

PREFACE

In his ministry of some 37 years, from 1879 to 1916, the written material produced by Charles Taze Russell has been calculated at some 39,000 pages, an output of over 4 pages per day. His voluminous works contain comments on a wide variety of Scripture topics, giving specific insight into literally tens of thousands of Bible texts. However, since he wrote from a topical perspective, it has not always been easy to locate his teachings on particular verses.

Over the years some four attempts have been made to make this task of isolating his thoughts on specific Scriptures easier for the Bible student. Each of these attempts tried to be more exhaustive than its predecessor, and such is the aim of this current work.

In 1901, arrangements were made to produce a special Wide-Margin edition of the Linear Bible with the pertinent references to the five volumes of Scripture Studies then available, and the previous six years of Watch Tower magazines; printed as marginal notations next to the referenced text. This Bible also contained the text of both the Common, or King James, version and that of the Revised Version. Further details, about it can be found in the Watch Tower Reprints, pages 2850 and 3451.

In 1907, a private project by Clayton J. Woodworth, selecting specific interpretations from the six volumes of Scripture Studies, was produced by the International Bible Students Association, as part of a series of appendices to a new Bible Student's Bible. These appendices also included a Topical Index and an Instructor's Guide, compiled by Sr. Gertrude W. Siebert as well as a section on Difficult Texts by Bro. Woodworth. This edition was ready for distribution by October, 1907, and is announced on pages 3992-3993 and 4072 of the Watch Tower Reprints. There it is noted that Bro. Woodworth spent 7 hours a day for the six month period from November, 1906 to April, 1907 accumulating these comments.

In May of 1908 plans were announced for a second edition of this Bible, with an up-dated commentary by Bro. Woodworth that would include the Watch Tower magazines as well as the comments from the six volumes of Scripture Studies. This announcement can be found on page 4096 of the Reprints, as well as the announcement of a later printing on page 4852.

It is this 1908 edition that has become a standard reference work in many Bible Student libraries over the past 70 years and has gone through six reprintings in the past 16 years by the Chicago Bible Students Book Republishing Committee. The continuing demand for this volume is a fair indicator of its lasting popularity among Bible Students.

However, since this work only includes the writings of Pastor Russell through the year 1907, and does not include the many miscellaneous works which he wrote, it was deemed wise to consider an up-dating of this work. An additional reason was that many discrepancies were noted in earlier production, where the comment given could not be verified as accurate by referring to the citation noted. The current project, of which this Old Testament is part one, began over seven years ago. At that time a four-stage program was drawn up and put into operation.

The first phase was to recruit a team of some 50 brothers and sisters throughout the United States to carefully and systematically read through the Reprints from 1909 to 1916, digesting the material onto filing cards under Scripture headings. The miscellaneous writings of Pastor Russell were also included in these reading assignments. As a result, after one full year, some 20,000 to 25,000 specific comments were gleaned and filed in Scripture order. All texts referenced in the various indexes were then researched for additional comments.

In the second phase of the project, a team of four manuscript compilers was commissioned to

work from this input of new material and combine it with the older editions, verifying the accuracy of each comment selected. A set of guidelines were drawn up to insure objectivity in the selection of material for the new book.

The third phase, that of editing the manuscript, proved to be the most time-consuming, and the one that has delayed the project far beyond its original projected publication. An exhaustive editing procedure was devised. One master editor was appointed to review all of the material, checking for accuracy, objectivity and exhaustiveness. He was furnished with all of the original research material to assist him in this work.

Then one of a team of 13 secondary editors were also sent copies of the manuscript to check independently of the primary editor. The work of both of these editors was submitted to the project coordinators who digested their findings for the final editing.

Two elders of the Chicago Bible Students were commissioned to carry out the final editing procedure. The first of these was to review the combined work of the compiler, the master and secondary editors; and then to re-read all of the articles referenced in the various Scripture indices to the Reprints and the other writings of Pastor Russell, increasing the total number of comments. Then, the second of these final editors, was to review the entire work, including the additions of the first final editor.

The final phase was production which again involved many brethren in the tasks of actual typesetting, and also repetitive proof-reading and grammatical editing for conformity to punctuation and capitalization styles.

It is the result of this cumbersome process which you now hold in your hands, some 1127 pages of typewritten manuscript, representing 20,200 individual comments on the Old Testament alone, with a total of 27,659 references. This compares with 7,007 comments and 7,860 references in the current manual.

Several guidelines were established to seek for objectivity and uniformity in the work you have before you. To the degree to which these were followed, we trust that this work will accurately reflect the thinking of Pastor Charles Russell, the author of the works we were desiring to digest into commentary form.

Realizing that, in nearly 40 years of writing, there would not only be a progression of thought, but also a wide variety of ways of expressing thoughts which would open these writings to a variety of interpretations, it was sought to make this commentary as unbiased as possible. If conflicting thoughts, or words which indicated possible conflicts, were found, then both were to be included. The one exception to this rule was in those cases where there was a generally recognized change of viewpoint by the author, in which case only the latter views were included. An example of this is on the matter of the operation of the New Covenant, where the change of viewpoint was so extensively voiced in the years of 1909 and 1910.

