

Conscientious Objection to MILITARY SERVICE

**A MANUAL DESIGNED TO ASSIST CHRISTADELPHIAN
YOUNG PEOPLE FACING THE PROSPECT OF A
NATIONAL SERVICE CALL-UP**

Christadelphian Scripture Study Service



Foreword

The world is again moving inexorably towards global war. This time we expect the coming conflagration to be interrupted and concluded by divine intervention and the Kingdom of God to be ushered in. Whether the prevalence of "wars and rumours of wars" will necessitate another National Service call-up in this country no-one can say with any certainty, but recently there have been many loud calls from influential groups to reintroduce National Service Training for young people in Australia. If it does come, National Service Training in the future is likely to involve females as well as males (a legacy of the recent equal rights campaign). The daunting prospect of all our young men and women facing the ballot and ultimately the courts to defend their conscience is now upon us. Now is the time for Christadelphian young people to be preparing for that eventuality.

Shortly after the change of government in Australia at the end of 1972 the National Service Act was repealed and struck off the statute books, but its re-enactment into law would only be a formality in the event of National Service Training being reintroduced. The Act is frequently referred to herein for it is sure to be the basis for any new law enacted in the future.

These notes have been written to assist Christadelphian young people to prepare themselves to stand before the courts of the land and give a good confession of their faith and the reasons why we must stand aloof from the politics of this present evil world. The subject is developed from the grounds of our separation, through our relationship to the state and the issues surrounding military service, to the practical matters involved in a court appearance. It is in the final chapter that perhaps the most important point of all is made; namely, that no amount of knowledge and preparation can make up for the most vital of all ingredients in every case – the genuineness of the Applicant manifested by his consistency in living the life required by the Truth.

How many of our young people stand ready today to have their personal lives probed deeply and mercilessly by an experienced Crown Prosecutor? How many could confidently detail to the court the manner in which they spend their leisure hours, or have a period of their lives analysed hour by hour, week by week, to see if they are living in accordance with the principles they say they espouse?

Should you not feel ready for this, some serious thinking and preparation is urgently called for. It is the prayer of the Publishers that this booklet will, despite its limitations, contribute something to the attempts of Christadelphian young people to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet.3:15).

J.A. Cowie

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Pilgrims and Strangers

DEFINITION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

According to the *New Imperial Reference Dictionary* a conscientious objector is "one who objects on grounds of conscience, especially to Military service". Conscience is defined as "inmost thought, moral sense, scrupulousness". These contemporary definitions go only part of the way towards explaining the Christadelphian position. Anyone, religious or non-religious may, under the terms of the National Service Act, plead conscience when confronted with military service, without any real basis for so doing except humanitarian considerations or pacifist convictions.

The Christadelphian position has no such origin. Our conscientious objection to military service does not spring from natural feelings of revulsion towards war or a sense of humanitarian compassion. Its basis is the revealed will of God as contained in His word. That will is law to the Christadelphian, who having come to know it, is then called upon to obey its requirements. The Divine will becomes his conscience, governing and testing his manner of life and his every action.

It is precisely because of his knowledge and obedience to the Divine will that the Christadelphian is placed in the position of a Stranger and a Pilgrim in society. He is compelled to stand apart from the ungodly and unscriptural principles and practices of men and governments, and eschew involvement in their political aims, worldly ambitions and conflicts. His conscientious objection is not therefore to military service, but to any form of involvement in the organisations of man which require of him service contrary to the principles he has espoused.

In Australia the existence of conscientious objection to military service is now fully recognised and is enshrined in Section 29A of the National Service Act 1951-1973. Clause (1) states, "A person whose conscientious beliefs do not allow him to engage in any form of military service is so long as he holds those beliefs exempt from liability to render service under this Act."

In defining a conscientious belief clause (5) states: "For the purpose of this Section, a conscientious belief is a conscientious belief whether the ground of the belief is or is not of a religious character and whether the belief is or is not part of the doctrines of a religion."

Thus, while the Act provides for conscientious objection on almost any grounds, the onus is on the applicant to prove that he genuinely holds such beliefs. This is where the Christadelphian position,

properly upheld, reveals its true strength. The purpose of the following pages is to restate and highlight that strength.

THE PILGRIM STATUS OF THE ISRAEL OF GOD

In his opening salutation to "the strangers scattered abroad" the Apostle Peter clearly defines the status of the True Israel (1 Pet. 1:2). His first Epistle was addressed to his brethren in Christ among the Jewish Diaspora (the word translated 'scattered' in the salutation) who were suffering persecution on account of their beliefs.

Peter describes them as "strangers", using the Greek word *parepidemos*, which is formed by the preposition *para*, indicating something in close proximity and generally meaning, "beside, or alongside of"; and *epidemos*, from *epidemeo*, signifying "to sojourn as a stranger among another people" (Acts 2:10; 17:21). Thus, *parepidemos* means as Grimm-Thayer define it, "One who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives; hence a stranger, sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner".

The same word is translated "pilgrim" in 1 Pet. 2:11. A pilgrim spiritually defined is one "journeying through life as a stranger in this world" (New Imperial Reference Dictionary).

In the same verse (1 Pet. 2:11) the word "stranger" is the Greek *paroikos*, signifying "a sojourner, an alien" (Liddell & Scott); "a temporary resident" (Young); "a stranger, foreigner, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship" (Grimm-Thayer), as may be seen from its use in Acts 7:6 ("sojourn"); Acts 7:29 ("stranger"); and Eph. 2:19 ("foreigners"). The verb *paroikeo* is similarly used in Luke 24:18 ("stranger"), and Heb. 11:19 ("sojourned").

The words *parepidemos* ("strangers", "pilgrims") and *paroikos* ("stranger") describe the true pilgrim. One who is always, wherever he dwells, absent from his own land, but who will one day come to his own land – the land of his inheritance. Wherever the terms "stranger and pilgrim" occur in scripture this fact is borne out – see Heb. 11:13; Gen. 23:4 (Lxx); 1 Chron. 29:10-15; Ps. 39:12; Lev. 25:23. In this last reference the fact that Israel in possession of the Land promised to their Fathers were still regarded by God as "strangers and sojourners with Me", emphasises the truth that a greater destiny awaited them.

The saints to whom Peter wrote were exhorted to remain true to their pilgrim status whatever sufferings and persecutions might come upon them. Their very status as strangers and pilgrims, for conscience sake, would bring persecution, but would also result in the glorious destiny which has been reserved for the true Israel of God (1 Pet. 1:4-9). Note Peter's use of Lev. 11:44-45 and Ex. 19:4-6 in relation to the true Israel (1 Pet. 1:14-16, 2:9-10).

This is our position. A position which compels us to stand apart from the society in which we live, and avoid involvement in its practices and organisations.

Obedience – Fundamental Attitude of a Pilgrim

What is it that compells a Christadelphian to stand apart from society? Obedience to the terms and conditions of his pilgrimage, is the answer.

Obedience to God's law is the basis of the pilgrim life. Willing obedience to the divine will can not only result in separation from the world. The ways of man are not the ways of God (Isa. 55:8-9; Prov. 21:2; Jer. 17:9-10; Ezek. 18:29). Neither do the ideals and objectives of men and nations conform to the purpose of God. Therefore, when a man embraces the things of God and renders obedience to His will, he inevitably finds himself at cross-purposes with society (John 15:18-20; 16:33; 17:14; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). There is a mutual antithapy between flesh and spirit which God himself has established (Gen. 3:15; Ex.17:16; Gal. 5:17).

The importance of obedience has been eternally emphasised by the words of Samuel to king Saul: "To obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Sam. 15:22). Yet in giving obedience to God, sacrifice must be a factor (11 Sam. 24:24). Willingness also is indispensable (Ex. 25:2), but both these are unavailing unless you also happen to be right (Ex. 25:40).

In the preparation and construction of the Tabernacle these three essential elements were present.

- (1) Willingness to offer – Ex. 35:21
- (2) Wisdom (ie. knowledge of what was right) – Ex. 36:2-3
- (3) Exact compliance (obedience) – Ex. 39:42-43

Obedience was crucial (Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5) although empty without willingness as a springboard, and impossible without knowledge of what was right.

The same principles apply to God's servants in all ages. Full and true spiritual pilgrimage is not possible where willing obedience, rendered on the basis of exact knowledge is absent. It is this very quality that constitutes one a pilgrim (see Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 5:1-2).

The Sacrificial Aspect of Submission

As pointed out in the previous section, submission to the will of God inevitably involves sacrifice. Obedience does not come naturally to any human being (Rom. 8:4-8; 7:19-21; Heb. 5:8). On the contrary, disobedience to God's Law is man's natural course (Mark 7:21-23, 1 John 2:16).

Obedience or submission to divine law requires the rejection and setting aside of the human will. The disciple of Christ is called to a life of obedience that involves daily sacrifice of his own desires (Luke 9:23-24; Gal. 5:24). In this he follows the pattern of Christ who submerged his own natural inclinations by constantly exalting God's will above all else (Matt. 26:39; Heb. 10:7). This he did even to the death of the cross, his final great act of obedience (Phil 2:8).

However, sacrifice may be required of Christ's followers as a consequence of their chosen path of life. As a pilgrim and stranger in

society a believer can expect persecution from those who neither know or understand the reasons for his separation from society (1 Pet. 4: 4, 14). He may also have to endure persecution from individuals or state authorities who being corrupt desire to stamp out of existence those they regard as a threat to their power, objectives, or religion. Christ suffered death at the hands of the Jews and the Romans for these reasons. The brethren to whom Peter wrote were also suffering terrible persecution instituted by the corrupt Emperor Nero for the same reasons (1 Pet. 4:12; 1:6-7; 5:8-9).

Many of Christ's brethren have made the supreme sacrifice in the past because they faithfully upheld the divine will in the face of bitter and cruel persecution (Rev. 6:9-10). Even in this century, brethren have suffered terrible privations and in one case, death, as a consequence of their convictions and resolute determination to fulfil God's will.

Sacrifice, willingly offered in rendering obedience and enduring persecution, is an indispensable part of the pilgrim life.

LAW, CONSCIENCE AND SEPARATION

The Disciple under Law

In our previous discussion upon obedience as the fundamental attitude of a pilgrim, the need for an accurate knowledge of what we propose to obey was emphasised. The world is full of people dedicated to one cause or another. Some are able to explain the reason for their dedication, some are not. Most however, are committed to causes related to the present order of things among men. Causes that have little, and for the most part, no scriptural basis whatsoever. They are bound by principles, and occasionally laws which are of their own making, and are designed to achieve their own objectives. The will of God is almost always ignored and all too often blatantly contravened. This is as true of the practices of some "Christian" causes as it is of any other human cause. The Christadelphian position of necessity is vastly different.

The disciple of Christ is bound by laws which are not of his own making, but on the contrary, laws which if obeyed are inimical to his own temporal self interests. As shown in the previous section, obedience to God's will requires sacrifice. In Christ's words, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." (Luke 9:23-24).

The commandments of Christ constitute the law under which his disciples now live (Matt. 7:21, 24-25; John 17:8, 14). They are principles by which the Lord will judge those who come before his Judgement Seat (John 12:47-48). To disobey them is to injure him and deny his friendship (John 14:21; 15:14) and to assure our rejection at his hands in the Day of Judgement (2 Thess. 1:7-8; 1 Pet. 4:17-18). To obey them brings pleasure to him and glory to God (John 15:8-10; 16:27) and assures us of acceptance by him at his return (2 Pet. 1:8-11).

Israel were under Law (Gal. 3:24; Rom. 2:17, 7:1); a Law they were unable to keep (Acts 15:10, Rom. 3:20, 8:3) and which offered them no hope of eternal life, through their inability to keep it (Rom. 7:7-11; 2 Cor. 3:7; Heb. 8:7-8). Through the death and resurrection of Christ the Law of Moses was abolished as a national code of conduct (Gal. 3:13), but its principles remained in the form of the Commandments of Christ. In his teaching, the Lord developed and extended the divine principles enshrined in the Law into a code of personal conduct of which his own life was the prime example. The Law of Christ probes deep into the heart as the source of human motivation. It concentrates upon the inner man rather than external actions. It seeks to regulate men's lives by a positive and willing response from the heart and leaves no room for the cold formalism of obedience to laws and regulations which nearly always characterised Israel's approach to the Law of Moses.

