or interpolated), the use of “red letter” signifiers (e.g., for sayings attributed to Christ), and the appearance of prefaces, introductions, outlines, glossaries, maps, essays, and other study aids within the Bible edition.

Some literary scholars assert that the footnote or annotation is strictly subordinate to the main text both in theory and in practice. Jacques Derrida, for example, stresses the “secondariness” of annotation and writes: “The status of a footnote implies a normalized, legalized, legitimized distribution of the space, a spacing that assigns hierarchical relationships.” He regards annotation as a “subspecies” of the “secondary discourses” of “commentary, interpretation, exegesis, etc.” What makes them alike is that “secondariness is their common law. They can only respond; they cannot speak first. . . . Before them, in front of them, there has been and there will

⁴ Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1993) 1, 4; citing D. F. McKenzie, “Typography and Meaning: the Case of William Congreve,” in *Buch und Buchhandel in Europe im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981) 81–125, page no. not indicated.

⁵ Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 2.

⁶ John Lennard, “Mark, Space, Axis, Function: Towards a (New) Theory of Punctuation on Historical Principles,” in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page*, ed. Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000) 1–11. See also Bray’s introduction, xvii–xviii.

have been an originary text or speech act.”⁷ Another school maintains that footnotes commonly stand in a complex relationship with their main texts, that they can both buttress and subvert the latter, and often carry as much or more weight than the main text. Peter Cosgrove writes: “The footnote . . . is neither an adornment nor a humble dependent. It functions in ways that always constitute a threat. . . . The footnote maintains . . . a double existence. It stands outside the text to impart information, but it enters the text to interfere with its narrative function.”⁸ Cosgrove’s claim is based on a scrutiny of Edward Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788) and Alexander Pope’s *Dunciad Variorum* (1729). He shows that Gibbon reserved his sharpest barbs for footnotes, and that Pope’s annotations satirized the 18th-century traditions of learned commentary on canonical texts. These and other cases show that the footnote cannot be counted on to remain either subordinate or secondary. The idea of the strictly subservient footnote should be discarded.

The footnote’s ambiguous role helps to explain the ambivalence about whether and how texts should be annotated. The debate goes back to the Middle Ages, as witnessed by Chaucer’s tongue-in-cheek portrayal of the Summoner—see the epigraph—who prefers to preach on the Bible’s glosses rather than on the Bible itself. Early Protestants insisted on the Bible’s sufficiency as a “self-interpreting” text—and then added their own set of annotations to confute their opponents. Arguments against annotation are both ethical and esthetic. The first holds that annotations obscure the meaning of an authoritative text and thus fail a moral test. They pretend to explain the text and instead explain it away. The sophisticated and sophisticated glosses of the interpreters have twisted the text’s plain meaning. A. C. Hamilton notes that the term “gloss” derives from the Greek, where *glossa* referred to “a foreign or other obscure word which required explanation.” New connotations emerged in English usage, and “gloss” often came to mean “a sophisticated or disingenuous interpretation.” In current

⁷ Jacques Derrida, “This Is Not An Oral Footnote,” in *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (New York: Oxford University, 1991) 193, 202. Similarly Gerard Genette argues that “the paratextual element is always subordinate to ‘its’ text, and this functionality determines the essence of its appeal and existence” (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane A. Lewis and Richard Macksey [New York: Cambridge University, 1997] 12).

⁸ Peter Cosgrove, “Undermining the Text: Edwards Gibbon, Alexander Pope, and the Anti-Authenticating Footnote,” in *Annotation and Its Texts* 139, 148. Anthony Grafton writes that “footnotes buttress and undermine, at one and the same time” (*The Footnote: A Curious History* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1997] 32). Grafton’s reading of Gibbon is much like Cosgrove’s: “And nothing in that work [i.e., *Decline and Fall*] did more than its footnotes to amuse his friends or enrage his enemies. Their religious and sexual irreverence became justly famous” (*Footnote* 1).

parlance, if someone “glosses over” difficulties or problems, it means that he or she is using clever words to evade the issues. Referring to an advertising brochure as “glossy” may not be a compliment, since the term suggests both attractiveness and duplicity. Early in English use, “gloss” was conflated with “gloze,” meaning “to gleam,” and so suggested a deceptive appearance.⁹ One of the paradoxes of the gloss, noted by Hamilton, is that it may falsify through its effort to clarify. When the text is obscure, explanation may be a form of obfuscation. If a gloss intends to clarify obscurities in the text, the clearer the gloss makes the text, the more specious the gloss becomes. On this view, all glosses are suspect, and not merely those that are evidently malicious or perverse.

A second objection to annotations is esthetic. According to the argument, annotations interrupt the flow of reading and thus fragment the reader’s experience of the text and its world. If the act of reading is a journey into a fictive realm beyond the self, everything that blunts the force of the text also diminishes the reader’s enjoyment. Noel Coward made the point memorably when he said that having to read a footnote is like having to go downstairs to answer the door while making love.¹⁰ Similarly Samuel Johnson acknowledged the usefulness of annotations for Shakespeare’s plays, and yet urged readers not to stop to read them once they found themselves caught up in the plot: “Let him . . . who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. . . . Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject.”¹¹ It might seem that the moral objection against annotations—that they subvert the authority of the text—carries more weight than the esthetic objection. Yet the Bible is not only a book of authority but also in large part a work of narrative, and so both objections are worth considering. An unannotated Bible could facilitate a transparent encounter with the sacred text.

