

# **SIMPLE STUDIES IN ROMANS**

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Simple studies in Romans by William L. Pettingill

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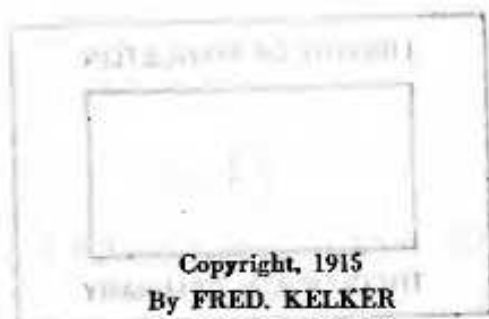
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**WILLIAM L. PETTINGILL**

**SIMPLE STUDIES  
IN ROMANS**



ADDITIVE SERIES  
OF  
KELKER



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Harrisburg, Pa.

## FOREWORD

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It is fitting that Romans should be located at the beginning of the New Testament epistles, because of its fundamental character, setting forth as it does in logical order of sequence the things that are elementary in "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

In these studies the purpose is to help the children of God to a clear understanding of the wonderful truths set forth in Romans, to the end that they may be established. In the final chapter of the book it is declared that God is able to establish His people, and it is pointed out that His means of thus establishing them is according to what Paul calls his own gospel, "and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery." Paul's gospel, including "the revelation of the mystery," finds its beginnings in Romans. The body of truth revealed to Paul had been "kept secret since the ages began, but now is made manifest," starting with Romans (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:5-7). The Thessalonian epistles, and some others, were written before this book, but it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Holy Spirit has superintended the arrangement of the books of the New Testament, and that among the epistles, Romans is rightly first.

The late Dr. Stifler, whose admirable outline we have followed to a considerable extent, used to tell his students that the chief difficulty connected with the study of Romans was that the Lord's people would not believe it. "It is not," said he, "that the book is hard to understand, but that so many who read it refuse to believe what it says." Doubtless this is the main difficulty with all Bible study: how can we understand what God has said unless we begin by believing it? May God Himself bring us to this study in the right attitude of mind and heart, and deliver us from the sin of unbelief, "which doth so easily beset us!"

For we may not forget that this book speaks to us with authority. Penned by the accredited representative of the risen Christ, it is as if He Himself had written it. The words we read here are God's words, written by God's man as he is moved by the Holy Spirit. With all the Scriptures, they are God-breathed (2 Tim. 3: 16).

Dr. C. I. Scofield says (*"Correspondence Course"*):

"Not one word of the New Testament had been written when Christ departed from the earth; but we have His express authority for receiving it as the inspired Word of God. (a) He said plainly that He would leave the revelation of truth unfinished (Jno. 16: 12); (b) He promised that this revelation should be completed after His departure (Jno. 16: 13); (c) He chose certain persons to receive such additional revelations, and to be His witnesses, preachers and teachers after His departure (Jno. 16: 13; 15: 27; Ac. 1: 8; Mt. 28: 19, 20;

Ac. 9: 15-17); (d) Knowing beforehand what they would write, He gave their words precisely the same authority as His own (Mt. 10: 14, 15; Lk. 10: 16; Jno. 13: 20; 17: 20)."

All this, of course, applies equally to the writings of Paul, who received his commission from the hands of the risen and glorified Christ. Paul comes to us with the very words of Him Who is Head over all things to the Church. To again quote Dr. Scofield:

"We conclude, upon the testimony of Christ, and of the writers themselves, that the Scriptures are verbally inspired—that the Holy Spirit gave the words. The notion that 'the inspiration is in the concept,' and not in the words, is contrary to the express declaration of the witnesses who **knew**."

Our epistle falls naturally into four great parts, which may be indicated and easily remembered by the use of four key-words, namely:

I. **SIN**. Here we are told the naked truth about sin; here we see the awful guilt of man, and his utter helplessness. This division reaches to chapter 3: 20, where every mouth is stopped and the whole world brought in guilty before God.

II. **RIGHTeousNESS**. Having shown the desperate need resulting from the ravages of the dread disease of sin, the Spirit of God comes to pour oil and wine into the wounds, and to show how our need is fully met in the gospel. This division extends to the end of the 8th chapter.



III. VINDICATION. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 are a vindication of the ways of God in His dealings with Israel.

IV. WALK. Growing out of the doctrines of the epistle, and based upon them, are the exhortations of the final chapters, 12 to 16, calling upon Christians to walk in the way of holiness. This is ever the Holy Spirit's method: first He tells us the truth about our position, and then He seeks to bring us practically into conduct befitting that position. For example, in Eph. 5:8 it is written:

"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

Indeed, this should be the object of all Bible study. Truth itself is valueless except it be transmuted into life. "Knowledge," by itself, "puffeth up." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

## PROLOGUE

(Chapter 1: 1-17)

The prefatory paragraphs in the first seventeen verses of chapter 1, are two:

### I. THE SALUTATION (1-7).

1. **"Paul, Jesus Christ's slave"** (1). This is the true meaning of the opening phrase. The word translated "servant" in the common versions is literally "bondman," that is "slave." Thus this man at once identifies himself: he is the Lord's slave; he has taken His yoke upon him, and is His willing bondservant. He has known the bondage of sin, but this is a bondage of love. The yoke he now wears is easy, and the burden is light (Mat. 11: 28, 29).

2. **"A called apostle"** (1). Not merely "called an apostle," and much less "called to be an apostle." Many of the commentators, and even the translators, break down here. Most of them have "called to be," and the Twentieth Century New Testament goes so far as to render it "called to become an apostle." Alford points out that in Paul's case, his call to the apostleship was a very special one. He was "called, and that to the very highest office, of an apostle; and even

more—among the apostles, not one by original selection, but one **specially called.**" And on this point Bengel says :

"The rest of the apostles were educated by long intercourse with Jesus, and were called first to follow Him, and obey Him, then put forth as apostles. Paul, before-time a persecutor, was suddenly made an apostle by special calling. In like manner, the Jews were God's people by promise; the Greeks, by simple calling. Thus the **called apostle** had a similitude and relation to the **called saints**" (verse 7).

Paul, then, was an apostle by call, even the call of the risen Christ. It becomes us, therefore, to heed well the message he brings us. He speaks, not as a mere messenger, but as an apostle—a "legate," as Murdock puts it. The word apostle means "a sent one," but in its New Testament sense it stands for one who is sent clothed with full authority to speak and act for the divine Sender.

3. "**Separated unto the gospel of God**" (1). Paul had no difficulty in classifying himself; he knew where he belonged, and to Whom. He was the Lord's slave, and his particular business was in connection with "the gospel of God"—God's good news. He was "a chosen vessel," dedicated to a certain particular use (Ac. 9: 15). His work was marked out for him even from his birth (Gal. 1: 15), though it took a long time for him to discover that fact.