So while the Law of Moses was set aside, the Law of the Heart was established. Hence, the disciple of Christ is under Law; a law which seeks obedience springing out of a responsive love to Christ, and a desire to follow his example.

The Christadelphian Conscience

In the first section of this manual we sought to define a conscientious objector, and noted that in these modern times the authorities will recognise a conscience based upon any conviction whether religious or otherwise. But what is a "conscience" scripturally defined?

The Greek word *sunideesis* is translated "conscience" 32 times in the New Testament. It signifies "a knowing with one's self, consciousness; the being one's own witness; the testimony to one's conduct borne by consciousness" (Bullinger). Grimm-Thayer offers the following meaning: "The consciousness of anything; the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other; conscience". The use of this word in such contexts as Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom. 2:15; 13:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:19 and many other significant places, indicates what really is a true conscience in the scriptural sense.

It is clear from the occurrence of such phrases as "in all good conscience before God" (Acts 23:1), "a conscience void of offence toward God" (Acts 24:16), and "if a man for conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 2:19), that the basis of a scriptural conscience is not human feelings or ideals, but the expressed will of God. God's will, if adopted into the mind becomes the source of all worthy action, and the judge of all fleshly thinking (Heb. 4:12). Man is incapable of judging things from a divine viewpoint without the thinking of God first being implanted in his mind (Jer. 10:23, John 7:24, Heb. 5:14). Divine ideas are sown in the mind by God's word (Isa. 55:7-11) which instills wisdom (Prov. 3:5-7, 13-20) and understanding (Prov. 4:7).

The knowledge of God's will is therefore the source of a Christadelphian conscience and the fountain of all action that is pleasing to God (Col. 1:9-10). So that if God commands His servants to kill (as He did Israel -- Deut.

20:16-17) then it is wrong to disobey and injury is inflicted upon a true scriptural conscience. On the other hand, if God commands His servants not to kill (as in our case), then it is wrong to take life, and killing would be offensive to our scripturally instilled conscience. Whatever God commands becomes our conscience; the grounds of a consciousness of right and wrong; the means whereby we are able to commend one action and condemn another.

The faithful servants of God in all ages have possessed such a conscience. For example, David a man after God's own heart, had no compunctions about killing the enemies of Israel whose destruction God had commanded, but reacted with righteous anger at the murder of the innocent whose lives were protected by God's Law (11 Sam.1:13-16, 3:28-29, 4:9-12, 12:5). His conscience was not against killing, but against killing those who were protected by Divine law. God's will governed all David's actions – if God said "Kill", he killed; if God said "Do not kill", he eschewed bloodshed and avenged murder. So it was in every avenue of his illustrious life except for two well known lapses.

Except it be thought however, that a Christadelphian conscience is merely a mechanical obedience to Divine law, we hasten to add that it is much more than this. It is a state of mind, the operation of a character, and a way of life which revolves around God's expressed will, rightly understood and loved. There must of necessity be involvement of the heart; a responsive love compelled to obedience out of gratitude and humble reverence for all that belongs to God. Where these attributes exist and the mind is steeped in Divine principles, there is "a law of the mind" (Rom.7:23), governing and determining the path in which a man will walk.

Separation from the World

Separation from the World should come as a consequence of attaining the 'Christadelphian conscience' outlined in the previous section. If the word of God is implanted in our minds and takes deep root, providing a higher source of motivation in our lives, it is inevitable that we will come into conflict with the evils of the World (John 17:14, 1 Pet.4:1-4) which we will first encounter within our own flesh (Rom.7:14-23; Gal.5:17; Mark 7:21-23). True separation has its basis in mental conviction. The light of Truth cannot co-exist peacefully with the darkness of the World (Eph. 5:8-13), "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16).

Consequently, partnership with the world is totally incongruous for one who has been called to partnership with Christ (11 Cor.6:14-18). As the Apostle made clear to the Corinthians, sonship is dependent on separation. Our relationship with God is predicated upon our effort to be more like Him "Be ye holy as I am holy" (1 Pet.1:16). Where there is friendship with the world there is enmity with God (James 4:4).

Much could be written concerning this subject and its ramifications for our daily lives, but sufficient has been adduced to provide a firm basis in connection with the Christadelphian attitude to Military Service. We can have

no partnership with the world in its Godless enterprises; certainly not in those associated with prosecuting war and bloodshed in the interests of the State or human ambition. However, men must be able to see that our attitude towards Military Service does not stand alone as a matter of conscience, but as a logical consequence of our total way of life.

Separation from the world is the evidence that attests the existence of a pilgrim and stranger.

SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS

The Patriarchs of Israel

The principles discussed in the foregoing pages were given practical expression in the lives of the Fathers of Israel – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They demonstrated by a living faith that they had no part in the world of their times, nor its practises. By faith Abraham left his own land to sojourn “in the Land of Promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob” who were also heirs of the promise God made to him (Heb.11:8-10).

Like faithful men of God who preceded them and whose names are also immortalised in the honour roll of Faith (Heb.11), they died in faith “not having received the promises”. They saw them afar off however, and their lives were governed by the three elements of a true and lively faith in the promises of God. They “were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb.11:13). Here the word ‘stranger’ is *xenos* signifying “not of one’s own family, stranger”. ‘Pilgrims’ is the Greek word *parepidemos* which has been discussed in a previous section.

Abraham had indeed left his own family and nation to sojourn as a stranger beside the inhabitants of the land which he was to afterwards receive as an everlasting possession. He was compelled by his faith in God’s promises to occupy this position, and the writer to the Hebrews describes the threefold process by which he was so moved. He was:

PERSUADED – Gr. *peitho* – Sig. in the Middle Voice “to suffer one’s self to be persuaded or convinced; to yield assent to”. This was a mental process. Belief was based upon confidence in the power of God to fulfil the promises He had made and in the comprehension of what He had promised.

EMBRACED – Gr. *aspazomai* “to draw to one’s self, hence to embrace”. This is a moral process and consists in a conscious choice to meet the conditions of the promises. Abraham deliberately and gladly chose this way of life with all his heart.

CONFESSED – Gr. *homologeō* Sig. “to speak or say the same together with another; ie. to say the same things.” This is a physical process. The patriarchs were united in not only voicing their pilgrim status but in actually sojourning as strangers and pilgrims in the land of Canaan. Their very way of life demonstrated their separation from society and their total dedication to a higher cause.

Abraham's spiritual children are constrained by the same process to walk as "strangers and pilgrims" in the land of their sojourn waiting for the time of the fulfillment of the promises made to him.

Abraham as a Conscientious Objector

The detractor seeking to discredit the Christadelphian position will immediately point to Genesis 14 to prove that Abraham's pilgrim status did not prevent him from engaging in war in company with the inhabitants of the Land in order to protect his own interests. What then is the answer to this charge of inconsistency? Is there a satisfactory solution to this apparent problem?

Close consideration of the battle of the kings and Abraham's victorious involvement in it not only provides a solution, but reinforces the argument already advanced in this study, that a pilgrim's life is governed by the divine will, whatever that may be at any given point of time. If Abraham became involved in a local war, then he must have done so by specific divine commandment. If he acted upon his own volition and decided to attack the northern invaders without a command from God, our whole concept of a pilgrim is shown to be baseless and incorrect. If a pilgrim, in the Biblical sense of the term, can make war when his judgement tells him it is proper and wise to do so, the matter ceases to be one for objective analysis, and becomes entirely subjective. When that happens we have lost our case altogether, for one man's opinion is as good as another's. This matter is therefore, deserving of careful consideration.

It is important to note the following points concerning the battle of the kings as it is described in Genesis 14:

- (1) The war was fought between four kings who invaded from the north and five kings who inhabited the lower Jordan Valley. Abraham was not directly involved (Gen.14:1-3).
- (2) Abraham dwelt in the plain of Mamre near Hebron, just a few miles from the conflict which reached to Kadesh in the south. He was confederate with three Amorites (Gen.14:13), but none of them moved to assist their fellow Amorites who became victims of the invasion. No action was taken to succour Amorites living just a few miles away (Gen.14:7).
- (3) Abraham only moved when he heard that Lot his nephew had been taken captive out of Sodom (Gen.14:14). He went to war in association with the three Amorites who as the Hebrew has it "were possessors of a covenant with him" (Gen.14:13,24). That is, they now shared Abraham's faith and hope -- the promises God had made to him.

That Abraham acted to save Lot and his family as a result of a divine command is proven by the following considerations.

- (1) Abraham's army consisted of 318 servants raised and "trained" in his own house. The word "trained" is the Hebrew *chanik* signifying "instructed, initiated". These were men instructed in the Truth and possessing faith (Gen.18:19). Their attitude is reflected by Eliezer the chief among them (Gen.24:12). They manifested the truth of Proverbs

22:6, where the same word is used. It is impossible to conceive of Abraham or his servants going forth to engage a vast and hostile army without a firm conviction that they were doing God's will. That prayer would have preceded their march is certain. That it had been answered before their decision to depart is also strongly suggested.

- (2) Abraham's dramatic victory could only have been by divine agency (Gen.14:15). This was recognised by Melchizedek (Gen.14:20), who also came out to bless Abraham on his return. Thus Abraham's action was given the divine stamp of approval in two ways – God wrought the victory and then sent His representative to bless the victor.
- (3) The events of this chapter are highly typical, pointing forward to Christ's victory over the Gogian invader from the north. This victory will be accomplished by Christ in company with His saints, both Jew and Gentile (Amorites – Gen.14:13) and will be for the relief of the relatives of Abraham inhabiting the Land of Israel today who will be taken captive by Gog (Gen.14:16, Zech.14:1-3). The events surrounding Melchizedek are obviously typical (Heb.7:1-7), prefiguring Christ's blessing of His brethren with whom He shall eat bread and drink wine anew in His Kingdom (Gen.14:18; Luke 22:15-18), to celebrate His victory over the power of flesh.

We conclude therefore that Abraham acted in accordance with God's will and not against it. That he was in no way associated with the alliances of men when he overthrew the northern confederacy. His curt refusal of any gift from the King of Sodom (Gen.14:22-23) is final proof of that.

Abraham was a stranger and pilgrim who remained absolutely true to that status – he was a conscientious objector to any form of involvement in the military forces of men.

David

To the end of his life David recognised his pilgrim status before God. Despite nearly forty years of prosperity, military success, and the establishment of a powerful kingdom he nevertheless saw himself and the nation as "strangers.....and sojourners, as were all our fathers" (1 Chron.29:15). This is remarkable testimony to the power of his convictions, but more so to the greatness of the ideals which should motivate every servant of God.

Christ

The finest scriptural example of a stranger and pilgrim is of course, to be found in the life and attitude of the "seed of Abraham". His appearance among men and ultimate glory as king of the whole earth had motivated Abraham to look beyond his own times to those of his seed (John 8:56). The work of God in Christ was the foundation of Abraham's faith and the reason for his pilgrim status (Heb.11:10,16).

It was fitting therefore, that during the era of His redemptive work among men the Lord should have been revealed as the greatest of all pilgrims. All of the principles discussed so far in this chapter were beautifully drawn together in his life.

He eschewed involvement in the politics of His day though He was in prospect "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Matt.4:8-10;22:15-21;John 18:36-37). He stood aside from the society of His day, rejecting and condemning its evil and godless ways (Matt.12:39,41-42) while at the same time calling upon men to join him 'outside the camp' (Matt.23:37-38; Heb.13:13-14).

Of those who followed him during his ministry he required total pilgrimage – the loss of all worldly status and privilege, and a life of sacrifice in obedience to his commandments (Luke 9:23-26). He was himself the supreme example of this (Phil.2:7-8), and the death he suffered was a direct result of his pilgrim status (Ps.39:12). Thus his example of suffering for righteousness sake at the hands of the Jewish and Roman authorities became the basis of Peter's appeal and encouragement to first century Christians to live as strangers and pilgrims in the face of terrible persecution (1 Pet.2:11-12,19-23).

BONDSERVICE

Historical Basis

While slavery is outlawed in most civilised countries of the modern world and is viewed with repugnance by the vast majority of people, it once played a dominant role in human society. Even now nations are reaping the harvest of the slave trade of the last century and in remote corners of the earth slavery is still practised in a surreptitious form. One of the Lord's tasks will be to rid the earth of such oppression and exploitation (Ps.72:4).