⁹ A. C. Hamilton, “The Philosophy of the Footnote,” in *Editing Poetry from Spenser to Dryden*, ed. A. H. De Quehen (New York: Garland, 1981) 127–63, citing 135–36. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “gloss” as “an explanatory equivalent of a foreign or otherwise difficult word in a text,” and in “a wider sense” as “a comment, explanation, interpretation. Often used in a sinister sense. A sophisticated or disingenuous interpretation.” The first use of the term, given in the *OED* as 1548, has this negative sense: “Like as by a glosse ye subuerte the commaundement.” Another writer in 1647 refers to “Malicious Glosses made upon all he had said.”

¹⁰ Cited in Grafton, *Footnote* 69–70.

¹¹ Hamilton, “Philosophy of the Footnote” 134–35; citing Samuel Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare*.

ANNOTATIONS IN EARLY ENGLISH BIBLES

During the 16th century Protestant Reformers pressed for the removal of annotations and marginalia from the Bible, to restore a plain and pristine text. In 1518, Martin Luther's friend and advisor, Philip Melanchthon, sought to turn from biblical glosses to the text itself: "Now away with so many frigid petty glosses, these harmonizings and 'disharmonies' and other hindrances to the intelligence, and when we shall have redirected our minds to the sources, we shall begin to taste Christ." Erasmus dismissed the *Glossa ordinaria* as something "patched" together that obscured the meaning of the biblical texts. The early English translator of the Bible, William Tyndale, was harsher. In his *Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (1525), he inveighed against "the great pillars of [the] holy church, which have nailed a veil of false glosses on Moses's face, to corrupt the true understanding of his law." For Tyndale, God's word stood over and against all human traditions and opinions. Yet Protestant leaders often did not practice what they preached. Tyndale, who condemned Catholic glosses, produced his own anti-Catholic glosses. In fact, his glosses to the Pentateuch (1530) and the New Testament (1526, 1534) attracted almost as much attention as the translations themselves. Often the notes were highly polemical, as for instance the note on Leviticus 10:8: "Oure prelates be dronke with desire of honoure . . . and live not soberly to teach us what christ commanded by the handes of the apostles."¹² Attempting to turn the tables, Thomas More wrote in his anti-Protestant *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1528) that the Reformers were heretics who preferred "their own gay glosses before the right catholic faith of all Christ's church."¹³

The 1537 *Matthews Bible* did nothing to quell the controversy, since it had glosses with an anti-authoritarian slant. The notes to Matthew 23, for example, inform the reader that it may sometimes be proper to disregard the commands of corrupt bishops and rulers. This led King Henry VIII to issue a decree on November 16, 1538, to ban all Bibles with marginal notes, except those royally authorized. The king ordered that no one "from henceforth shall printe or bring into this realm any bokes of diuine scripture in the english tonge, with any annotations in the margyn, or any

¹² Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 16; citing William Tyndale, *William Tyndale's Five Books of Moses called The Pentateuch: Being a Verbatim Reprint of the Edition of M.CCCCC.XXX . . .*, ed. J. I. Mombert, rev. ed. with intro. by F. F. Bruce (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1967). The heavily glossed 1526 New Testament exists only in fragmentary form, and appeared in a facsimile edition, as *The First Printed English New Testament*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1871).

¹³ Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 13–15; citing the dialogue reprinted as *The Dialogue Concerning Tyndale by Sir Thomas More* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1927) 114–15.

prologue or additions in the calender or table, except the same be firste viewed, examyned, and allowed by the kynges highness.” When Miles Coverdale was asked to revise the *Matthews Bible*, he was specifically asked to remove all contentious annotations from the new edition. The terminology in the notes was to be ecclesiastical rather than sectarian—thus individual assemblies were to be referred to as “churches” rather than “congregations.” Yet the prologue explained that there was not enough time to make all the necessary changes in the annotations, and in the end the *Coverdale Bible* included little pointing hands scattered through the text at certain key points of textual contention. In these passages the individual reader is enjoined to make no “private interpretacyon thereof.” The little hands mean “hands off”! “A pointing hand,” writes Tribble, “warns the reader that the passage at hand is church property; that there are ‘godly’ or officially sanctioned readings of these texts.”¹⁴ The 1549 *Matthews Bible*, nonetheless, continued the controversy. Its notes, written by Edmund Becke, were just as bitter as Tyndale’s and more complete and systematic in character.¹⁵

The battles over annotation continued throughout the later 16th century. One of the most influential of the 16th-century Bible editions was the 1560 *Geneva Bible*, which went through numerous editions from 1560 to 1611. The “aids” contained in the *Geneva Bible*, including extensive glosses, were a prime reason for its popularity. Through reading “the best commentaries” and by “conference with the godly and learned brethren,” the translators and editors of the *Geneva Bible* said that they endeavored “to gather brief annotations vpon all the hard places, aswel for the vnderstanding of suche wordes as are obscure, and for the declaratio[n] of the text, as for the application of the same.”¹⁶ Roman Catholic scholars took the offensive in the *Rheims New Testament* (1582), which then spawned William Fulke’s counteredition in 1601. The notes to the Rheims edition are anti-Protestant and polemical. To the phrase “he took bread” in Matthew 26:26, the *Rheims New Testament* adds this note: “Here at once is instituted . . . both a Sacrifice and a Sacrament, though the Scriptures geve neither of these names to this action: and our Aduersaries without al reason or religion accept in a sort the one, and vtterly deny the other.” For the phrase “my body,” the note adds: “He said not, This bread is a figure of my body: or, This wine is a figure of my bloud: but, This is my body, and, This is my bloud.” William Fulke brought out a contentiously titled edition in re-

¹⁴ Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 23–25; citing Henry VIII from Alfred W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525–1611* (Folkestone, U.S.: Dawsons, 1974; orig. publ. 1911) 241–42.

