

“A Mighty Man
in the Scriptures”



Dr. C. I. Scofield

By JOHN G. RIDLEY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Much of the information in this booklet has been gleaned from "The Story of the Scofield Reference Bible" by Frank E. Gaebelein, published by Oxford University Press, New York. This book, I am informed, is now out of print and no longer available.

Permission has been graciously given by Oxford University Press, New York, to quote from Mr. Gaebelein's book and to reproduce the picture of Dr. C. I. Scofield for the cover. Grateful appreciation is thus expressed to the publishers.

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"A Mighty Man in the Scriptures"

*A survey of the life and ministry of
Dr. C. I. Scofield,*

Editor of the "Scofield Reference Bible".

By Rev. JOHN G. RIDLEY, M.C.

On Christmas Day, 1929, my good wife presented me with a bulky, interleaved Scofield Reference Bible. Today, after 35 years of constant use, it still holds pride of place amongst all the Bibles in my library. It has been read through and meditated upon many times. Some of its pages have faded almost beyond recognition; twice it has been re-bound, and now it needs a third effort to hold its faded pages together.

Long since, the dear old book should have been placed on the "retired list" and given a quiet corner in one of the shelves surrounding an overloaded desk. But no! as Goliath's sword to David, so that old Bible to this writer—*"There is none like that; give it me."* Let it sit on the right hand of its owner still. He is thoroughly at home with that Bible. It is his

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dearest friend in the realm of books. It has counselled him down the long years and, please God, it will counsel him to the end of his earthly race.

Even ten years before that Christmas gift was given, a smaller Scofield Reference Bible was the guide of his more youthful years; girding him with messages in his one and only pastorate, and giving him many a gem of comfort in seasons of suffering and bush-mission service.

Thus, for forty-five years, this writer has found the Scofield Reference Bible one of his richest treasures in the realm of his Christian life and long ministry of Evangelism.

Who Then Was Scofield?

In view of the above introduction, any reader may well ask the question, "*Who then was Scofield?*"

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, the Editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, was born in 1843 in Lenawee, Michigan, U.S.A. In his early years, his family moved to the South and settled in Tennessee. His parents attended the Episcopal Church and were ardent Protestants, but Cyrus, while attending that Church, never made any confession of faith in Christ.

In his late teens the Civil War commenced, and Cyrus enlisted early under the Confederate flag. He continued to serve in the Army of the South throughout those four fierce years of

conflict with courage and distinction, being awarded the Confederate Cross of Honour.

Thus, like many another Christian, Scofield crossed the threshold from boyhood to manhood as a soldier, mercifully spared through battle-flame and fire to fulfil a divinely appointed destiny in distant days ahead.

Success and Failure

With the war experience behind him, Cyrus Scofield, in his early twenties, studied law in the office of a leading St. Louis firm. He progressed rapidly and in due time was admitted to the Kansas Bar.

Going from strength to strength, he served a term in the State Legislature, and then was appointed United States Attorney for Kansas by President Grant. After two years of service as U.S. Attorney, he moved back to St. Louis as a practising lawyer and built up a flourishing business.

In 1879, fourteen years after the Civil War closed, he would have been considered a very successful lawyer, with a prosperous future ahead.

However, there was a fatal flaw in his character, which was beginning to forecast final failure to himself and others—*he was a hard drinker*. Let us quote his own words:—

"I was a drunken lawyer in the city of St. Louis. I would have fought anyone that charged me with being a drunken lawyer, but I was one nevertheless."

Such was the sinful shadow of failure which had cast its gloom over Cyrus Scofield as he reached the age of 37 years.

The Great Conversion

Then came, by the grace of God, *the great conversion*, referred to by McCall Barbour as "*a wonderful story of the power of Christ to cure even those who are of great intellectual ability, but who, nevertheless, are fast fettered by the chains of vice and sin.*"

Enter Thomas S. McPheeters, Christian businessman of St. Louis. He was one of Scofield's clients, and a warm friendship had developed between the two men. A business session had just finished between the lawyer and his client, and the latter was leaving the office when, with hand on the door-knob, McPheeters turned and exclaimed: "Scofield, I am the biggest coward on earth."