In New Testament times slavery was a fact of life and was universally practised by the rich and powerful. Slaves generally came from the ranks of captives taken from nations which fell to the Roman legions. Those who were not killed were sold into slavery. It is said that two-thirds of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. To be a free-man was therefore a treasured privilege (Acts 16:37-38) while freedom from slavery could only be obtained at great cost (Acts 22:27-28). The bondslave was deprived of the rights of citizenship and was wholly in the power of his master. He virtually possessed no will of his own. His strength and time were entirely at the disposal of his master.

In Old Testament times two kinds of slavery existed. There were captives sold into slavery (Gen.14:12,14; 37:28,36; Josh.9:23), and men who sold themselves into slavery as a means of support for themselves and their families (Ex.12:45; Lev.25:39). In Israel this latter service was regulated by the Law of Moses which prevented its abuse and conferred certain rights on the servant. The nation which had endured slavery in Egypt was not to practise a similar oppression upon others, either Jew or Gentile (Ex. 22:21; 23:9).

The many allusions to slavery in the New Testament are to be interpreted however, in the light of bondservice and slavery as it existed in those times.

The Lot of a Bondslave

The word used for bondslave throughout the N.T. is *doulos* in the Greek, signifying "a slave, one bound to serve, one whose will and capacities are wholly at the service of another". The word is used of the lowest scale of servitude to men, but when used of service to Christ expresses the highest devotion of one who is bound by love. The root of *doulos* is *deo* – to bind, and this clearly is the basic idea of the term. A bondslave was under bondage to render service according to the will of his master.

The Impossibility of Serving Two Masters

Being so bound to one master, it was physically impossible for a bondslave to render service to two masters at the same time. This principle the Lord recognised and effectively used in His teaching upon the responsibility of men to their heavenly master (Matt.6:24; Luke 16:13). The spiritual principle applied whether men were bond or free, once they had become the bondslaves of Christ (1 Cor.7:20-24). Its application is of no less force today.

The Bondslaves of Christ

The Apostle Paul stressed that bondslaves were not to seek freedom from their earthly service just because they had attained a new status in Christ. He contended that a bondslave called to the Truth became "the Lord's freeman" though still bound to an earthly master, while a freeman called to the Truth became a bondslave of Christ (1 Cor.7:20-24). Both were now Christ's bondslaves and were to subject their will to his. They were not to be the "servants" (Gr. – *doulos*) of men (1 Cor.7:23).

How was the man bound to an earthly master to reconcile this seeming paradox? He was to view his service to his earthly master as service unto the Lord (Eph.6:5-8). In this way he could bring approbation to the Truth and demonstrate its power in his life (Tit.2:9-10). Providing that his master required of him nothing contrary to the will of Christ he was to render willing obedience and service.

We are the bondslaves of Christ and can subject our will totally to no one but him who has bought us with a price (1 Cor.7:23). We are no longer our own, but have become a possession of God in Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Our will must be subjected to His and no other, else we are neither Christ's bondslaves nor a true pilgrim.

Christadelphians and the State

A DEFINITION OF CITIZENSHIP

According to the New Imperial Reference Dictionary a citizen is "an inhabitant of a city: a member of a state: a townsman: a freeman". Citizenship is defined as "the rights of a citizen". In the New Testament there are two words translated "citizen", one derived from the other. The basic Greek word is *polites* (from which is derived the English 'politics') signifying "a member of a city or state, citizen, freeman; belonging to, connected with one's city or country". See the usage of this word in Luke 15:15, 19:14, Acts 21:39. The other Greek word is *sumpolites* which is the same as the former word with the addition of the prefix *sum*, signifying union or cooperation, hence a fellow-citizen (Eph.2:19).

Another related word *politia* is used in Acts 22:28 where it is translated "freedom", and in Eph.2:12 as "commonwealth". Its meaning is given by Bullinger as "the relation in which a citizen stands to the state, the condition, rights of a citizen, citizenship; then, the civil polity, the condition of a state".

Yet another word is used only once in the New Testament. The Greek word *politeuma* is translated "conversation" in Phil.3:20 and signifies "the condition, or life, of a citizen, citizenship". This word describes the heavenly status of saints and is particularly relevant to the matters which follow.

The Privileges and Responsibilities of Citizenship

As seen from the foregoing review of the different terms employed in connection with citizenship, a citizen is a member of a state or polity. As such he shares the privileges and the responsibilities of membership of that society. The state confers certain rights upon its constituent members but also requires that certain obligations are met in order that those rights be maintained. The extent to which the Christadelphian may share those rights and obligations is the question now before us.

OUR HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

In the previous chapter the status of Christadelphians as "strangers and pilgrims" in the world was considered, and the separation that must exist between the Christadelphian and the world duly stressed. This leads us now to a consideration of our heavenly citizenship.

The Status of Saints

Having been called out of the nations as a people for Yahweh's name (Acts 15:14) we have transferred our allegiance from man to God. From henceforth "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29) and devote our lives in His service as "a living sacrifice" conforming to His will (Rom.12:1-2). In so doing we live as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet.2:11) waiting for

a kingdom that is “not of this world” or order of things. That kingdom is still in the formational stage because its king is still in heaven performing His mediatorial work on behalf of its future constituents. While He remains there, that is where our interest and attention should be focussed. Instead of concentrating our thoughts and energies on earthly things we now “set our affection (Gr. the operation of the mind) on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col.3:2).

The Apostle told the Colossians that they were dead and that their life was hid with Christ in God (Col.3:3). Through him we have access by faith into the very presence of God (Rom.5:2; Heb.9:24). In this way we “sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:6). It is an exalted status, for as the Apostle stated, “when Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall (we) also appear with him in glory” (Col.3:4). Or, as he put it to the Philipians, “for our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil.3:20-21).

We conclude therefore, that saints enjoy a status as citizens of a higher and more enduring polity. A status which must inevitably affect their earthly citizenship.

A Holy Nation

The community of saints is variously described in scripture as “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Ex.19:6; 1 Pet.2:9), “the commonwealth of Israel” (Eph.2:12), “the Israel of God” (Gal.6:16), and so on. It is obvious from these descriptions that the saints are regarded as prospective constituents of the restored Kingdom of God on earth (Acts 1:6; 3:21; Matt.19:28), and even now are members of a heavenly polity which is nearing its final stages of preparation.

A kingdom cannot exist without certain fundamental elements. A king, a law, co-rulers, subjects, and a land are all essential. The work of Christ for the last twenty centuries has been to prepare all of these requirements pursuant to the establishment of God’s Kingdom upon earth. He is the king (John 18:37) but has not been declared as such yet (Ps.2:6-7). He has however, been given all power in heaven and in earth in order to secure that position in the fulness of time (Matt.28:18; 1 Pet.3:22).

Christ is himself the nucleus of the Kingdom of God. Without him there could not, and would not be any Kingdom. So that he could say confidently even while his mortal ministry was in progress, “the Kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:21). The object of his ministry was to provide a way into the Kingdom of God for those who would enter through him (Matt. 4:17,23; 7:14,21,24-25). He provided a law for that kingdom through which those who keep it shall receive their reward in due time (Matt.5:3-10). These will become co-rulers with him when the Kingdom is established (Matt.5:19; 19:28-29; Isa.32:1).

The work of calling out of the nations a people for God’s name (Acts 15:14) continues today. Meanwhile God has guided the destiny of Israel and a partial restoration of the Jews to their own land has occurred. In them has

been provided a nucleus of Christ's mortal subjects in the Kingdom age, namely the refined third of Jews in the land after Armageddon. In due time they will be joined by their regathered brethren from all nations of the earth, and finally by the remnant of the humbled Gentiles who will be his mortal subjects during the Millennium. The land of Israel, greatly enlarged by Christ's conquests, will become the territory of that Kingdom. Finally, the whole world will be embraced by Christ's Kingdom (Ps.72:8-11; Rev.11:15).

This glorious Kingdom is yet in the formative state. Hence its polity is still in heaven from whence its future immortal constituents look for their saviour and king (Heb.9:24,28; Rev.2:25-27; 3:20-21). Thus their citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20). They are a holy nation, separated unto God that he might be glorified in them, both now and in the future age.

Our Responsibilities

Heavenly citizenship confers incalculable blessings and privileges upon those who share this exalted status in Christ. Its obligations too, are considerable. Members of this heavenly polity are constrained to live as strangers and pilgrims in society and to maintain separateness from the world and its evil ways. These obligations have been considered in the previous chapter entitled "Strangers and Pilgrims" and may be briefly summarised by saying that we have a duty to obey God rather than men, and where His will and commandments conflict with the demands of the state, our heavenly citizenship requires our firm allegiance to Him and a disavowal of our obligations to the state. We cannot allow the demands of earthly citizenship to over-ride our obligations to God as citizens of "the Commonwealth of Israel".

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN AND SOCIETY

Earthly Citizenship

As members of a heavenly polity Christadelphians are of necessity strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and yet by the laws and regulations of the land of their sojourn, are regarded as citizens of an earthly state also. For most, this citizenship is not one of choice but a result of the accident of birth. They happen to be born and raised as members of a particular society. Both they and their parents are regarded as citizens of that society because they are residents in and subjects of a particular state. They share the privileges conferred by that status and must meet the obligations which it imposes upon them except where these contravene the principles and demands of their heavenly citizenship. The latter they possess by voluntary choice while the former is possessed by virtue of birth or chosen place of residence.

Thus the Christadelphian appears to have a dual citizenship – a heavenly and an earthly citizenship both governed by his allegiance to Christ. There are a number of things in which the demands of earthly citizenship will conflict with those pertaining to heavenly citizenship and because of it must be repudiated in order to give the commandments of Christ their rightful and preeminent place. However, as we have already observed, the repudiation of earthly citizenship and its responsibilities cannot be total.

The Repudiation Partial Only

By the law of Christ we are required to pay taxes to the state (Rom.13:6-7;

Matt.22:21) but cannot give an oath of allegiance to serve it. We are required to obey the laws of the state (1 Pet.2:13, Rom.13:1-5) but cannot play a part in enforcing them. We are commanded to honour the king or rulers of the state (1 Pet.2:17) but cannot fight to preserve their rule. We are to respect and obey the powers that be (Rom.13:1-2) but cannot become involved in voting them in or out of office.

These examples serve to illustrate that the law of Christ requires a heavenly citizen to meet many of the obligations of an earthly citizen. Our allegiance is to Christ alone, but in rendering it we are required to act in a manner that might be interpreted as a qualified allegiance to the state. This "qualified" allegiance however, is not actually the result of allegiance rendered to the state, but the outcome of total allegiance rendered to Christ.

The Christadelphian is not therefore being selective by accepting the privileges offered to the citizens of a state without rendering a full and unqualified allegiance in return (as it is sometimes alleged), because by the law of Christ he is restricted from claiming all the rights and privileges offered by the state to its citizens. Far from being in what some would call a comfortable position, he is likely to experience persecution, privation, and disadvantage during any period of war or national stress, because his relationship to the state will become widely known, whereas in a time of peace he may appear to be comfortable as a privileged sojourner, accepting what he likes and rejecting what is distasteful.

In summary, the Christadelphian has an earthly citizenship which is not regulated by the state, but by the law of Christ. He will meet all the obligations of that citizenship except those contravening Christ's law, in which case the demands of his heavenly citizenship take precedence over those of his earthly citizenship (Acts 5:29).

Payment of Taxes

This particular facet of earthly citizenship illustrates very well the relationship of the Christadelphian to the state. We have an obligation to pay taxes (Rom.13:6-7). If the state were to levy a tax on resident aliens and not on its subjects we would be exempt from the tax; and, conversely, if the state levied a tax on its subjects but not on resident aliens, we would be subject to the tax. So then, despite our status as "strangers and pilgrims in the earth" this does not mean that we disclaim all of the responsibilities of earthly citizenship. As seen in the previous discussion on this matter it is a question of allegiance, not a question of physical status. Though citizens of a state our allegiance is to Christ alone, and by his commandments we are required to pay taxes. Should the state use these taxes to prosecute a war, this is a matter beyond our control. Our payment of taxes must be seen as obedience to Christ's commandments, not as support for the state.

Our relationship to the state is therefore to be determined solely by the expression of God's will and our total allegiance to Christ. We cannot be like some who profess Christ but claim all the privileges of earthly citizenship, at times advancing Paul's use of his Roman citizenship as justification.