¹⁵ Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 28–29, citing the preface to *Geneva Bible*.

¹⁶ Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 32–33.

sponse, *The Text of the New Testament of Iesus Christ, Translated out of the vulgar Latin of the traitorous Seminarie at Rheimes. . . . With a confutation of all such arguments, glosses, and annotations* (1601). Fulke's edition reprinted the original pages of the *Rheims New Testament* with his own added annotations. The reader of Fulke's Bible finds a biblical text with an accompanying theological debate in the form of two sets of competing glosses. For the Rheims preface, Fulke breaks up the text, and quotes a few sentences at a time, along with his refutation. His words are in Roman type, and the Rhemish text in italics.¹⁷

Prior to the epochal publication of the Authorized Version of the Bible in 1611, King James expressed his disapproval of the *Geneva Bible* as containing "some notes very partiall, vntrue, seditious, and sauoring too much of daungerous, and trayterous conceites." He objected to the note on Exodus 1:19, which allowed disobedience to rulers, and the annotation to 2 Chronicles 15:16, which upbraided the Judean ruler Asa for deposing his mother from the throne and not actually killing her! One should remember that King James was the son of Mary Queen of Scots, a woman accused of Roman Catholic "idolatry," and then not only deposed but executed.¹⁸ After nearly 100 years of competing annotations, the scholars who labored on the Authorized Version produced a Bible with no annotations at all but only variant readings placed in the margins. Where the Hebrew or Greek originals admitted more than one translation of a word or phrase, one of these was to be placed in the text and the other in the margin. Evelyn Tribble associates the Authorized Version with what she calls a "domestication" of the margin.¹⁹

The impact of the Authorized Version on English and North American culture, religion, and language is well known and need not be rehearsed here.²⁰ With regard to biblical annotations, the main point is that a contentious century of annotated editions culminated in 1611 in a standard English-language Bible that was all but free from any interpretive apparatus. Generations of Protestant Bible readers would appeal to the text of the Bible and that text alone to justify their doctrines and practices. From the early 1600s until well into the 1800s, there were often no annotations in English-language Bibles published under Protestant auspices. When annotations were included, these were generally recognized as an expression of the opinions of one particular denomination or school of thought. Roman

¹⁷ Ibid. 43–50.

¹⁸ Ibid. 52–53; citing King James from William Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference . . . at Hampton Court, January 14, 1603 (1604)* (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1965; orig. publ. London, 1603) 46–47.

¹⁹ Tribble, *Margins and Marginality* 51, 53.

²⁰ See David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003).

Catholicism, though, represented a different case. For English-language Roman Catholics, the annotations first published by Bishop Challoner in 1750, and published in most officially sanctioned Roman Catholic Bibles in English until the 1950s, served as a standard gloss—a kind of *Glossa ordinaria* for modern Roman Catholic Bibles in English.

The American Bible Society, beginning in 1816, made it a foundational principle to distribute copies of the Bible “without note or comment.” This may have been a necessary policy, given the interdenominational support enjoyed by the American Bible Society. Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, and other Protestants could share in the work of Bible distribution without fearing that the texts they disseminated might contain notes that favored one group above the rest. Annotations raised the specter of division, due to divergent Protestant interpretations of Scripture. Throughout the 19th century, American Protestants shared a conviction that the unannotated Bible would bring a blessing wherever it went. Bible distributions and giveaways—a work continued today by the Gideon Society—were a hallmark of 19th-century and early-20th-century American Evangelicalism. Most Protestant Americans regarded the plain, unannotated Bible, with nondescript cover, as a force and power unto itself.²¹ It may be no accident that the most extensively influential annotated Bible for American Protestants—*The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909)—appeared when the unified front of 19th-century American Evangelicalism was beginning to break up. In an era of competing Protestant parties, an annotated Bible could help one group to transmit its perspective and its adversaries. The early 1900s were less like the mid-1800s than the late 1500s, with a multiplicity of contending interpretations of Scripture. Scofield’s annotations—despite his disclaimers—were expressions of a definite theological standpoint and his “revolution of 1909” brought back annotations to Protestant Bibles as a weapon of theological warfare.