"Why, Tom, what do you mean? I never had you down as a coward."

"Well, for a whole year I have had a question in my mind that I wanted to ask you, but have been afraid to put it to you."

"Tom, come back here and sit down, and ask me any question you like."

"Scofield, I want to ask you why are you not a Christian?"

After a considerable pause, the lawyer quietly replied: "Well, Tom, does not the Bible say something about no drunkards having a place in heaven? You know I am a hard drinker."

"You haven't answered my question, Scofield. Now tell me, *why are you not a Christian?*"

"I have always been a nominal Episcopalian, you know, Tom, but I do not recall ever having been shown how to become a Christian."

"Will you sit here for a few minutes until I show you how?" asked McPheeters, as he took a New Testament from his pocket.

Calmly the businessman read to the lawyer some of the great salvation texts from his well-worn Testament—John 3 : 16; 6 : 37; 10 : 27-28; Acts 13 : 38-39, and others. Closing the book, he said to the lawyer:

"Now, Scofield, *how does a man become a Christian?*"

"I judge he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him as his own Saviour."

"Right! And now will you do it?"

"Well, Tom, I will think about it," was the evasive answer.

"Scofield, you have thought about it long enough. I ask you now, will you take the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?"

After a solemn pause, came the simple but supreme answer: "*I will.*"

Together the two men dropped on their knees, and, as Scofield said long afterwards, "*I received the Son of God as my Saviour, passing from death unto life.* And, praise His name, He has kept me from that moment to this. . . . Instantly the chains were broken, never to be forged again. The passion for drink

was taken away. Don't say he strove with his drink sin and came off victor. He did nothing of the kind. Divine power did it, wholly of grace. *To Christ be all the glory.*"

Scofield's Early Ministry

Soon after his remarkable conversion, Cyrus Scofield came under the impressive influence of one of the greatest Bible teachers of his time, Dr. James H. Brookes, who was then Pastor of a big Presbyterian Church in St. Louis. This influence inspired the young convert to make an intensive study of the Scripture, while giving himself, likewise, to fervent witness amongst railroad men.

His success in this witnessing work moved the Superintendent of Congregational Home Missions to invite him to become Pastor of the New Congregational Church in Dallas, Texas. In 1882 Scofield commenced pastoral ministry at Dallas, with twelve members, and laboured fervently in Bible teaching and evangelism until 1895, when, with a church membership of 551, he resigned, under the earnest urge of Mr. D. L. Moody, to accept the call of the Congregational Church at East Northfield, Massachusetts.

D. L. Moody, greatest evangelist of his generation and keen judge of human and spiritual character, had long fixed his heart on Scofield. They had met during the former's evangelistic campaign in St. Louis, soon after

the latter's conversion, and the evangelist had quickly recognised the outstanding ability and gifts of the converted lawyer. Thus, in the long run, Moody secured Scofield as his own pastor, and also as the Bible teacher of the students at Northfield and Mt. Hermon Schools. To Moody's vital vision, Scofield was the ideal teacher and preacher for the mass of young people in the great Northfield centre.

Moody's confidence was not misplaced. Scofield remained at Northfield for seven years, and during that time Moody was called to his heavenly home and royal reward on December 22, 1899.

It was Dr. Scofield who conducted the brief family service at Moody's house on the frosty December day of the funeral. Again, it was Dr. Scofield who had charge of the great public service in the afternoon. Over the years, we may listen-in and hear Scofield's voice announcing the opening hymn, "The Sands of Time Are Sinking." Again, it is Scofield's voice giving forth the first and main tribute: "We are not met, dear friends, to mourn a defeat but to celebrate a triumph. He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Here was no anti-climax." So right on with the secrets of Moody's power unto the crowning utterance: "I like to think of D. L. Moody in Heaven. I like to think of him with his Lord, and with Elijah, David, Paul, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and Finney. Farewell for a

little time, Greatheart! May a double portion of the Spirit be vouchsafed to us who remain."