PAUL AND HIS ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

Why the Apostle Appealed to it

It is true that on a number of occasions the Apostle appealed to his Roman citizenship (See Acts 16:37, 22:25, 25:11) but this fact does not justify our doing the same. Paul was a specially chosen ambassador for Christ and on each occasion that he appealed to the rights of a Roman citizen it was to further his commission as the apostle of the Gentiles and not simply for his own protection.

This is amply illustrated in Acts 16:37-40 where upon release from the prison in Philippi he charged the Roman authorities with injustice. Why do this after he and Silas were set free and permitted to depart? The only reason can be that Paul had in mind the future well-being of the fledgling ecclesia in this Roman colony where official opposition to the Truth was strong and violent (Acts 16:19-24). So though he was requested to leave the city immediately, he did not do so, but deliberately went to the house of Lydia, where the ecclesia met, and convened a meeting of the brethren under the notice of the embarrassed magistrates. This action was obviously calculated to produce in the authorities a greater sensitivity to the associates of Paul and Silas. Unwarranted persecution of the brethren could well have resulted in a revival of this embarrassing incident for them.

In Acts 22:25 Paul escaped scourging not because he feared suffering or death, for he knew these awaited him (Acts 21:10-14). His aim was to reach Rome (Acts 19:21, 23:11) and there to continue his work. It was his appeal to Roman citizenship which finally accomplished this result (Acts 25:11-12).

Paul a Chosen Vessel

Paul's case is unique. Separated from the womb he was prepared in every way to be a light to the gentiles. Of Jewish origin, he was nevertheless a free-born Roman citizen and consequently enjoyed complete access to both Jew and Gentile throughout the whole Roman Empire. God prepares his messengers well and provides them with the credentials essential for the success of their mission.

It was for the accomplishment of that mission alone that Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship. Shall we presume upon rights of an earthly citizenship to avoid our responsibilities to Christ and plead Paul's precedent? To ask the question is to answer it. Paul was raised up for a special work in which his peculiar status and relationship to the state played an important part – we are not.

Paul did not contravene Christ's commandments by invoking his Roman citizenship, in fact he fulfilled his commission from the Lord by so doing.

CHRISTADELPHIANS AND POLITICS

Our Political Allegiance

We have already seen that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20) and that our allegiance must be wholly given to Christ. In view of this it is obvious that Christadelphians must avoid involvement in the politics of the state. As strangers and pilgrims on the earth they seek a kingdom yet to be estab-

lished, and view the present kingdoms of men as temporary and transitory, soon to give place to the Kingdom of God on earth (Rev.11:15).

This refusal to become involved in the political affairs of nations does not mean however a total lack of interest in human affairs and international politics. The very nature of our hope compels us to take an avid interest in the politics of nations as we watch the signs of the times for indications of the fulfilling purpose of God. Nor does our detached interest bespeak a lack of concern for the distressed state of the world and its inhabitants, for the true Christadelphian earnestly seeks the day when the ills and evils of the world and the sufferings of its inhabitants will give place to "a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" so that the problems of humanity might be permanently resolved.

Voting in Political Elections

To exercise a vote in political elections must in the light of our previous considerations be an extremely inconsistent action for any Christadelphian to take. How can we vote for one political party against another, or one political candidate over another in order to elect a government to which we cannot render total allegiance? The incongruity is immediately obvious, quite apart from other important considerations.

How do we know which man or which political party God purposes should rule our country of sojourn at any given time? Could it not be that we may vote for someone whom God wills not to place in power. If it be replied that our vote would be of little significance in determining the result of an election let it be considered that regardless of the outcome we have interfered in a matter beyond our control and certainly outside our duty to Christ (Acts 5:39).

During World War I the Canadian authorities regarded those who had voted in political elections as responsible to fight on behalf of the government they had helped to elect. Only those who had abstained from voting were eligible for consideration as conscientious objectors. The Canadian government perceived the nexus between voting in political elections and responsibility to defend the state, and insisted that those who had exercised the right to vote also had an obligation to obey the laws of the state in respect to military service.

Both from the point of view of allegiance and the purpose of God the true follower of Christ is compelled to stand aside from the politics of men and refuse the right of voting in political elections. His 'politics' are in heaven from whence he looks for the saviour who will overturn human governments and establish God's Kingdom on earth.

Application for Exemption from Voting

It is generally recognised by the electoral authorities in Australia that Christadelphians have a conscientious objection to participation in political elections. In Queensland the state electoral office actually has a form for use by people applying to abstain from voting because of disability or other legitimate causes, which also includes a section for religious conscientious objection

and specifically names Christadelphians. This form is evidently only available to those attending the polling booth and therefore, is not recommended for use by the Christadelphian community. We have a responsibility not to give the adversary an opportunity to speak reproachfully of the Truth, and if it is known by our neighbours and acquaintances that we are conscientious objectors to military service or any other form of involvement in the politics of the state, then our attendance at a polling booth for whatever reason may well be interpreted as an indication of inconsistency on our part. It is better to avoid any semblance of connection to the political process, and handle the inevitable request to show cause for having failed to vote by the established means.

Following every state and federal election Christadelphians who have abstained from voting will receive in the mail a letter requesting an explanation of the reasons for so doing. The electoral office will normally accept a reply along the lines of the following example:

“I am a baptised member of the Christadelphian Ecclesia. It has always been a tenet of our faith not to vote in political elections”.

Similar variations of this brief explanation may be submitted and usually, nothing further will be heard from the electoral office.

It is to the advantage of our community to be consistent in our approach to this matter. The liberty we now enjoy in being able to exercise our conscience freely without fear of persecution is surely largely attributable to the united approach of our community in the past.

CHRISTADELPHIANS AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Use of the Legal System

The commandments of Christ and His apostles are clear on this matter. We are to suffer ourselves to be defrauded (Matt.5:40; Luke 6:29-30; 1 Cor.6:1-7). We cannot use legal coercion for the recovery of debts or damages. Hence, clause 35 of “Doctrines to be Rejected” in our Statement of Faith rejects, “That we are at liberty to serve in the army, or as police constables, take part in politics, or recover debts by legal coercion”.

The Christadelphian can make no appeal to the courts of the land to settle disputes of any kind. He may on occasion be required to stand in court as a witness or perhaps even as a defendant, but never as plaintiff. As a conscientious objector to military service he may be summoned to appear before a court of summary jurisdiction in order to support his application for total exemption during a period of war or a national service call-up. Under these circumstances he is happy to appear to defend his faith and conscience because it is his allegiance to Christ that will be in question. Should it be necessary, he may also appeal to a higher court against an unfavourable decision, but beyond this he has no desire and certainly no warrant to proceed.

Justices of the Peace

It follows that if a Christadelphian must avoid the politics of the state

and refuse to use the legal system to secure or protect his own temporal interests, he cannot fulfil any role as an enforcer of the laws of the state either. The government of a state frame the laws; the constabulary and judiciary enforce them. The Christadelphian has no part to play in any of these aspects of the operation of a state.

On some occasions a justice of the peace may be required to act as a magistrate in criminal cases. Hence, he must also pledge to uphold the laws of the state by swearing an oath of allegiance to the head of state. To become involved in such activities would be to bind ourselves to the state and its laws at the expense of Christ and His commandments. The only role that saints have as 'justices of the peace' lies in the future, in the Kingdom age, and then they will administer the laws of the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa.32:1).

Jury Service

The principles that apply to jury service are the same as those which govern our attitude to use of the legal system and participation in the judiciary and constabulary. A juror is a judge and a defender of the laws of a state, charged with assessing and deciding upon a defendant's actions in relation to those laws. He is essentially a member of a panel of "judges" who have power to condemn or vindicate men according to the laws of the state. This role is inconsistent with the responsibilities of a follower of Christ.

The laws and principles by which we must live transcend the laws of any state in every way. The Christadelphian's attitude and conduct are governed by higher principles than the enacted laws of a political state, and it is therefore unthinkable that we should agree to dispense with Christ's principles in order to sit in judgement upon other men according to the state's code of law. To do so would be to adopt a double set of standards: one for ourselves and an entirely different one for others. This we cannot do with a clear conscience before God.

Our only course of action is to disqualify ourselves from jury service. This can be easily achieved by advising the sheriff of the court that our religious convictions make it absolutely impossible for us to judge any matter purely from the point of view of the enacted laws of the state. Potential jurors are required to advise any reason as to why they might not be suitable for jury service and may claim exemption on various grounds. There are few who can claim more palpable reasons for disqualification than Christadelphians, and it is our wisdom and duty to do so.

CHRISTADELPHIANS AND THE POWERS THAT BE

Obedience to State Authority

Christ and His apostles left no room for doubt about our responsibility to obey the laws of the land wherever we may sojourn awaiting the Kingdom of God. We are to obey "every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet. 2:13), except where they contravene the commandments of Christ (Acts 5:29).

Thus, rulers of the state who formulate and administer law are to be obeyed

and honoured (Rom.13:1-5; 1 Pet.2:17). Paul argues that the powers that be are ordained of God, and to some degree regulate and control society according to principles which preserve it from total barbarism. Though far from ideal these conditions did allow for progress to be made by Christianity in the Roman Empire and servants of Christ should be thankful for a measure of peace and freedom to practise their faith.

For this purpose, prayer is to be made "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim.2:1-4). This should be remembered in our private and communal prayers. The wonderful circumstances enjoyed in this land for service in the Truth without fear and persecution are a blessing, not a right.

Our Attitude to Law Enforcement Officers

Where there is flesh there will be evil. Hence, any organisation set up by men is unlikely to be free from corruption. Civil authority, though ordained by God to regulate society, will nevertheless be corrupt in some measure. Thus Paul encountered "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph.6:12) and Peter observed the civil authorities "as a roaring lion" seeking to devour the Christians (1 Pet.5:8).

There is no contradiction in this. In the same Epistle that Peter warns the brethren to beware of Nero's inquisitors he also counsels them to submit to the law of the state and honour its emperor (1 Pet.2:13,17). They were bound to submit to the system but were warned that the system would persecute them for their religious convictions. Submission to evil and suffering for righteousness sake (1 Pet.4:12-19) were necessary in God's purpose to refine their faith and prepare them for His Kingdom (1 Pet.1:6-7).

How different are our circumstances!! Official persecution of Christadelphians does not exist in this country (though this is not the case in some countries) and we are left alone to pursue our service to God. We need to examine whether this freedom, and absence of any persecution has affected our attitude to law-enforcement authority. Do we break state laws at will, all the time watching out for police officers, lest we be caught so doing? Is not this despising civil authority? Does not this make a mockery of submission "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet.2:13-14)? The past histories of young brethren, especially in relation to the use of motor vehicles, can be a very embarrassing impediment in a case for exemption from military service.

Beware, the times in which we live can breed a contempt for law-enforcement authorities and the laws they administer. We are commanded to submit to, and respect both, despite the fact that evil will be apparent in them. Like all institutions of man their tenure is limited and soon will cease forever.

Conscientious Objection to Military Service

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN POSITION

Coining of the Name Christadelphian

When the American Civil War broke out in 1861 the brethren were confronted with the problem of military service in the army of either the Confederate South or the Federal North. It became necessary to present a united front to the authorities in arguing the case for conscientious objection to military service. For this purpose Brother John Thomas formulated a certificate outlining the reasons for their conscientious objection which could be submitted at hearings set down to consider applications for exemption from military service. In late 1864 he also coined the name "Christadelphian" meaning "brethren in Christ" (Heb.2:11) so that the brethren might be recognised by the authorities as a separate and distinct denominational group.

A Consistent Stand Since 1864

Since 1864 the Christadelphian community has made a consistent stand against military service, combatant and non-combatant. This stand has been progressively recognised by the governments of the English-speaking nations during two world wars in this century. After many difficulties during those two wars, with some brethren having to endure severe trials and deprivation because of their conscience, there is now a recognition of conscientious objection to military service by most countries where "Christianity" has an influence. In Australia that recognition was enshrined in Section 29 of the National Service Act 1951-1964 dealing with "Conscientious Objection". This is a precious legacy granted to us in the providence of God through the sterling efforts of our brethren who have faithfully upheld the principles enunciated by Brother Thomas in 1864.