The matter of how to handle material included in the over-all writings of Pastor Russell that were not from his pen, but contributed by others, was also considered. It was decided to include these comments, since their inclusion was evidently under the direction of Pastor Russell as the editor of the journal. However, whenever this was done it was denoted in the comments by an asterisk (*). Such comments were also included in the original Bible Students Manual. Exceptions to this rule were in those cases where a viewpoint was quoted by Pastor Russell for the specific point of disagreement—as in the opposing views given by Rev. White and Rev. Eaton in the debates found in the book, *Harvest Gleanings*. Excerpts from the book, “The Three Worlds,” found in *Harvest Gleanings*, are included without the asterisk, even though the actual authorship of this

book—whether by Pastor Russell or by N. H. Barbour is debatable. However, this portion was excerpted rather sparingly. All articles that were unsigned in the Reprints were assumed to be from the pen of Pastor Russell.

Excerpts from the old comments from the Newspaper Sermons of Pastor Russell, denoted by the symbol “N,” were excluded because they could not be verified. There are two exceptions to this in the book of Malachi which could be verified from the recent publication of these sermons in the book, Harvest Gleanings, Vol. 2. These references are identified by the symbol “NS,” for Newspaper Sermons, to distinguish them from excerpts from the first volume of Harvest Gleanings.

Pastor Russell’s complete familiarity with the Bible is often shown in his use of Biblical language in regular sentence structure. This usage is seldom accompanied by the citation of the texts referenced. For this reason it has been difficult to excerpt many of these comments, particularly in the years preceding 1909 that were not systematically researched. Therefore there may be many inadvertent omissions of significant comments, due to this problem.

Other significant omissions may be due to the fact that 1908 was not researched in phase one, because we were not aware, at that point in time, that it was not included in the original commentary. Also, as the work progressed in the final editing stage, it was found necessary to be more thorough in final research, a fact that was not realized in such early books as those of the Pentateuch.

While care was sought to use the exact words from the articles cited, this was not possible in a number of cases, and paraphrases were adopted to abbreviate the comment to the length sought for a volume of this type. It is hoped that the extensive editing procedure adopted for this volume will assure that these paraphrases accurately reflect the author in the writing cited.

One final problem was the handling of references to general typical pictures, where the specific scripture was not cited. In the earlier comments this was a common practice, though not necessarily reflecting the thoughts of Pastor Russell on that particular text. This is one area in which the current volume is also not totally consistent. Where the compilers or editors felt that there was general agreement on the general comment fitting the particular Scripture it was included, and where they felt that there was significant difference of opinion on its meaning in a particular Scripture, it was excluded. However, this admittedly leaves this area open to the subjective judgement of the editors.

The referencing of the comments to the pages on which they were cited was another area of concern. Abbreviated symbols were arbitrarily selected for each publication and are found on a separate page in the forepart of this volume. In the case of references from the six volumes of Scripture Studies and Tabernacle Shadows a page reference was deemed sufficient. In smaller books, such as the Question Book, Sermon Book and Overland Monthly, you will find, after a colon (:) a number which refers to the paragraph number on the page. In the case of a letter “T” it refers to the portion of a paragraph on the top of a page that carries over from the preceding page.

In the references to larger books, such as the Watch Tower Reprints, Harvest Gleanings or Convention Report Sermons, a slightly different system is used. There the number after the colon (:) refers, not to the paragraph number, but to a section number, as illustrated by the diagram herewith—each page being arbitrarily divided into six equal sections. This was done because there are a variety of methods of counting paragraphs where poems, indented Scriptures and long sub-headings are found.

Two additional peculiarities should be here noted. Because the page numbers of the newest edition of the Photo-Drama of Creation differ from that of the original, both are noted, separated by a slash (/), the old edition page number preceding the slash, and that of the newer edition following it. In the case of the book “What Pastor Russell Taught”, only references from the section

after page 323, written by Bro. Benjamin Barton, are included, since all of the other material is duplicated in the Watch Tower Reprints.

Since the various editions of the six volumes of Scripture Studies, printed by different publishers, may have slightly different page numbers, it was determined to use that which was closest to the original and appears in the majority of editions. If your edition varies, it should be found within a few pages of the page cited. The appearance of multiple citations for Volume 5 (E), has been dropped because the one edition that made such multiple entries necessary is virtually out of circulation.

The publishers of this current work are prayerfully hopeful that it will be a valuable tool to Bible Students everywhere as they seek more accurately to understand the Lord's words to us through the Bible. We trust that all will use it for the intention for which it is published, as a reference guide to original material and a key to the Bible, and not as an answer book or a replacement for the study of God's Holy Word itself.

Realizing well the failings of the human flesh and the enormity of the work itself, we recognize that occasional errors, typographical as well as unintentional misunderstandings of thought, may well occur in this work. For this we apologize, having sought to eliminate these to the best of our ability.

A great debt of gratitude is due to the many brethren who contributed to the labor of producing this volume and, while realizing that they labored freely out of their dedication to the Lord and the truths contained in these writings of Pastor Russell, nevertheless we wish to express our appreciation for their labors of love.