Yes, and it is Scofield's voice finally pronouncing the Benediction at the grave on the crest of Round Top at eventide.

Foremost in the honoured group that took part in Moody's funeral services—Dr. R. A. Torrey, Dr. H. G. Weston, Bishop W. F. Malalien, Dr. A. T. Pierson and John Wanamaker—was Dr. C. I. Scofield.

Truly, Moody's confidence was well confirmed in his selection of Dr. C. I. Scofield to be President of Northfield Bible Training School, and his own personal Pastor and friend.

Dr. Richard Day places Scofield third in a "group of powerful Christian leaders," who were Moody's "close friends," and who, in turn, "felt somehow D. L. Moody was a mystic centre of power for his age."

The Reference Bible

Dr. Arno Gaebelein, profound Biblical scholar and Editor of "Our Hope," tells us that "the birthplace of this great work (The Scofield Reference Bible) was Sea Cliff, Long Island," at a Conference in 1902. There Dr. Scofield spoke of producing such a work, and talked long with Dr. Gaebelein on the outline of his plans. His idea, according to Arno Gaebelein's son, Frank E. Gaebelein, was to produce "an edition of the English Bible that would be built upon a connected series of references, and

that would set forth systematically the great evangelical truths, along with the prophetic teaching that had, in the latter years of the nineteenth century, been rediscovered by a number of prominent pastors and Bible expositors."

It was a titanic task to attempt such a work in advanced years and with irregular health; but Cyrus I. Scofield had "a debt of love" to pay to his Saviour and Lord, and he, being assured of the leading of the Holy Spirit and the backing of many of his colleagues, went to work, with a willing heart and masterly mind surrendered for such service.

For seven long years Dr. Scofield bent his back, and brain, and knees, to this supreme service of his redeemed lifetime. Long periods were spent at Oxford, England, and Montreux, Switzerland, in consultations with leading British and Continental scholars.

Then other periods were spent with American scholars and in research work in great libraries.

Three times the Board of Consulting Editors met together, and at the final meeting the entire work on the Reference Bible was reviewed in every aspect.

Let us glance at that Board in its final session. Each man was a distinguished Bible scholar and a devoted Christian minister. Each had offered advice, guidance and criticism to the Editor-in-chief. Now the Reference Bible-to-be passes in review before them.

The labours of their leader are revealed in their strength or weakness. The long chain of references have to be examined; the Bible outlines, book by book, pass before them; the paragraph headings (so vital a help to students and ordinary readers), and the hundreds of notes must all march on in review.

Finally, after adjustments and discussions have ceased, these honoured men of God declare that they are willing to permit their names to appear as Consulting Editors to The Scofield Reference Bible:

Rev. Henry G. Weston, D.D., LL.D., President Crozer Theological Seminary;

Rev. James M. Gray, D.D., Dean of Moody Bible Institute;

Rev. W. J. Erdman, D.D., Bible teacher and author;

Rev. Pro. W. G. Moorehead, D.D., President of Xenia Theological Seminary;

Rev. Elmore Harris, D.D., President of Toronto Bible Institute;

Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D., Editor of "Missionary Review of the World";

Arno C. Gaebelein, D.D., Editor of "Our Hope."

So The Scofield Reference Bible was passed, and went forth to the American Branch of the Oxford University Press as its first important book. Twenty-one years later, in 1930, The Scofield Reference Bible became the first book published by the Oxford University Press, New

York, to attain a sale of one million copies. Since then, we are told, the total sales of this unique edition of the Holy Scriptures have several times exceeded the million mark.

Attack and Defence

Mr. Frank Gaebelein assures us that it "would have been quite foreign to a man of C. I. Scofield's judgment and common sense, to attribute to his work anything approaching perfection."

After all, few commentators of Scripture would dare to do so; and Dr. Scofield's notes place him in that circle of blessed souls who have endeavoured to help ordinary Christian people by a commentary on Scripture.

Some people have found fault with Dr. Scofield because of the note at the head of the introduction page—"The Scofield Reference Bible." Yet, glancing to our left, we notice six valuable books in this library which bear the title "*Henry's Bible*." Never once have we heard a thrust against Matthew Henry for permitting his Commentary to be thus titled; yet we fear Scofield, for a far lesser fault, if fault at all, has often been attacked.