Doctrines to be Rejected – No. 35

The Christadelphian position is clearly stated in this clause of our Statement of Faith which reads under the heading of "Doctrines to be Rejected", "That we are at liberty to serve in the army, or as police constables, take part in politics, or recover debts by legal coercion".

The Christadelphian Instructor – Q. 66 & 67

The principles and commandments of Christ upon which our stand is based are simply expressed in the answers to Questions 66 and 67.

Q.66 – *Recite a few of the things we are to do?*

Answer: (1) We are to love God and Christ; (2) to do to men as we would that they should do to us; (3) to love one another; (4) to sympathize with men in their joys and sorrows; (5) to love even our enemies, blessing those who curse us, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for those who

badly use us; (6) we are to be ready to every good work, to give to those who ask, to relieve the afflicted; (7) to be faithful even to bad masters; (8) to pray always and in everything give thanks; (9) to speak the truth always; (10) to be blameless and harmless; (11) to be humble, brave, joyful, courteous and manly; (12) to follow after whatsoever things are true, honest, pure, just, lovely and of good report.

Q.67 – Can you enumerate some of the things we are not to do?

Answer: (1) We are not to be masterful and lordly; (2) we are not to return evil for evil; (3) we are not to avenge ourselves, but rather give place to wrath, and suffer ourselves to be defrauded; (4) we are not to do our alms before men, or let our left hand know what our right hand doeth; (5) we are not to labour to be rich or to love the world; (6) we are not to return cursing for cursing, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; (7) we are not to grudge, judge, complain, or condemn; (8) we are not to give way to anger, wrath, bitterness, or evil speaking; (9) we are not to conform to the world or to be ambitious after higher things; (10) we are not to be slack in paying our debts; (11) we are not to backbite or speak of other men's sins until we have spoken to themselves first; (12) we are not to be guilty of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, covetousness, wrath, strife, sedition, hatred, emulation, boasting, vainglory, envy, jesting or foolish talking.

Christ's Commandments – The Disciple Under Law

As explained in a previous chapter the Christadelphian position is based solely on obedience to the commands of Christ and nothing else. The Christadelphian should not be motivated by 'pacifism' or merely humanitarian considerations, but rather by a singular desire to mould his life upon the example of Christ, and to be governed by his commandments. Where a commandment of Christ is adjudged to contravene the ideals of the pacifist or humanitarian, the Christadelphian must stand with his Lord against the popular view. The divine will is the only factor of importance in any issue.

THE DIVINE ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR

God's Attitude Towards Killing from the Beginning

The taking of life is a divine prerogative alone. This is clearly shown by the fact that Cain was condemned and banished by God for murdering his brother Abel (Gen.4:8-12), while God himself had already passed a sentence of death upon his parents for their disobedience to His law (Gen.2:17, 3:19).

Furthermore, God destroyed almost the entire population of the earth by a flood because of their wickedness (Gen.7:21-22), and then immediately commanded the eight survivors of Noah's family not to take human life (Gen.9:6).

It is clear from these and many other considerations that God inflicts death as a punishment upon those who by disobedience and unrighteousness become worthy of His judgement. As the Apostle says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (Gr. – suppress) the truth in (Gr. – by) unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (11 Pet.3:9; Ezek.

18:23,32), but neither will He abdicate His righteousness (Ezek.18:29-30), and where this is not upheld He will eventually act to vindicate it (Ex.34:7, 32:32-35).

For anyone other than God or His personal representative (Ex.23:20-21; John 5:26-27) to inflict death upon another without specific command from God is unlawful. Under the Law of Moses murder was punishable by death (Ex.21:12; Matt.26:52). Christ's law not only forbids murder but strikes at the source of murder – hatred in the heart of man (Matt.5:21-22). Murder in the heart, or in fact will disqualify men from entry into the Kingdom of God (1 John 3:15; Gal.5:21).

We may conclude therefore, that God alone has the right to take life and that He does so only to uphold His own righteousness.

Killing Under the Law of Moses

Throughout the period of Patriarchal times there were laws (Gen.26:5) and killing was prohibited, but with the giving of the Law of Moses came the introduction of divinely instituted war and killing on a national scale. The Law introduced two levels

- (1) Personal Level – killing prohibited (Ex.20:13)
- (2) Judicial Level – killing commanded (Deut.7:1-2, 20:16-17)

Until Israel became a nation, divinely approved war on a national scale could not have been considered a possibility, nor could it have divine approval after the effectiveness of the Law of Moses ceased (Luke 16:16; Matt.5:21-22), but that did not altogether exclude judicial death (e.g. Ananias and Sapphira) for which Peter went guiltless (Acts 5:1-9).

Israel disobeyed the command of God to exterminate the Canaanites from the land and as a consequence suffered a heavy punishment – Judges 2:1-3; Josh.23:11-16. Total destruction had been decreed against the seven nations of Canaan for a two-fold purpose. Firstly, their iniquity was full (Gen.15:16) and they were to be judicially judged, and secondly, the inheritance of Israel was to be rid of corrupting influences for the preservation of the Truth in Israel. It was not only foolhardy therefore for Israel to disregard this injunction but also unrighteous. Just as unrighteous as it was for an Israelite to turn and murder his own brother against the divine law.

Summary of Principles

If killing was allowable in some circumstances and prohibited in others, it is clear that:

- (1) If the commandment is to kill (e.g. 1 Sam.15:3) to do so is virtuous, but not to do so is evil (Jer.48:10).
- (2) If the commandment is not to kill, the reverse is true.
- (3) The virtue does not lie in the law itself, but in obeying it, whatever it is.

In all instances cited, it should be noted that it is never given to man to decide to kill another. Throughout, if killing is to retain virtue, it must be at God's command.

Further, as between human beings organised in society, killing has always been forbidden whether in Antediluvian, Post-diluvian or Patriarchal, Mosaic

or Christian dispensations.

Where do we stand today?

- (1) We are not under Mosaic law. Therefore, there is no national ground for war-like activity.
- (2) We are individuals specifically commanded to refrain from killing, and without specific command to exercise any divine judgement. No legal grounds exist for taking life.

What of tomorrow?

At the return of Christ those accounted worthy of eternal life will exercise divine judicial judgement upon the nations and count it an honour to obey the command (Ps.149:5-9; John 18:36-38).

The Origin and Abolition of War

God desires neither war or its inevitable consequence – death, yet he himself inflicted death upon Adam and Eve as just retribution for their transgression of His law, and declared war upon Sin until it, along with death is eradicated from the earth (Gen.3:15-19; cp. Ex.17:16; 1 Cor.15:25-26).

Sin brought conflict in the first instance and has ever since been the cause of war between men and nations (James 4:1). With the suppression of sin in the Kingdom of God, war will be abolished among the nations (Ps.46:9, 68:30; Isa.2:4; Rev.11:18), but will only finally be eradicated by a great conflagration when sin manifested in Christ's enemies initiates the last of all wars upon earth (Rev.20:7-9). Total abolition of sin, war, and death will permit the fulness of divine glory to fill the earth (1 Cor.15:28).

The salvation of the world has been God's purpose from the beginning (11 Pet.3:9; Luke 9:52-56; John 12:47, 3:17). But God, who desires that none should perish, will not abdicate His righteousness to attain that object. He has declared war upon all unrighteousness of men who refuse His offer of salvation in Christ (Rom.1:18).

Hard-hearted Pharaoh was taught this principle. Yahweh who had gone forth for the salvation of Israel, also revealed Himself as a "man of war" on their behalf (Ex.15:1-4) and fought against the Egyptians, a fact also recognised by the Egyptians themselves (Ex.14:25). This He did to uphold His righteousness before Israel and the nations. The Egyptians had rejected all His reasonable demands and had cruelly and unjustly oppressed His people, and were bent on their destruction. If God had refrained from intervening, it would have meant that He had:

- (1) Forsaken the promises He had made to Abraham – Gen.12:1-3,7; 13:14-17; 15:18.
- (2) Abandoned the destiny of the world to people, who, like the Egyptians, were sinners.
- (3) Virtually abdicated His sovereignty as God the creator and King of kings – in favour of Sin and thus, Sin would have been enthroned, and righteousness dispossessed. Divinely instituted war was made essential for the vindication of God's holiness and supremacy.

Therefore, we conclude that, sin aside, war is something God abhors and to

which He only resorts to uphold His righteousness. He alone has the right to initiate war and has promised to ultimately abolish it from the earth.

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN ATTITUDE TO –

Fighting an Enemy

Fighting and striving are expressly forbidden by Christ. His way is the way of non-resistance – Matt.5:39; 11 Tim.2:24.

The only fighting permitted a servant of Christ is that relating to his warfare of faith. This is a spiritual warfare fought against natural evils within, and worldly evils without – 1 Tim.6:12; 11 Tim.4:7; Heb.10:32. The weapons of this warfare are not carnal but those provided by God – 11 Cor.10:3-5. Our attitude to a personal enemy should be one of submission. By returning good for evil in the spirit of sacrificial love, an enemy will either be converted or self-condemned – Matt.5:44; Luke 6:29; Rom.12:20.

Faced with a national enemy, such as an invading army, the Christadelphian has only one avenue of escape – fleeing to another area or country – Luke 21:20-21. The same principle applies where persecution becomes intolerable – the choices are, submission to the evil or escape to another place – Acts 11:19, 8:1,4.

These principles govern the life of a servant of Christ in this dispensation, but the time will come at the end of the gentile age, when in immortality, the servants of Christ will fight to subdue Christ's enemies so that His Kingdom might be established – John 18:36; Ps.149:5-7.

Killing

Christ's commandments in regard to killing are specific and very clear. To kill for any reason is expressly forbidden – Matt.5:21; Mk.10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom.13:9; James 2:11.

For the servant of Christ this commandment reaches into the inner recesses of the heart with the extension of Christ's teaching to regard hatred of one's brother as incipient murder, and tantamount to the same thing – Matt.5:22; 1 John 3:15.

Avenging

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom.12:19). This principle governs the servant of Christ in his relations with his fellow man and the state. Vengeance is a divine prerogative, not a human right. If a saint is persecuted or oppressed unjustly he is to regard it as his due in this life (John 15:18-20; 16:2,33) and as divine chastening for his purification through probation (Heb. 12:5-11). God will avenge the wrong done to His servants in due time, as though it was wrong done unto Himself – Luke 18:7; 11 Thess. 1:6.

Rendering Evil for Evil

If vengeance is a divine prerogative, the suffering of evil becomes a saint's only course of action if escape is either impossible or not desired. Christ's teaching (Matt.5:39) was beautifully portrayed in practical manifestation in His own crucifixion. No one else could have claimed a right to strike back at enemies as He could have done. No other man has suffered greater unjust-

ice or humiliation than He. His submission to His father's will in being led like "a lamb to the slaughter" became the inspiration by which first century Christadelphians and subsequent generations endured horrific persecution and fiery trials – 1 Pet.2:19-23; Heb.12:2-3.

The apostles of Christ not only repeated, but practised the same principles in their lives – 1 Pet.3:9; Rom.12:17; 1 Thess.5:15.

Taking the Sword

To take the sword in self-defence or in defence of one's country is forbidden by the commandments of Christ – Matt.26:52. In this passage the Lord used the word 'perish' which signifies not just dying in battle but perishing eternally because of a decision to adopt this way of life.

The only 'sword' a saint is permitted to use is the word of God (Heb.4:12; Eph.6:17) with which he can wage an effective warfare of faith against principalities and powers, or spiritual wickedness in high places, after having first used it upon himself.

War

War results from the capriciousness and evil intentions of men (James 4:1) but is sometimes used by God to judge nations for their wickedness (Ezek. 14:21; Jer.25:9-14; Dan.9:26-27; Matt.22:7).

In this dispensation the servants of Christ stand aloof from involvement in war, waiting to become constituents of "the army of heaven" which will bring righteous judgement upon the nations of the world in the greatest of all wars – Rev.19:14-15.

To obtain a place in that army a saint must firstly undertake a spiritual warfare and fight a good fight of faith – 1 Tim.6:12; 1:18.

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST

As portrayed above a Christadelphian who eschews bloodshed and war is nevertheless involved in a warfare of his own; a life and death struggle against the forces of evil, within and without. This warfare he undertakes as a soldier of Christ – 1 Tim.2:3-4.