Roman Catholic theology, past and present, insists that an authoritative interpreter is needed to elucidate the meaning of sacred Scripture, and consequently Catholic canon law in the modern era has dictated that Catholic Bibles published under the jurisdiction of local bishops need to have annotations that accord with the Church’s teachings. A decree of the Council of Trent stipulated that non-Catholic annotations or “suspected passages” in a Bible edition be “expunged by the theological faculty of some Catholic university or by the general inquisition” before the edition

²¹ Even as physical object, the Bible received veneration in the 1800s. Civil War veterans told of bullets stopped by a Bible placed in a vest pocket—a story lampooned by Mark Twain when he spoke of a man almost killed by a speeding Bible that was halted by a bullet next to his chest!

was “permitted to those to whom the translations are permitted.”²² In 1757 the Sacred Congregation of Rites, at the bidding of Pope Benedict XIV, directed that Bibles published with the authorization of the Holy See contain “annotations taken from the holy fathers of the church or from learned Catholic men.”²³ The same principle regarding annotations appears in later pronouncements. Pope Leo XIII’s apostolic constitution, *Officiorum ac munerum* (1897), dictated that all vernacular versions of the Bible were forbidden except those published under the auspices of the Holy See or else under the direction of bishops and “with annotations taken from the church fathers and from the writings of learned Catholics.”²⁴ Canon 1391 of the *Codex iuris canonici* (1918) repeats the language found in the 1897 decree with one small change—the addition of the word “chiefly” (*praecipue*) in the phrase “chiefly taken from the holy fathers of the church and . . . learned Catholics.” In fact, as indicated below, Challoner’s 18th-century annotations contained little in way of direct citation from the church fathers. Canon 825.1 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* states that “vernacular translations” must be “annotated with necessary and sufficient annotations.” Thus, while the 1918 code mentioned the “church fathers” in reference to the content of biblical annotations, the 1983 code is opened regarding their content. Canon 825.2 of the 1983 code—in a section not paralleled in the 1918 code—allows Catholics with episcopal permission to collaborate with “separated brothers and sisters” in preparing translations of the Bible “annotated with appropriate explanations.” During the 20th century, professional Bible scholars took up the task of biblical annotation and so gradually displaced the interpretive role assigned by canon law to the writings of the church fathers and other approved Catholic authors.

CHALLONER’S HOLY BIBLE (1750) AND THE SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE (1909)

Almost all English-language Catholic Bibles prior to 1950 were published not only with annotations but also with identifiable marks of official sanction by bishops, archbishops, cardinals, popes, or the Holy See. Typically the front matter to Catholic Bibles included letters from ranking clerics, papal encyclicals or other documents, and sometimes even a state-

²² *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1960) 274.

²³ Pietro Gasparri, *Codicis iuris canonici fontes*, ed. Jusztinián Serédi, 9 vols. (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1923–1939) 7:724—cum annotationibus desumptis ex sanctis Ecclesiae Patribus vel ex doctis catholicisque viris.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 3:506–7—cum adnotationibus desumptis ex sanctis Ecclesiae Patribus, atque ex doctis catholicisque scriptoribus.

ment of the indulgence (i.e., reduction of time spent in purgatory) for those who read the Bible regularly with sincere intent for a specified period of time. The Catholic Bible was an *authorized* text that came to the layperson with approval from ecclesiastical authorities. Annotations in traditional Catholic Bibles often aimed at authorizing and endorsing Catholic teachings and practices.

The individual most responsible for determining the shape and form of English-language Catholic Bible from 1750 to about 1950 was Richard Challoner (1691–1781), who served the English Catholic Church as bishop and vicar apostolic (i.e., the highest ranking Catholic cleric in England). In the mid-1700s the only Catholic version of the Bible in English was the Douai version (1609) produced nearly a century and a half earlier. It was hard to understand because of its antiquated language. The revision and updating of the Douai version would have been a laborious task for a team of scholars, and yet Challoner himself undertook the work. His task was to revise the Douai version and to revise or replace the older annotations with a new set more appropriate to the age. Challoner's revision of the Old Testament translation became standard until the advent of the newer Catholic translations in the mid-20th century. His revision of the New Testament translation was influential, though it was revised during his lifetime and after his death. For two centuries Challoner's influence in the field of biblical annotations was virtually unchallenged. His annotations were included in most English-language Catholic Bibles until the 1950s.²⁵

Throughout his notes, Challoner tried to show that the practices and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church rest on solid biblical precedents. Numerous notes pertain to issues of marriage, divorce, celibacy, and sexuality—still controversial topics among Catholics today. In the Book of Genesis, the bishop comments on the sad story of the “sons of God” marrying nonbelieving women in the days before Noah's flood, and finds this a warning against religiously mixed marriages.²⁶ Other annotations treat the biblical practices of polygamy and concubinage. While a plurality of wives was allowed to the patriarchs by “divine dispensation,” Jesus

²⁵ The Bible edition cited here is *The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate with Annotations, References, and an Historical and Chronological Table: The Douay Version of the Old Testament . . . The Confraternity Edition of the New Testament* (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, Printers to the Holy Apostolic See, 1950). On Challoner, see Edwin H. Burton, *The Life and Times of Bishop Challoner*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1909) especially “Bishop Challoner's Edition of the Bible” (1:270–89); and Eamon Duffy, ed., *Challoner and His Church: A Catholic Bishop in Georgian England* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1981).