Soon after the Reference Bible was published, the following noble men of God, amongst others, paid high tributes to its value: Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, world evangelist and Moderator of the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church of U.S.A.; Dr. S. Parkes Cad-

man, Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas, former Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford; and Dr. Floyd Tomkins, Rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Philadelphia.

Following in the train of these good men, for twenty years, or more, the Scofield Bible was a precious gift to most young converts. Many of the ministers of this writer's younger years thought and spoke well of Scofield's notes. It was, in those days, considered *good help* to give a young Christian Scofield's "*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*" or his "*Prophecy Made Plain*." The latter book was warmly reviewed by many evangelical magazines. "*The Life of Faith*" stated: "On all subjects relating to Scripture, Dr. Scofield is a sure guide, and this work can be confidently recommended." "*Tongue and Pen*" declared: "It is the most concise, clear, and scriptural exposition we have read." Spurgeon's old paper, "*Sword and Trowel*," commented: "It is a book written with solemn earnestness and powerful appeal." Dr. Reuben A. Torrey, world evangelist and firm friend of Scofield, crowned all by saying, "A standard work on Prophecy, written by one of the leading scholars of the day."

Yes, in those earlier days, a Scofield Reference Bible or Scofield's books were highly esteemed by most of those evangelical ministers who followed in the wake of Moody's mighty evangelism.

However, some adverse criticism was not wanting from the first, and this has greatly increased during the past twenty-five years. So fierce has the attack become in some quarters that Dr. Scofield, his Bible and books have all been banned with such bitterness that one can almost sense a charge of "heresy" against this saintly man of God. Nevertheless, an early critic of the Reference Bible, who may not have agreed with his views on prophecy, yet testified: "On the great fundamental issues of the Christian religion, such as the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the deity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of the Body and the life everlasting, *it* (The Scofield Reference Bible) *rings true as a bell.*"

A Noble Defence

In the storm of attack hurled against The Scofield Reference Bible in its middle life, there arose a dynamic defender, whose valiant defence should suffice for every sincere lover of truth to know that he is not "following cunningly devised fables" in his love for, and appreciation of, The Scofield Reference Bible.

Doctor I. M. Haldeman, honoured Pastor of the First Baptist Church, New York, for nigh on fifty years, and a warm friend of Rev. William Lamb, of Australia, was questioned as to his views of The Scofield Reference Bible.

Immediately, he turned to his fine gift copy of The Scofield Bible and gave deep consideration to, and examination of, Dr. Scofield's notes. Following that, this great minister of Christ spoke out with strong and stalwart words:

"Those notes revealed a saturated knowledge of the Bible, consciousness of it as God-breathed, and made manifest beyond question that Dr. Scofield has been possessed and moved by the mind of Christ in writing them.

"The truth is presented in such simplicity, directness and daylight clarity, that it is absolutely illuminating. Whole sweeps of truth are set forth with such compactness, such concreteness of expression, that there is not a waste word, and yet, the unmodified wholeness of the Bible reaches you, and you know it is a 'thus saith the Lord'.

"After a study of these notes I am prepared to say, *it is impossible to put any Bible Commentary or Exposition I know (and I know and have all that are worth knowing) in comparison with Dr. Scofield's as such.*

"To print, to send broadcast the statement that the Scofield Bible contains a 'grievous misrepresentation,' a 'vilification of the holy law of God'; to publish abroad that Dr. Scofield's notes are the result of an 'infatuation,' by his own 'theory'; that what he teaches in these notes is a 'fabrication,' a 'concoction,' something not 'derived' from the Bible, but 'imposed' upon the Bible; to give utterance and wide publicity

to such denunciation of a book beloved by thousands is, as I conceive it, not only a denunciation but *an unworthy and baseless slander.*

"As I have gone through these notes, not only have I found a blessed clearness in setting forth the truth of God, the exaltation of Christ as redeeming Saviour, Lord, and very God, but a worshipful reverence of the Bible, even to the letter of it, as *the supreme authority*, the tribunal from which there can be no appeal, the tribunal to which Dr. Scofield submits his writings and by which he wishes them to be judged.