The Oath of Allegiance

To fight in a human army a soldier must first take an oath of allegiance to the rulers of his country or Empire. This the soldier of Christ cannot do. He has committed himself wholly to Christ and no man can successfully serve two masters – Luke 16:13.

NON-COMBATANT SERVICE

Submission to Military Authority

The Christadelphian objection to non-combatant military service is just as emphatic as our refusal to take up arms in combatant service. The principal objection is exactly the same for both forms of military service. It is, as already stated, our refusal to submit to the authority and will of anyone but Christ. Our sole allegiance is to him and our conforming to the laws or will of the state is entirely governed by our responsibility to obey his command-

ments. While the laws of the state do not contravene the laws of Christ it is our duty in obedience to Christ, to obey them. A command to enlist in the armed forces goes beyond Christ's law and subverts it. To give our will to another authority and take an oath of allegiance to serve the state is to sever ourselves from Christ and to repudiate our unique relationship with him. No true servant of Christ could seriously contemplate such a step.

The argument that as non-combatant members of the armed forces the Christadelphian may render humanitarian assistance to his fellow man is completely irrelevant in this context. The question is not whether we are prepared to render assistance to our fellow men in time of war, but whether we are at liberty to submit to any other authority but Christ — 1 Cor.7:23.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT

To serve as a non-combatant under military authority is to make a contribution to the war effort of a nation state as part of an organisation having no connection with the will and purpose of God, except inasmuch as that nation may be used by God in shaping the destiny of all nations. This latter point the servant of Christ cannot determine with any certainty. Though a nation's destiny may be set down in Biblical prophecy, the Christadelphian cannot be sure that a particular war effort plays any part in fulfilling the divine purpose with that nation. Therefore, even if no conflict of allegiance was involved, the servant of Christ must stand apart from any organisation which may be acting in conflict with the purpose of God.

SERVICE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Acting as Free Agents

The ideal Christadelphian position during a time of war is to be allowed by the authorities, total exemption from military service, combatant and non-combatant, and from state directed work of national importance, so that we might act as free agents within the bounds of our conscience to assist our fellow man.

When a nation is at war, especially a war on or near its own territory, the involvement of its citizens and subjects is almost total. The whole community is touched by the war in some way or another. Nearly all industry becomes war oriented. Sweeping powers are claimed by the government and military authorities to enable them to control and marshal the nation's manpower, industrial output, and agricultural produce for the purpose of prosecuting the war. Even the civil service becomes an instrument in the hands of the government to fulfil its policies in respect to the war effort.

The Christadelphian who is able to remain totally independent of any involvement whatsoever is very fortunate. For most, a decision has to be made as to where the lines shall be drawn in the level of their involvement in civil activities which may assist directly or indirectly the war effort of the nation. To remain a free agent is the ideal situation, but that is not always possible and the individual must judge for himself the status of his own position and act accordingly to satisfy the demands of his allegiance to Christ.

Work of a Civil Character Under Civilian Control

During World War 2 (1939-45) in Australia, Christadelphian brethren eligible

for military service were granted full exemption from service, combatant or non-combatant and registered as conscientious objectors on one condition – the condition being that they would perform “such work of a civil character and under civilian control as was specified by the Minister of State for Labour and National Service, and undergo any training provided or approved by that Minister to fit them for that work”.

While acceptance of this condition effectively diminished a Christadelphian’s total freedom of action, it was regarded by brethren as acceptable because it did not require an oath of allegiance, nor did it altogether remove the right to object to undertake any aspect of civil work which was seen to be directly associated with prosecuting the war effort. An appeal could be made to the authority concerned to reconsider the nature of work required of the Christadelphian, and failing this, outright refusal would either force a satisfactory solution, or force the civil authority to place the matter in the hands of the appropriate political authority or court for adjudication. Under no circumstances could the Christadelphian subject his will to another authority, whether civil or military, which may call upon him to undertake work which in his judgement was contrary to the commandments of Christ.

Some Possible Questions on this Subject

It is helpful to consider carefully your answers to questions which seek to reveal inconsistency in the Christadelphian’s refusal to serve in the non-combatant corp and yet acceptance of some civilian duties which are seen to be associated with the war effort. Here are a few questions; formulate your own response to them.

- (1) If you were a bank teller would you pay out money to army personnel in a time of war?
- (2) If you were a farmer would you sell your produce to the army?
- (3) What is the difference between helping the sick and wounded in army hospital and a civilian hospital?
- (4) If while serving in a civilian capacity you were ordered by an army officer to give priority to an army emergency and suspend your normal activities, what would you do?
- (5) If soldiers commandeered your ambulance or fire truck and ordered you to drive them to another place, what would you do?
- (6) If you were employed in roadbuilding and discovered the road was solely for military use, would you continue to build it?

The Christadelphian in Court

PREPARATION

Need for thorough Knowledge and Conviction

It is absolutely essential that the Christadelphian presenting himself in Court to defend his conscience should not only possess one, but be able to properly defend it. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, he presents himself as a representative of Christ to give an answer of the hope that is within him, and to defend the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. To do so lightly, or in an ill-prepared manner is surely a denigration of the name he bears, as well as inconsiderateness of those who must follow him.

Secondly, the court will not accept a simple declaration that a conscientious objector is a member of the Christadelphian community as a basis for exemption. The appellant must prove that he personally possesses a conscience against military service by not only presenting to the court the reasons for his conscience, but also by being able to defend those reasons and his personal life, against what is very often subtle and persistent cross-examination.

There is only one avenue open to the Christadelphian who desires to successfully negotiate the court procedure. He must know his case thoroughly *before* going to court. His case will not be won in court, but in the months of preparation beforehand.

Adequate knowledge is essential but it must also be accompanied by conviction. The court must be able to perceive that an applicant is not just mouthing what he has been taught in a "parrot-fashion", but that he actually believes what he is saying. To ascertain this is the purpose of cross-examination.

Diligent and prayerful preparation will arm the true conscientious objector for every contingency he is likely to meet in court. The governing principle is little different to that which must be applied in our preparation to stand before a greater tribunal (Matt. 25:1-10).

No Modern Application for Mark 13:11

Curiously, the words of Jesus in Mark 13:11 have sometimes been advanced by applicants for exemption from military service as a reason why we should not meticulously prepare our case before appearance in court. Some modern conscientious objectors have appropriated to themselves the promise of the Lord to his Disciples of the First Century, asserting that it applies equally to them.

Upon examination this is an astounding assertion. Having warned his disciples that it was inevitable that they would be arraigned before the authorities to give an answer of the hope that was within them, the Lord

warned them not to rehearse their defense, but to speak forth that which was given them by the Holy Spirit. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit." And so it did in those early days of the Ecclesia. To claim however, that this promise still applies today is to say that the Holy Spirit is available to believers in modern times. This is manifestly untrue, scripturally and in practise, despite the recent trend towards "Pentecostalism" and "Charismatic" religion among the churches. A trend which unfortunately has not left the Christadelphian community untouched.

In short, the Holy Spirit is not available to believers today, and therefore, the Christadelphian has no choice but to devote a great deal of time and effort in preparation of his case.

A Simulated Trial

Many young Christadelphian Brethren have greatly benefited from the conducting of a simulated "Trial" as a climax to their preparation. While ensuring that Local State Laws are not infringed, a situation can be created where an applicant is placed in a "real-life" court atmosphere. This can only be to his advantage, enabling him to get the "feel" of the court and its procedures, as well as allowing him to test his preparation publicly.

Liaison with your Appointed Counsel

Under the provisions of the National Service Act 1951-1964, an applicant for exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection may be represented at the hearing by Counsel, Solicitor or duly authorised Agent.

It has been the practise of Brethren in Australia to appoint an experienced Brother to represent them as an authorised Agent in court. To appoint Non-believers to act in this capacity when the fundamentals of our faith are in question would not only be out of place, but unwise.

Having appointed your Christadelphian representative, liaison with him in the weeks leading up to the case is vitally important. Though the assistance that can be rendered in court by your Agent is limited by court procedure (as explained later), his part in assisting you to present your case is very helpful and his mere presence is of enormous benefit in boosting the confidence of the applicant.

It is essential to spend time with your representative, running through every aspect of the case and of court procedure.

Prayer

In every avenue of life and at every approach to the Word of God, Prayer should be the bastion of the true servant of Christ. The issues of life in the truth are more easily borne when committed into the hands of our Heavenly Father. This is especially true when faced with the defense of our conscience before the powers that be.

God has ordained those powers (Rom. 13:1-3) and has committed all power in Heaven and in Earth (1 Pet. 3:22) to his Son. If in obedience

to him we find ourselves in conflict with the State we can do nothing else but hold fast to our convictions and seek divine guidance to overshadow our affairs. We can then be assured that whatever the outcome his will has been done (1 John 5:14-15). It follows that if we are to pray for "the powers that be" (1 Tim. 2:1-3) so that we might live peaceable lives in Christ's service, then our prayers can and will be effective when we are brought before them to give a reason of the hope that is within us.

Earnest prayer during our preparation and while our case is in progress is an essential ingredient in the whole process of securing exemption from any form of military service. We cannot draw upon the power of the Holy Spirit like our Brethren of the First Century, but we can draw upon the strength and overshadowing providence of our God to assist us and guide the outcome of our case (11 Tim. 4:16-18, 1 Pet. 5:6-10).

Dress and Appearance

The last days of the Gentile Age have been characterised by an appalling decline in standards of conduct and appearance once accepted as normal in societies where "Christianity" is entrenched, or has exerted its influence.

The standards of a "Christian" society however are always lower than those demanded of the servant of Christ. This is especially true of conduct, but is also true of dress and appearance. Modesty and moderation are required of the servant of Christ in his choice of apparel, to match the high standards of moral conduct which he is called upon to manifest in his daily life. The absence of the former is very often a tell-tale sign that he is experiencing difficulty in meeting the latter. An almost total breakdown of moral standards in our society has also led to the abandonment of modesty and sobriety in dress and bearing. The sad fact is that Christadelphians have not been unaffected by this general decline. We need to be vigilant to ensure that trends in behaviour and dress, unacceptable to Christ do not creep into our lives through our failure to perceive the subtle and insidious pressures brought to bear upon us by an evil world.

When a Christadelphian stands in court he does so as an ambassador of Christ and a representative of the community of Christ's Brethren. He is duty bound to ensure that he faithfully represents both, in a manner that will not bring disrepute upon the name he bears. Part of his responsibility is to present himself dressed appropriately for the occasion. In the courts of this Land which remain a stronghold of the formalism and conservatism of the past, a suit coat is required to be worn by officials and appellants, and those not complying are deemed improperly dressed. There is no reason why we should not present ourselves dressed as formally and neatly as we would for the most formal of ecclesial meetings.

Furthermore, the Court will be able to make comparisons between various groups of conscientious objectors. Apart from the Christadelphian, there will be members of other religious groups, organisations and persuasions, and even of the "alternative society", all appearing before the Court to

argue their case for exemption, during any period of a National Service call-up. Their reasons will range from religious convictions to pacifism, and will be as diverse as their background, way of life, and appearance. It is unlikely that the unkempt long hair and dishevelled appearance of the "hippy" type pacifist will appeal to the Magistrate as a reason to grant an application for exemption any more than the arguments of insincere objectors have in the past. Very likely he will be required to do military service, as a result of which his shabby and unkempt appearance will be transformed through the application of army discipline.

For brethren in Christ, the wearing of long hair is a shame to themselves (1 Cor 11:14) and a reason by which the name they bear may be had in derision. Let us be careful not to ape the world in its folly, but rather strive to uphold the standards of conduct, dress, and appearance expected of a separate and "holy" people.

COURT PROCEDURE

The National Service Act

While Court procedures may vary slightly from State to State in cases of conscientious objection to military service, all would be guided by the provisions of the relevant Act of Parliament. During the last National Service call-up the provisions of the National Service Act 1951-1964 were applied.

Section 29 of the Act dealing with Conscientious Objection may be summarised as follows:

"A registrant who claims that he holds conscientious beliefs which do not allow him to bear arms or engage in military service may apply to be registered as a conscientious objector. He must first register for national service and should then lodge an application as soon as possible after receiving his Certificate of Registration. The application form enables him to apply for total exemption from military service or for exemption only from combatant duties. The form may be obtained from the National Service Registration Office or any District Employment Office of the Department of Labour and National Service. When completed it should be sent to the Registrar at the National Service Registration Office.