²⁶ *Holy Bible . . . Douai* (1950) 10 note to Gen 6:2.

brought marriage back to God's original intention of monogamy. Almost every time "concubine" appears in Challoner's Old Testament it is explained with the comment that they were "lawful wives . . . of an inferior degree," or "not harlots," as he sometimes indelicately phrased it. Such a remark recurs no less than nine times.²⁷ Probably the concern is to prevent the reader from rationalizing nonmarital sex on the grounds that it is found in the Bible. Regarding divorce, Challoner adopted the traditional Catholic view that Jesus' so-called exception clause—"except for [sexual] immorality" (Matthew 5:32)—allows a spouse who is married to an adulterer to separate from that person but not to marry someone else.²⁸ Thus Challoner's notes enforced a distinctively Roman Catholic understanding of marriage and divorce. Regarding celibacy, Challoner commented that "all receive not the gift of living singly and chastely, unless they pray for the grace of God to enable them to live so and . . . to that end to fast as well as to pray."²⁹ One finds here a hint of the traditional teaching, found in John Chrysostom and other authors, that God will not refuse the gift of celibacy to those who ardently seek it. The point is made directly in a note to 1 Corinthians: "If they will use the proper means to obtain it, God will never refuse the gift of continency."³⁰ Challoner also presented the traditional teaching that celibates "serve God in a more perfect state than those who marry."³¹

Challoner's annotations often made direct or indirect reference to disputes between Catholics and Protestants. Despite the Israelites' frequent lapses into idolatry, one cannot say that "the true worship of God was ever quite abolished among them" and the "succession of the true church" continued at all times.³² This assertion has obvious pertinence for the Catholic polemic against the Protestant assertion that the true church had all but disappeared during the medieval era. Not surprisingly, Peter's confession of faith in Christ in Matthew 16 received careful consideration. By building his church on Peter, Jesus made it secure from all storms and floods.³³ Paul, who rebuked Peter publicly, was guilty of "imprudence" and yet he did not detract from Peter's supremacy among the apostles.³⁴ Catholic sacramental teachings also found support in the annotations. Jesus' statement that a man must be "born of water" indicates that baptism is necessary for salvation, while Peter's act of laying hands on the early disciples so that they might receive the Holy Spirit is an instance of the

²⁷ Ibid. 19, 29, 42, 261, 274, 324, 336, 419, 421 notes to Gen 16:3, 25:6, 35:22; Judg 8:31, 19:10; 2 Sam 5:13, 15:16; 1 Chron 1:32, 3:9.

²⁸ Ibid. 24 note to Matt 19:9.

²⁹ Ibid. 24 note to Matt 19:11.

³⁰ Ibid. 176 note to 1 Cor 7:9.

³¹ Ibid. 25 note to Matt 19:12.

³² Ibid. 252 note to Judg 2:12.

³³ Ibid. 21 note to Matt 16:18–19.

³⁴ Ibid. 196 note to Gal 2:11.

sacrament of confirmation.³⁵ Challoner defended Mary's perpetual virginity, and explained Jesus' sometimes harsh-sounding statements regarding Mary and other family members as a symbolic or typological anticipation of the later "reprobation" of the Jews as they rejected their Messiah.³⁶

One of the striking features in Challoner's annotations is a consistent tendency to exonerate biblical heroes and heroines for their misdeeds. Some of the foulest deeds come out smelling like a rose. Regarding Moses' murder of the Egyptian taskmaster, Challoner attributed this to a "particular inspiration of God."³⁷ The usual rule against murder apparently did not apply. Analogously, Samson would seem to be guilty of suicide when he knocked down the pillars of the Philistines' building and so brought an end to his own life and theirs. Yet he too acted by "a particular inspiration of God" and served as "a figure of Christ, who by his death overcame all his enemies."³⁸ Noah bears no guilt for getting drunk, since "in being overcome by wine . . . he knew not the strength of it." With a huge interpretive leap, Challoner explained the spiritual significance of the action of Noah's sons in stepping backward, with eyes averted, to cover over their naked and drunken father with a cloth: "Thus . . . we ought to cover the nakedness, that is, the sins, of our spiritual parents and superiors."³⁹ Abraham's statement that Sarah was his "sister" was "no lie" since she was a blood relative.⁴⁰ Jacob's deception and fraud perpetrated against both his father and his brother pertains in prophetic fashion to God's later election of Gentiles above the Jews, and this means that any lie in this case would "be no more than an officious and venial one."⁴¹ A definite pattern emerges in these annotations. When a major biblical character appears to fall into sin, Challoner's exculpation is total: no sin was committed. When a lesser figure is involved, there is often a lesser degree of exoneration. In the famous case of the Golden Calf, for example, Challoner did not attempt to exonerate the people. It is the sins of the leaders in this instance that elicit a mitigating explanation.

In sum, then, Challoner's annotations enforced well-established Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. These include the wrongfulness of non-marital sex, the total ban on divorce, the virtue of celibacy, the primacy of Peter, the continuity of the true church through all ages, and the necessity of baptism. To this list, one must add: the virtue of the Old Testament patriarchs. Challoner simply did not concede that Moses was a murderer. Here one finds a striking divergence between Catholic and Protestant attitudes toward biblical characters. While Protestants might magnify the sins

³⁵ Ibid. 97, 131 notes to John 3:5 and Acts 8:17.

³⁶ Ibid. 4, 16 notes to Matt 2:25, 12:48.

³⁷ Ibid. 62 note to Exod 2:12.

³⁸ Ibid. 271 note to Judg 16:30.

