

PREFACE

In 1996 and 1998 College Press published the two volumes of Jack Cottrell's commentary on Romans as part of *The College Press NIV Commentary* series. Immediately the volumes received deservedly high praise. As a writer Cottrell has the relatively unusual ability to present his ideas clearly and simply. Even when dealing with complex issues he can cut to the very marrow of the matter. He takes great care to wrestle with the text until the meaning of Paul's words — God's words — is accurately exposed. In the process of explaining the text, Cottrell also interacts with other writers assessing their positions, attacking their weaknesses and confirming their contributions to the understanding of the text. All the while he is concerned about theology: theology that comes directly from Romans to be sure; however, he is also concerned about the theology that comes to Romans from the rest of Scripture. Cottrell also writes from the unique perspective of one who has long been a part of the Restoration Movement.

In 2003 Dru Ashwell, executive editor of College Press & HeartSpring Publishing, approached me about the possibility of reducing the two-volume set to a single volume. The primary motivation behind this change is the desire to see greater distribution and use of what we consider to be a very important contribution from one of the Restoration Movement's most popular contemporary writers. The simple fact is more people are likely to benefit from a single volume on Romans than a double volume with its increased cost and depth of material. However, from the beginning we agreed that all the material ought to be included in the abridged version by way of an electronic copy. Thus we have the best of all possibilities: an abridged version of the commentary that also includes the original, unabridged version.

A quick comparison will show that the primary changes made to reduce the original version to a single volume include the following. We have omitted many quotations from other writers and commentaries. When Cottrell discusses alternative understandings and positions on the text, we have reduced them or omitted them entirely. Many other explanations and notes from the original have also been summarized or removed. *However*, here it is important to notice that where this new, abridged version departs from the original, there is a disk symbol [⦿] which directs one to the original two volumes. (For example, ⦿I:26 indicates page 26 of volume one in the original.) It is our collective

Preface to the Combined Volume

desire that everyone who uses this abridged volume might frequently consult the unabridged version for further information and might come to know fully the Gospel of Grace that is the Epistle to the Romans.

Terry Chaney