An application to be registered as a conscientious objector is heard and determined by a Magistrate. The registrant is given adequate notice in writing of the date, time and place fixed for the hearing. The Magistrate has power to direct that he be exempted from all military service or that he be employed only on duties of a non-combatant nature. If the application is unsuccessful there is a right of appeal to a higher court and the decision of this court is final and conclusive. At the hearing of an application or an appeal the registrant may be represented by counsel, solicitor or duly authorised agent. He is responsible for any fees incurred by such representation but no court fees are charged.

If a registrant is balloted out or is otherwise eligible for indefinite deferment or for exemption there is no need to have his application deter-

mined by a Magistrate. The Registrar will advise him of this when notifying him that he is not required for service."

Burden of Proof

Section 29D of the Act deals with the burden of proof, placing it upon the applicant. Simply stated, the Act requires the applicant for exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection to prove his own case before the Court. It is not the duty of the Crown to disprove it. Emphasis should be placed on the preparation and presentation of a strong case of conscientious objection to military service, combatant and non-combatant. An ill-prepared and weak case presented as "Evidence-in-chief" in Court may seriously prejudice the applicant's chance of a favourable decision.

Placing the burden of proof on the applicant also makes it imperative that the applicant knows his case thoroughly. This approach is readily understandable when the aim of the Court is to test the sincerity and genuineness of every applicant.

What the Applicant must prove

Regulation 35 under the National Service Act requires that a Court of Summary Jurisdiction be satisfied with an applicant's case for exemption in the following particulars. Briefly, it states, "In addition to all other relevant considerations; (a) The extent to which the evidence of the applicant is corroborated; (b) The period during which the applicant claims to have held his conscientious belief; (c) The circumstances in which he claims to have formed it; and (d) The circumstances in which he claims to have continued to hold it."

These points must all be firmly established in "Evidence-in-chief" (to be discussed later) given by the applicant before the Court. As previously stated, it is essential that the applicant thoroughly prepare this portion of his case.

SWEARING AN OATH

The standard procedure in all courts of the Land is to obtain an oath from any person entering the witness box that they will tell the truth in the evidence they give. This oath is sworn by the witness placing his hand upon the Bible. When an applicant for exemption from military service enters the witness box he too will be asked to swear upon the Bible.

The Law of Christ

The servant of Christ is expressly forbidden to swear an oath in this manner (Matt.5:33-37; James 5:12). Honesty and truthfulness are indispensable attributes of the followers of Christ. They hate lying and deceit. For them a simple 'yes' or 'no' carries as much weight as any oath. Their word is their guarantee (Matt.5:37; James 5:12).

Unfounded Objections to this Interpretation

Some object, saying that neither the Lord or his brother intended such

an interpretation of their words, but were merely correcting the abuses of the times. They argue that the context of Matt.5:33-37 concerns the making of vows, because Jesus referred to Num.30:2. Furthermore, they contend that both Jesus (Matt.26:63) and Paul (11 Cor.1:23) used or spoke under oaths.

A careful examination of Matt.5:33-37 reveals that Jesus is speaking chiefly about our dealings with other men which may reflect upon our estimation of God. His use of the phrase "let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay," clearly implies dealings between men. Seen against the backdrop of the abuses and distortions current in the nation at the time, it is also clear that the Lord is speaking about oaths between men and not vows to God. The practise of using oaths to emphasise the truthfulness of one's words had degenerated to a point verging on blasphemy. The trader selling his wares or the farmer his produce would invoke things of increasing importance and sanctity in order to lend weight to the claims he made. The distortions resulting from this practise can be easily imagined and are amply illustrated by the examples cited by Jesus.

As he continually did throughout his discourse on the Mount, Jesus swept away the degenerate practises of Israel by striking at the heart of the matter. If it was needful for men to use oaths in order to impress others with the veracity of their words, then surely that veracity was in question. The principles of Jesus are transcendent. If the heart is right before God, truthfulness will be characteristic of the man, and lying will be eschewed. A simple 'yes' or 'no' will be an indubitable guarantee of truth.

Examination of Num.30:2 shows that it concerns not only vows but also swearing of oaths. Clearly, this is the subject of the words of Jesus in Matt.5:33-37. Furthermore, to contend that Jesus spoke under an oath by quoting Matt.26:63 is quite irrelevant in this context. It was the High Priest of Israel who invoked an oath of adjuration during the Lord's trial out of sheer desperation to force him to speak. Jesus never swore an oath in this exchange but did feel constrained to respond to the High Priest's oath of adjuration lest silence might have been interpreted as a sleight upon God.

In Paul's case the words "I call God for a record upon my soul" (11 Cor. 1:23) can hardly be described as an oath, any more than his words in Rom.9:1 may be construed as such. The oaths which both Jesus and James forbade were those with which a man "bound his soul with a bond" (Num.30:2). This is vastly different to simply calling upon God to act as a witness. The very reason why a servant of Christ need only use a 'yea' or 'nay' is that he is conscious that God is a witness to all his words. To bind one's soul by an oath cannot increase the veracity of his words.

Let us be settled in our minds on this matter. The words of the Lord are unequivocal. It is dangerous to seek a way around them merely to save embarrassment.

Affirmation - An Acceptable Alternative

In recent times a simple affirmation that one will tell the truth has been

accepted in courts of law as an acceptable alternative to swearing an oath on the Bible. Ironically, legislation passed providing for use of an affirmation in lieu of an oath was introduced into Parliament by a Government seeking to meet the demands of atheists in its own ranks who objected to using the Bible in swearing oaths. This concession made for atheists has simplified matters for Christadelphians.

Should you be requested to swear an oath in Court, all you need do is ask the Clerk of the Court if you could take an affirmation instead. Nowadays you should have no difficulty. By affirming that you will tell the truth you are simply saying that your 'yea' will be 'yea', and your 'nay', 'nay'. It is courteous to advise the Clerk before the case commences.

PRESENTATION OF THE CASE

Reason for Counsel

The purpose of being represented by Counsel in Court is that the Applicant might be assisted in presenting Evidence-in-chief to the Court. This is then followed by Cross-examination conducted by a legal representative of the Crown.

There is an important difference between Evidence-in-chief and Cross-examination. This lies in the mode of questioning permitted by the Court. In Evidence-in-chief leading questions are forbidden. Generally, any question which supplies or suggests the answer, or which may be answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no', is a leading question. On the other hand, in Cross-examination, leading questions are not only permissible but almost obligatory. The counsel for the Crown wants to suggest wrong answers to the Applicant in the hope that a weakness or inconsistency may appear in his case.

The reasoning of the Court is understandable. If the Applicant is to give evidence, it must be *his* evidence, not his counsel's. If it is to be believed, it should be able to survive attack from any source and in any form. This emphasises the need for a well prepared case which may be readily adduced from the Applicant by a few legally admissible questions posed by Counsel.

After Cross-examination has been completed, there may be opportunity to present re-examination of the Applicant by his counsel. This is only permissible where further clarification is desired on certain points raised in Cross-examination which had not been touched upon in Evidence-in-chief. Under the laws of evidence, re-examination must be confined to new matters raised in Cross-examination.

Evidence-in-chief

Evidence-in-chief is the evidence presented to the Court by the applicant in support of his application for exemption from Military Service. It should include the grounds of his conscientious objection to Military Service, evidence of the period during which those convictions have been held, and evidence to demonstrate the consistency of his stand. Documentation and other witnesses may be introduced in order to establish the last two points, but the grounds for an Applicant's conscience must be expressed clearly and concisely by the Applicant himself. Counsel not being able to pose

leading questions, is limited in the help he can give. The Applicant must consequently be thoroughly conversant with the grounds upon which his conscientious objection is based.

The outcome of the case may well rest upon the soundness of an Applicant's case presented in Evidence-in-chief. If he purposely withholds the major part of his case or fails to elucidate it extensively enough, the Crown may very well say they do not propose to cross-examine at any length because the Applicant has not proved his case. The case may therefore fail through default. On the other hand, if through poor presentation of Evidence-in-chief a matter is seriously challenged in Cross-examination and no new matter is raised, re-examination by the Applicant's Counsel is not possible.

The only safe way is to present a solid case in Evidence-in-chief and be well prepared for a strong Cross-examination with little or no chance for re-examination.

A Specimen Evidence-in-chief

The grounds for our conscientious objection may be presented as in the following example to which would be added the other evidence sought by the Court. This should include at the beginning the Applicant's name, address, occupation and age. Then the case:

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

A Christadelphian's objection to military service is founded upon the Bible which we believe to be the infallible and inspired word of God (11 Tim.3:16, 11 Pet.1:21).

I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will shortly return to this earth (Acts 1:11) to establish His Kingdom upon the ruins of other kingdoms. He will put down all rule, authority, and power (1 Cor.15:23-25), both political and national (Dan.2:44, Isa.60:12) and will reign as King (Zech.14:9). His Kingdom will be co-extensive over the whole world, and will bring blessing and peace to all peoples (Ps.72).

In order to inherit a part in this Kingdom it is necessary to obey the commandments of Christ (John 14:21-23).

The Kingdom Jesus Christ will set up on earth, will be the Kingdom of God restored (1 Chron.28:5 & 29:23; cp. Acts 1:6, Jer.3:17). During the period that this Kingdom was in existence, men of faith fought for it at the express command of God (Deut.7:2; 20:16; 1 Sam.15:3), who however at times commanded them not to fight (11 Sam.5:23; Jer.21:8-9, 27:5-8).

In view of God's intention to restore that Kingdom, the Bible teaches me that present conditions are temporary (11 Cor.4:18), and because of my spiritual allegiance to Christ and the Kingdom He will set up, it specifically warns me against fighting for present kingdoms which are to pass away (John 18:36; Luke 21:20-21; 11 Cor.10:3-4; Eph.6:13).

The Bible teaches that Christ is taking out of the nations a people for His Kingdom (Acts 15:14). The foundation of that hope is separateness from the political, ecclesiastical, and national organisations of man (11 Cor.6:14-

18). We cannot leave the world, but we must be separate from its evils (John 17:14-18). We are to strive to live as Jesus Christ who is our example (1 Pet. 2:21-23). He refused to fight, and exhorted His followers likewise (John 18:10-12).

His commandments on this matter are specific. He and His apostles stressed the importance of: –

- * Non-resistance to evil – Matt.5:39-40
- * Not taking vengeance – Rom. 12:19
- * Not rendering evil for evil – 1 Thess.5:15
- * Not taking the sword – Matt.26:52
- * Not killing – James 2:11, Rom.13:9
- * Not fighting but rather fleeing from invading forces – Luke 21:20

We are to hold Jesus in higher esteem than anyone else (Luke 14:26) obeying His commands as a soldier his commanding officer (Matt.10:37; 11 Tim. 2:3-4). We are commanded to observe the laws of man except where they conflict with the laws of God (Acts 5:29), paying all taxes as commanded (Rom.13:4-7), recognising that governments (even Pagan!) are ordained of God (Rom.13:1-2; Dan.4:17) and rendering due honour (1 Pet.2:17 - the king was Nero), though acknowledging a higher authority in heaven (Acts 17:7). We are to live as “strangers and pilgrims in the earth” as far as our political and national identity is concerned, awaiting the polity (the Kingdom of God) to come (Heb.11:13-16).

We are bound to obey Christ’s laws, and He forbids us to become bondslaves of men (1 Cor.6:20,7:23). Therefore we cannot join any organisation (even though its ideals may be morally sound) which will interfere with the free and unfettered allegiance we must render to Christ. For this reason we cannot become members of the non-combatant corp of the army which is an integral part of an organisation whose sole aim is to wage war. To do so would require surrendering our allegiance to Christ.

We are expected to show fortitude in all circumstances of life, recognising that trials and suffering may be our lot (Acts 14:22), but that through faith and trust in the ability of God to ultimately save us out of every trial, we can be prepared and preserved for His Kingdom (1 Cor.10:13).

It is my firm and settled intention to uphold the principles that I have outlined, and which may be found enshrined in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith. This statement forms the basis of our fellowship and specifically mentions that members are not to take part in any of the forces of the State (Doctrines to be Rejected No. 35).

Evidence of Consistency

Having presented the substance of his case before the Court the Applicant is then required to provide evidence of the period during which he has held his convictions and of the consistency of his stand.