³⁹ Ibid. 14 notes to Gen 9:21, 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 16 note to Gen 12:13.

⁴¹ Ibid. 32 note to Gen 27:18.

of these patriarchs in order to drive home the point that all were sinners saved by grace, Catholics—at least in Challoner’s era—regarded the patriarchs as moral exemplars worthy of imitation and hence incapable of moral turpitude. The annotations in Challoner’s edition reveal much regarding traditional Catholic faith and devotion.

It would be hard to recount the history of Protestant Fundamentalism without reference to *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909).⁴² Since its first publication by Oxford University Press almost a century ago, some 10 million copies have appeared in print. *The Scofield Bible* did not merely sit on bookshelves or coffee tables. On the contrary, it was scrutinized, analyzed, memorized, and summarized in countless Sunday school lessons and pulpit performances by conservative Protestants. Most people who acquired this edition were consummate textualists who quoted chapter and verse and remembered the annotations as well as the texts themselves. The influence of the *Scofield Bible* within segments of American Protestantism may have been even greater than might be indicated by the impressive publication statistics alone.

The Scofield Bible is cheeky. Only an undaunted character like Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843–1921)—a Protestant layman from St. Louis, Missouri, who found evangelical faith in midlife after failing in his legal practice and being divorced from a Roman Catholic wife—would dare to put out such a work. There had been innumerable 19th-century editions of *The Holy Bible*, and yet Scofield inserted his own name into the title of his edition. This might be the first instance in the history of Bible publishing when someone placed his name not merely on the title page but within the title itself. Subsequently other annotators have followed Scofield’s precedent, and the spiritual heirs of the people who read *The Scofield Reference Bible* now turn to *The Ryrie Study Bible*, named after Bible teacher Charles Caldwell Ryrie. Scofield set the trend. He put his name in the title and called attention to himself and his annotations in his “Introduction” to the 1909 edition.

What is interesting about Scofield’s introduction is how it cries out for the reader’s recognition at the same time that it disclaims originality. After the word “Introduction” at the top of the page, Scofield adds in parentheses “To Be Read.” This is startling, for the annotator is telling us that we should not presume to read the Bible unless we have first listened to him. Scofield wrote: “The Editor disclaims originality. Other men have la-

⁴² All references will be to one of the following editions: *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*, Authorized Version, ed. C. I. Scofield (New York: Oxford University, 1909); *The New Scofield Reference Bible: Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version*, ed. C. I. Scofield (New York: Oxford University, 1967); *Oxford NIV Scofield Study Bible: New International Version* (New York: Oxford University, 1984).

boured, he has but entered into their labours. The results of the study of God's Word by learned and spiritual men . . . already form a vast literature, inaccessible to most Christian workers. . . . The Editor has proposed to himself the modest if laborious task of summarizing, arranging, and condensing this mass of material." Scofield writes that his notes give only "the winnowed and attested results" of others' studies, then added that "expository novelties, and merely personal views and interpretations, have been rejected." The annotator tells us that he is but a humble worker in the Lord's vineyard, that no "personal views" enter into his notes, and that he does nothing but summarize the exegetical labors of others. Yet, for this very reason, the introduction is "to be read," and the reader should pay attention to the annotations. It is as though the annotator wants to assert authority but realizes that he has to do so obliquely. In Scofield's introduction, repudiating authority is the basis for asserting authority. If anyone needs evidence that biblical annotators can be sly and self-aggrandizing, as well as humble and anonymous, Scofield's 1909 introduction provides it.

Scofield's annotations conjure up an embattled world where titanic forces of good and evil are locked in mortal combat. Rulers contend, armies clash, and cataclysms shake the planet. Indeed, the opening scene in the annotations is of the earth as a blasted and blighted planet, scarred by the rebellion of demonic hordes. What most commentators view as the creation in Genesis 1:3 and following, Scofield takes as the re-creation of the earth after a prehistoric tragedy that left it "formless and void." *The Scofield Bible* bears something of the epic character of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy or George Lucas's *Star Wars* movies. Some of Scofield's favorite words in the 1909 notes are "dominion," "destruction," and "mystery." Many have regarded Protestant Fundamentalism as a fighting creed or militant movement, and *The Scofield Bible* bears that out.

Scofield's annotations are not scholarly musings but rather a summons to spiritual battle. They propound a comprehensive "dispensationalist" theory of salvation history. The history of the world unfolds in relation to eight covenants that determine the conditions of human life and God's relations with humanity, to wit—the Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and the New Covenant (in Christ). The later covenants, according to Scofield, simply add detail and fullness to what precedes them, and so "the roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis."⁴³ In each age of world history, humanity is tested with respect to its obedience toward God, and God's judgments fall upon those who fail the test. The Edenic covenant ends with Adam and Eve's expul-

⁴³ *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), introduction to Genesis.

sion from the Garden of Eden, the Noahic covenant culminates in Noah's flood, and the Mosaic covenant includes dire warnings as well as promises of good. Given the traditional Protestant preoccupation with grace, it is interesting to see how much of what Scofield writes is concerned with obedience and disobedience and the resulting divine blessings or curses. If *The Scofield Bible* shows us the militancy of Fundamentalism, it also reveals its legalism.