With the sincere hope that this volume, as well as that of the New Testament, which is still some years from completion, will be of value to you in your searching of the Scriptures to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, we place this work in your hands.

CHICAGO BIBLE STUDENTS
Book Republishing Committee

PREFACE II

It is with great joy that the publishers put forth the first of the two volume set of “Expanded Biblical Comments on the New Testament.” These books are designed as companions to the “Expanded Comments on the Old Testament,” printed some six years ago.

The same procedure of many hands being used to extract the voluminous comments of Charles Taze Russell that was employed in the former work, was used in this project as well. Once again, an effort was made to search all the writings of the late Pastor Russell in order to offer as complete a representation of his views as possible.

As in the Old Testament work, no attempt was made to bend his expressions to fit into a given doctrinal mold, but rather the individual comments, even when apparently contradictory, were let stand. This volume, as its companions, is not intended to be an “answer book,” but to be used as a reference work, directing the student to original source material.

Wherever possible, direct quotes were extracted. However, in many cases, to maintain the brevity required for a work of this magnitude, the thoughts had to be either paraphrased or condensed. Where the compilers made such condensations, the required ellipses were omitted for typographical clarity.

Writings by other authors than Pastor Russell, when a part of the books he edited, are included also in this volume. However an asterisk (*) is used in such cases to identify the fact that they were penned by other authors.

The different Gospel records of the life of our Lord contain many similar incidents. It was not possible to include the same references in each of these occurrences. Therefore, an appendix has been prepared showing the similar passages in parallel columns. By use of this appendix, the careful student will be able to locate all of the comments that apply to the given incident. Work on the remainder of the New Testament books will be continued, and the final volume will be produced as soon as practicable.

As in the former book of this series, the publishers are only too aware of the failings of their flesh, and realize that inadvertent errors may have crept into this manuscript. We sincerely apologize for such errors of omission or commission, assuring you of our efforts to prevent such mistakes.

We owe a large debt of gratitude to all the many brethren who sacrificed literally thousands of hours of their time to make this endeavor possible. Not only do we include here the researchers, editors and compilers in this expression of appreciation, but also the many others who were involved in typing, correcting and the various phases of production.

With these remarks, we entrust this work to your hands, hoping and praying that it will be of help to you in your continuing search of the Scriptures to prove “what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God.”

CHICAGO BIBLE STUDENTS
Book Republishing Committee
November 1, 1988

PREFACE III

After more than 14 years of research, organization and production by a large number of Bible Students, it is with gratitude and joy that we present this third volume of the “Expanded Biblical Comments: 1879-1916.”

The attempt to be thorough in this work led to a changed method of operation for the New Testament comments. A team of researchers painstakingly looked up every reference in the “Index of Scripture Citations,” of the Reprints, along with additional indices for the other writings of Charles Taze Russell.

These were then cross-checked by other workers with the thousands of comment cards prepared by a group of some 50 “readers” who extracted comments from the Reprints for the years of 1909 through 1916.

We refer the reader to the Preface of Volume 1 of this work for a detailed history of the project and explanation of the primary method involved in its accomplishment.

It was a feeling of deep respect for the scholarship and ministry of Charles Taze Russell that motivated this project initially. This respect has certainly been deepened in the minds of those involved as they noted the thoroughness and logic of this “wise and faithful servant.”

The durability and clarity of his vision were increasingly evident to those who had the privilege of working on this series of Commentaries.

The verse-by-verse format enables the student to benefit from both the topical method of Bible Study used by the author, and the contextual method he so highly recommended.

Further research is going on to determine the feasibility of a companion volume, collating the writings of Pastor Russell on some 75 to 100 Biblical topics, ranging from “Advent” to “Zion.”

Once again, an expression of appreciation is in order, not only to the more than 50 researchers and the compilers, but to the large number of assistants in the various stages of production. The cooperation of these brethren located in many cities throughout the United States demonstrates their dedication to a common vision.

But above all, our appreciation goes to our Heavenly Father for the provision of the vast “storehouse” of truth in the Bible, and to his Son, whose Second Advent marked the time of enlightenment, when truths “new and old” would be brought forth from this “storehouse.”

Finally, we would like to once again state our desire that this work not be used as an “answer book,” but as a research tool, an index, directing the scholar to original source material. And even then, that the reader verify the accuracy of the concepts presented by checking them with the Bible.

To quote Pastor Russell himself, “Truth-seekers should empty their vessels of the muddy waters of tradition and fill them at the fountain of truth—God’s Word. And no religious teaching should have weight except as it guides the truth-seeker to that fountain.” A12

Recognizing our fallibility, we request that any of the users of this work who find errors of commission or omission please notify the publishers so that these can be corrected in future editions.

With these few words, we entrust this Commentary to your hands, hoping and praying that it will be a useful implement in your continued search for an ever-clearer understanding of God’s Word and His divine Will; and that you, too, may rejoice the more in the ministry of “Present Truth” which the Lord has showered upon us at this end of the Gospel age.

In appreciation of the privilege of serving the brethren of “the household of faith,”