"In the nearly fifty years' pastorate of the same widely known Church, here in this great city of New York, I have had a perfect opportunity to see the result of this teaching, not only as I have been privileged to give it by voice and pen, but as The Scofield Bible and Dr. Scofield's own personal teaching have brought it home to the people.

"I have no hesitation in committing myself to the unreserved statement that if every member of every genuine Christian Church possessed a Scofield Bible, read the footnotes, studied and searched prayerfully the Scriptures to which Dr. Scofield directs them, the Christians in that Church would be a unit in 'the faith once for all delivered,' joying in the Bible as the sure Word of God, and constituting a Church with the hearing ear; a Church in which the preacher would find himself in an atmosphere of atten-

tion from an audience of 'listeners'; in an atmosphere, an environment, that would compel him to bring forth all he knew of the divine theme, and to give the best of which his mind was capable in transmitting the Word of Life.

"Modernism would wither in such a Church. Nay! Modernism could not enter it, it would stumble and fall down in its own shame on the threshold. With such a Bible-fed membership, that Church would become a fountain of spiritual life in its community; a rebuke to mere religiousness and self-satisfied materialism. . . .

"Let any Christian recognise the 'Dispensational' teaching which the Scofield Bible so richly unfolds, and he will learn to read the Bible intelligently, with light from Heaven flowing across each page into his soul, till his mind will be content only as he gives out to others what he, himself, has found in this divinely-wrought casket—the *infallible Word of God*."

Ring down the curtain and close the case for the defence! Dr. Haldeman, in his matured age, experience and honour, has spoken for the thousands, or millions, who have found in The Scofield Reference Bible great spiritual spoil to the enrichment of the life of faith, hope and love.

The Home-Call

A few years after the Reference Bible was safely launched on the sea of literature, and the chief task of his lifetime was behind him, Dr.

Scofield was heard to say: "I am 71 years old, and I want to tell you I am not looking and waiting for death; I may pass to Christ that way, *but I am waiting and looking for Him.*"

The Second Coming of Christ was the longed-for goal of his Christian life. He studied, he preached, he wrote with that great event ever in view.

However, it was not to be just as he desired. He will see the blessed Advent, but from the higher angle: "*Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*" Scofield's body "sleeps in Jesus," but "*this great man and mighty,*" as one called him, is already "*With Christ, which is far better.*" And "when Christ, who is (his) life, shall appear; then shall he also appear (or be manifest) with Him in Glory."

In an old copy of "The Advent Herald," of 1921, there was a brief, but beautiful, tribute to Cyrus I. Scofield, headed: "*A Mighty Man in the Scriptures.*" We venture to close this message with some excerpts from that worthy writer:

"As the bells of the Churches were calling the worshippers from far and near to the various sanctuaries, the angels of God were hovering over the death-bed of the saintly Scofield, to bear the tired warrior to his eternal rest. Lord's Day morning, July 24, 1921, at eleven o'clock, the soul of *this great man and mighty* was

delivered from the body of humiliation and passed into the presence of the Lord. . . .

"Few men have done more to open up the treasures of the Word of God to the average Bible student, and his memory will be ever fragrant to all lovers of the Book. It was the lot of comparatively few to know him personally, but thousands upon thousands knew him through The Scofield Reference Bible, to which he devoted the best days of his life. He passed to his reward in a good old age. *Pastor, Prophet, Teacher, Evangelist and Friend, farewell till the breaking of the day!*"

For the sake of "the thousands upon thousands" of this generation who know far less of Dr. C. I. Scofield than "the thousands upon thousands" of his own day and generation, this brief message has been written. Yes, and written by one of the thousands of his own day who would ever acknowledge an abiding debt of gratitude and brotherly love to *Dr. C. I. Scofield* for his great "*labour of love*" in producing "*The Scofield Reference Bible.*"

May the Divine Author of the Holy Bible bless this message to every reader—and to His great Name be the Glory, now and for ever!