Scofield's notes take aim at those who assert errors in the biblical text. The introduction speaks of the "alleged discrepancies" of the Bible that will be resolved in the annotations. Scofield's affirmation of the inerrancy of the biblical text compelled him to reconcile apparently conflicting passages and to show how the statements of the Bible are compatible with the results of modern archeological, historical, and scientific research. While Challoner's Bible is concerned with *authorization*, the hallmark of *The Scofield Bible* is *harmonization*. A considerable number of notes discuss "alleged discrepancies."⁴⁴ In the introduction to "The Historical Books" of the Old Testament, Scofield stated: "The accuracy of these writings, often questioned, has been in recent years completely confirmed by the testimony of the monuments of contemporaneous antiquity."⁴⁵ Note the terse and vigorous phrasing here. Scofield's annotations are lapidary, vigorous, and unequivocal. They bespeak a man who knew his mind and wanted his readers to know it too. They leave no room for ambiguity, uncertainty, or alternative views. In the notes on the first chapter of the Bible, Scofield wrote that "man was *created*, not *evolved*," and cited a comment by free-thinker T. H. Huxley that there is an "enormous gulf" between humans and other creatures to undermine Huxley's own assertion of biological evolution.⁴⁶ Scofield was less rigid than some later Fundamentalists in allowing that the word "day" in Genesis 1 could denote "a period of time" rather than a literal, 24-hour day.⁴⁷ Many notes treat the Bible's accuracy. The biblical character of Job is "a veritable personage . . . and the events are historical."⁴⁸ Regarding Jonah's encounter with the whale, the note states: "No miracle of Scripture has called forth so much unbelief. The issue is not between the doubter and this ancient record, but between the doubter and the Lord Jesus Christ."⁴⁹ A note on Matthew affirms the reality of demons.⁵⁰ Just as modern rationalists deny the miraculous, so the Sadducees of Jesus' day were "the religious rationalists of the time" and "deniers of the supernatural."⁵¹

⁴⁴ Ibid. 1027, 1157, 1160, 1220 notes to Matt 20:30; Acts 7:14, 9:7; 1 Cor 10:8.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 257, Historical Books, prior to notes on Joshua.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 5 note to Gen 1:26.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 4 note to Gen 1:5.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 569 introduction to Job.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 944 note to Jonah 1:17.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 1004 note to Matt 7:22.

⁵¹ Ibid. 996–97 note to Matt 3:7.

Scofield took issue with standard Roman Catholic interpretations when he wrote that Peter's apostolic role was that of opening "the door of Christian opportunity" to Jews and later to Gentiles, and that "there was no assumption by Peter of any other authority."⁵²

A note on fasting in Zechariah evolves into an attack on religious formalism. The Israelites were in error when they instituted a fast day "wholly of their own will, and without warrant from the word of God." Scofield added that "the whole matter, like much in modern pseudo-Christianity, was extra-Biblical, formal, and futile."⁵³ His argument was that Christians have no warrant for instituting customs not directly supported by Scripture—a characteristic Protestant viewpoint. A few notes touch on gender and ethnic issues. Scofield attributed the rebellion of David's son, Absalom, to the "wild Bedouin blood" of his mother, Maacah, and added that "in Absalom David reaped from his own sowing."⁵⁴ In Zechariah he commented that "a woman, in the bad ethical sense, is always a symbol of that which, religiously, is out of its place." An unchaste woman serves as a symbol for the wickedness of Babylon, and female figures also represent evil in the Book of Revelation.⁵⁵ This note is eliminated from the 1967 revised edition of *The Scofield Bible*, which says nothing about woman as a symbol of evil.

The 1967 edition of *The Scofield Bible* generally tones down many of Scofield's emphases. Where the 1909 version spoke of "dominion," "destruction," and "mystery," the 1967 edition inserts new words—almost absent from Scofield's vocabulary—such as "comfort," "security," "rapture," and "translation" (i.e., the translation of the church out of the world and its tribulations). The familiar premillennialist doctrine of the rapture of the church is largely absent from Scofield's original notes, and yet highlighted in the notes to the 1967 edition.⁵⁶ The later editors altered or added notes to underscore that faithful believers will not in any way suffer divine wrath or judgment in the future tribulation period. Further changes relate to the issue of apostasy, and the 1967 edition repeatedly asserts in its annotations that genuine believers will never fall away from the faith.⁵⁷ Scofield's 1909 edition focused on the public aspects of God's coming kingdom while the 1967 edition is much more privatistic and individualistic

⁵² Ibid. 1022 note to Matt 16:19.

⁵³ Ibid. 970 note to Zech 7:2.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 369 note to 2 Sam 13:37.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 969 note to Zech 5:6, underscoring original.

⁵⁶ *Scofield Reference Bible* (1967) 929, 1222, 1294–95, 1276, 1372–73 notes to Joel 1:15, John 14:3, Rom 8:31, intro. to 2 Thess 2:3, 1 Tim 3:15, and Rev 19:19. Compare these with *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) 1135, 1271–72, 1299, 1372–73 notes to John 14:3, intro. to 2 Thess, 2 Thess 2:3, 1 Tim 3:15, and Rev 19:19.

⁵⁷ *Scofield Reference Bible* (1967) 857, 1315, notes to Ezek 18:24 and Heb 6:4. Compare with *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) 1295 note to Heb 6:4.

in outlook. A message of *preparation*—for battle and for tribulation—shifts into a message of *consolation* for the individual believer. These emendations in *The Scofield Bible* between 1909 and 1967 follow some broader sociological trends. David Watt has argued that the chiliastic convictions of turn-of-the-century Fundamentalists gave way to familial hopes during the middle of the 20th century. In a world careening out of control, conservative Protestants became less confident in their ability to influence and transform society as a whole and so limited their hopes to the smaller sphere of the Christian home.⁵⁸ The individualistic tone of the 1967 Scofield edition shows this shift. Changing biblical annotations were a sign of the changing contours of American Evangelicalism during the last century.

THE HERMENEUTICAL FUNCTIONS OF BIBLICAL ANNOTATIONS

From the preceding, it should be clear that biblical annotations in modern Catholic and Protestant English-language Bibles are not humbly subservient to the biblical text. The debates over the legitimacy of annotation in early English Bibles during the 1500s and the later American Bible Society's policy against annotation during the 1800s and most of the 1900s, show that biblical annotations have been an abundant source of contention and conflict. Quite recently, literary scholars have begun to regard the annotation or footnote as something worthy of academic investigation, although scholars in theology, biblical studies, and religious studies have not yet looked closely at biblical annotations. Challoner's and Scofield's Bibles show that annotations have hermeneutical heft. They often recon-textualize and reconstrue biblical statements and teachings.

Another point is that biblical annotations serve varied functions. One way of understanding these functions is to see them in relation to the presuppositions or preunderstanding that devout readers bring to the biblical text, which may be broken down into five aspects. First, an assumption among Christians of all traditions is that the Bible is, or else contains and conveys, "the word of God." Readers expect to be able to understand what they are reading. If God has spoken to us, should we not be able to grasp the message? The Bible, regarded as divine revelation, ought to be clear. Second, readers consider the Bible to be consistent or harmonious with itself. The sacred text cannot serve as a rule for Christian faith and practice if its teachings clash with and cancel out one another. Third, the Bible is expected to be a source of moral guidance and instruction. The "good book" teaches one to do good. Passages in the Scriptures that appear to be

⁵⁸ David Harrington Watt, *The Private Hopes of American Fundamentalists and Evangelicals*, *Religion and American Culture* 1 (1991) 155–75, at 166–67.

ethically objectionable must be reconciled with accepted moral principles. Alternatively, if it is clear that a given passage departs from accepted moral principles, the interpreter must find reasons for asserting that the usual ethical rules do not apply in the case at hand. Fourth, the Bible is a homiletic text and tool—an incentive as well as a rulebook or guide. Christians look to the Bible for inspiration and encouragement to accomplish the tasks before them. As a spiritual incentive, the Bible encourages not only action and exertion but also attentiveness and patience. Fifth, Christians regard the Bible as the foundation of their faith and practice. A devout reader will be unnerved at finding a contradiction between biblically mandated practices and his or her own practices. Readers look into the text of the Bible to find support for rituals, doctrines, and familial and social practices to which they are accustomed. In sum, the devout reader looks for a biblical text that is clear, self-consistent, morally instructive, spiritually motivational, and supportive of contemporary Christian beliefs and practices.

Annotations are links between the biblical text and the reader's expectations in reading or studying the Bible. A given set of annotations is, in effect, a hermeneutical code for the reading of Scripture. At least five functions for annotations are distinguishable—*explanation*, *harmonization*, *exoneration*, *exhortation*, and *authorization*—and these functions correspond to the presuppositions of the devout reader. Explanation is needed to secure a clear text, harmonization to render a self-consistent text, exoneration to give a morally coherent and instructive text, exhortation to yield a spiritually motivational text, and authorization to provide a text that supports contemporary beliefs and practices.

Challoner is especially interested in authorizing the distinctive practices and teachings of Roman Catholicism, while Scofield focuses on harmonization—a corollary of the Fundamentalist teaching on biblical inerrancy. Challoner also practiced exoneration in his treatment of biblical characters. Other annotated Bibles, not discussed above, give attention to God's commandment in the Old Testament to destroy the Canaanites and to other features of the biblical text that readers might find morally objectionable. Academic Bibles such as *The Oxford Annotated Bible* and *The Cambridge Annotated Bible* deal mostly with explanation and, at least in their late-20th-century editions, they all but eliminate the element of exhortation that appears in most premodern annotations and in modern devotional Bibles. At the other end of the spectrum, many newer Bibles appearing since the 1980s—such as the *Women's Devotional Bible*, *Life Application Bible*, and *Life Recovery Bible*—contain notes consisting mostly in exhortation and devoid of academic explanation. Contemporary Bible editions, almost by definition, occupy a marketing niche. They target a selected group of Bible readers.

To sum up, biblical annotations are more significant for biblical interpretation and theological reflection and more varied in their functions than commonly realized. More research on the theologies of annotated Bibles needs to be done. A turn toward annotation certainly fits the current culture. We live in an age of commentators and commentary. DVDs today come with special tracks that allow us to hear a director's scene-by-scene commentary on a film, and VH1 broadcasts pop up music videos that provide annotations for the images on the screen. Today's futurists warn worried university professors that the era of books and texts is passing. Fear not—the era of annotations is just beginning.