Counsel may call witnesses such as the Sunday School Superintendent to testify on the Applicant’s behalf or present letters from the Superintendent or the Recorder of his ecclesia regarding his attendance at meetings and Sun-

day School. Other relevant documents such as an order of exemption from military service granted to the Applicant's father during some previous national call-up may be helpful in establishing a background and record of consistency.

Some Applicants have in the past been sorely tested on the grounds of consistency. It is an area which some Crown counsels like to probe deeply. It is therefore essential that Christadelphian young people establish a good record of attendance at Sunday School and ecclesial meetings, but more importantly a sound pattern of life consistent with the beliefs that they espouse. It is too late to think about this when at twenty years of age you are suddenly summoned before the courts of the land.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

The Purpose of Cross-examination

The purpose of cross-examination by counsel for the Crown is to test the Applicant's case by probing his testimony for weaknesses and inconsistencies. The whole object of the exercise is to place the Applicant under as much pressure as is required to reveal the genuineness or otherwise of his case and to see whether or not he actually believes the things presented to the Court, and can adequately defend them.

The approach of most Crown representatives is fair and reasonable in achieving this object. Some however, approach the matter differently, especially in times of war, as might be expected. There have been many cases where Christadelphian applicants have endured long and arduous cross-examination by Crown Counsel, some of whom were very familiar with Christadelphian doctrine and practise. Without a thorough preparation an Applicant caught in this situation might be severely embarrassed.

The past has shown that no Christadelphian has anything to fear from cross-examination if he knows what he believes and can defend it, and has lived a life consistent with it. Many brethren who suffered imprisonment and privation during the two World Wars did so, not as a result of their inability to defend their beliefs but because the authorities refused to accept the grounds of their conscientious objection. Today there is an acceptance of conscientious objection in most 'civilised' countries, won for us by the fortitude and persistence of brethren in the past. All that we need do now in this country is adequately present and defend our case in court, and recognition of our conscientious objection is normally a matter of course. We may be yet tested more severely in the future.

Nature of Questions

It is in the very nature of cross-examination to ask questions which are designed to unsettle an Applicant. Counsel may begin cross-examination in the following way for example:

- Q. Have you discussed this application with others and received advice on it and on how you should answer questions?
- Q. Were you informed of questions you might be asked, and answers you should give?

Q. Did you find the Biblical references yourself, or did someone tell you?

It can be seen from this approach that Counsel is trying to unsettle the Applicant regarding the source of his beliefs, by demonstrating that he stands in Court as a spokesman for a sect, not as an individual with a conscience. Do not be afraid to admit that you have learnt from others and that you have thoroughly prepared for your case, but be sure to emphasise that what you say springs from your own personal convictions. Magistrates will accept this as not only reasonable but almost essential. After all, both they and counsel for the Crown have learned their profession from others and prepare their cases thoroughly beforehand. It is not preparation or assistance from others that are important, but rather, whether the Applicant can demonstrate in the witness box that what he is presenting before the Court actually represents his own convictions, from whatever source they may have come.

The next ploy may be to lead the Applicant to say something derogatory about the State or its armed forces which may reflect upon the Court hearing its case against a conscientious objector. The answer to the question, 'Is the army evil', is quite obviously 'yes'. From this point the questions may turn to the authorities who set up and control the armed forces or to the State itself. 'Are they evil as well', etc.? In this context it becomes necessary to define what is meant by 'evil' and to show simply that the organisations of men are not of God. However, the questions may take a different course, such as, 'Yet the Bible says, Resist not evil (Matt.5:39). Aren't you by this very application resisting something the Bible says you shouldn't?' It then becomes necessary to explain that the 'evil' of Matt.5:39 (*poneros* in the Greek) refers to an evil or injurious person who attacks you. The army is not evil in that sense unless it attacks you. Again you need to define what is meant by 'evil'.

The astute Counsel will attempt to use the Old Testament as a basis for demonstrating a supposed inconsistency in the Christadelphian position. He may ask, 'Do you base your conscience upon the Old Testament or the New?' Our first and natural response to this is 'Both', and while this is essentially correct, it allows Counsel to ask questions such as, 'In Deut. 7 God commanded His people to kill. How do you reconcile that with your current attitude, if the O.T. forms part of your conscience?' As you will not be in a position to spend the time required explaining the moral relationship of the Old and New Testaments it is much simpler to answer that your conscience is based upon the commandments of Christ, and therefore upon the New Testament. Counsel may then enquire, 'You know that in Matt.5:17, Jesus said that heaven and earth would pass away before the Law would pass away. Are not the heaven and the earth still here?' The answer here clearly revolves around what "heaven and earth" represent; the answer being Judah's Commonwealth which passed away in A.D. 70.

Another method of approach is to demonstrate inconsistency, or perhaps even disloyalty surrounding the matter of law and order. The rights of the individual within a nation are pressed as being valid in the international sphere. The questions may proceed in the following way:

Q. Should there be law and order in a community?

A. Yes.

Q. Should a man be permitted to steal your possessions?

A. No.

Q. Should murderers and robbers be permitted to roam at large?

A. Of course not.

Q. If someone brutally assaulted your family, would you call the Police?

A. Yes, I would.

Q. Would you go to their assistance?

A. I probably would, but without violence.

Q. Should there not be law and order among nations?

A. It is desirable.

Q. Should one nation attack another without let or hindrance?

A. It is not desirable: but God rules in the kingdom of men.

Q. Do you think we should say 'come on, do what you like'?

A. I do not.

Q. Should a nation sit by and let this happen?

A. By Christ's law. Yes.

Q. In the last war, should action have been taken to stop the aggressor?

A. No.

As can be seen from this exchange it eventually becomes necessary to point out that though law and order is desirable among nations, and they will in the end be judged for their disobedience of God's law, the individual has no control over their actions. He can speak only for his own conscience and for this alone will he be judged. Both he and the nations in due course must answer for their attitude to Christ's law of non-resistance to evil.

Spontaneous reaction is another area usually explored. To a question about what we would do if suddenly attacked or placed in a position demanding spur-of-the-moment decision for our own protection or that of our loved ones, we are inclined to be totally honest and say that though we know what we should do, and would make every attempt to do it, we are conscious that placed under severe emotional stress, it is possible that on a particular occasion we may act instinctively and as a result, inconsistently to our beliefs. It is best not to answer in this way if it can be avoided. Though Magistrates will appreciate that deviation under stress, or unpremeditated involuntary reaction, does not prove the absence of conscience, it is better not to give your interlocutor any chance to undermine the consistency of your case. There is an extremely effective way to answer questions of this type and this is considered in the next section on hypothetical questions.

These are just a few examples of the type of questions likely to be asked in cross-examination. Others have been considered in the previous chapter. If possible obtain transcripts of previous cases to further pursue this matter.

Treatment of Hypothetical Questions

A favourite practice of most Crown counsels is to pose questions of a hypothetical nature designed to place the Applicant in a position of choosing between two alternatives, both unacceptable. If the Applicant responds by choosing the lesser of two evils he is then led by a series of questions to a position where his answers appear to be inconsistent with the grounds of his application. For example, consider the following question.

“If as a Christadelphian you were living in Germany during the last War and saw a family of Jews pursued by the Gestapo, hide in the house across the street, what would you say if the Gestapo came to your house asking if you had seen them? Would you disclose their whereabouts knowing they would go to certain death, or would you tell a lie?”

If the Applicant becomes involved in such a question he may be forced into compromise with his own professed principles of adherence to the commandments of Christ. This and many other questions like it can only be effectively answered by following Christ’s own example in the treatment of hypothetical questions.

The Sadducees question concerning the woman who had had seven husbands, all of whom had failed to raise up seed in the family name (Matt.22:23-33), was designed so that it might present an insoluble problem to the Lord. He demolished it by attacking it where most hypothetical questions are weakest – at its foundations. They had made basic assumptions which were incorrect. They misunderstood the purpose of resurrection, and indeed, the purpose of the Levirate law. They were willingly ignorant of the teaching of the scriptures concerning resurrection and eternal life (Matt.22:29). Therefore, their question was based upon false premises and incorrect assumptions.

The same applies to nearly all hypothetical questions. Take the example already provided. The assumption is that Christadelphians living in Germany, and in particular those of military age, were free to conduct normal lives during the war. The truth is that many suffered persecution and at least one brother lost his life because of his conscientious objection to military service. It is likely therefore that we would be in prison and not in a position to witness the event portrayed in the question.

Still more to the point is our unshakeable conviction that in whatever circumstances of life we may be found, we will not be tried beyond our capacity to bear. We believe that God, through His providence, will not leave us with only two choices, both unacceptable to Him, but will always provide a way of escape for His faithful servants that they may endure all temptation (1 Cor.10:13). So even if we grant that we may be caught in the type of situation portrayed in the question, we still insist that God will provide a way of escape from such a dilemma. This is our faith. We believe that we must be tried in order to enter the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22), but that God will only try us to a point He knows we can bear. What can the Crown counsel say about this? It obviously removes the very basis upon which his hypothetical questions are founded, and consequently frees the Applicant from entry into the slippery paths of purely hypothetical issues.

Use of the Bible

Because the Christadelphian position rests solely upon the Bible, frequent reference must be made to it during presentation of the case and cross-examination. It is difficult to commit to memory every passage of scripture one would like to use in Court, and therefore it may become necessary to read from the Bible in replying to questions posed by either counsel. Permission should be sought from the Magistrate to refer to the Bible and should this be granted it is possible the Court Bible will be handed to the Applicant for his

use. He will need to know his chapter and verse very well under these circumstances.

Some Magistrates may permit the Applicant to use his own Bible in the witness box. The familiarity of one's own Bible is always an advantage in such circumstances.

Your case can only be helped if you are able to demonstrate a familiarity with the scriptures by verbatim quotation and proficiency in turning up the required references. It immediately becomes clear to the Court that the case being presented is your own and not the mere mouthing of something learnt 'parrot-fashion' for the occasion.

Addressing the Judge

In all the institutions of man there are certain forms and traditions to be followed. One of these is the manner in which judges of the courts are to be addressed. It is normal practise to address the judge of the High Court as "Your Honour", while a magistrate of a lower court as "Your Worship", and there is no reason why the Christadelphian should not use this form of address as well.

To address the Magistrate as "Your Worship" is an acknowledgement of his worldly status and his right of jurisdiction in such cases. It is in no way an ascription of honour or worship that might infringe upon our singleminded reverence for God and Christ, nor does it reflect upon our allegiance to Them alone. We are simply acknowledging that the individual concerned occupies a position of authority which we respect and obey because he has received it from God (Rom.13:1-7, John 19:10-11) for the regulation of society, so that God's servants might live quiet and peaceable lives, if that is His will (1 Tim.2:1-3).

Not only are we to give honour to whom it is due (Rom.13:7, 1 Pet.2:17) but have the apostolic precedent as to the manner in which it should be given (Acts 24:10, 26:2-3). Examination of Paul's manner of address reveals a respect for the position and authority of those addressed without a trace of the insipid adulation which characterised the worldly approach of his day (Acts 24:2-4, 12:22).

It is essential that we maintain respect for the Court and its officials throughout our case. To reveal contempt would not only be unscriptural, but unwise. Furthermore, it goes without saying that to descend to gratuitous eulogy of the Tertullian variety is entirely inappropriate.

AWAITING THE DECISION

Young Christadelphians with little experience of court procedure may sometimes be surprised by the Magistrate, after hearing the case, reserving his judgement to a later sitting of the Court. It can come as a bit of a shock, especially when a few seconds after the conclusion of cross-examination, the Magistrate reserves his judgement, rises, and leaves the Court abruptly. The first thought that enters the Applicant's mind is that he was not happy with the case and wants time to consider it. However, if the case has gone satisfactorily there is no need for concern. Some magistrates regularly reserve their judgements, some do not. Whatever their practise is, they all

must consider the case on its merits and make their judgement on the basis of the evidence presented.

Should the case have gone badly for any reason and an unfavourable decision given there is always recourse to the appeal provisions allowing the case to be heard again in a higher court. In the vast majority of cases thorough preparation and settled conviction combined with a consistent pattern of behaviour obviate any need to invoke the appeal provisions. And this is the way it should be.

THE ORDER OF EXEMPTION

Following the successful outcome of a case the Applicant is issued with an Order of Exemption from Liability to Render Service on the Ground of Conscientious Belief (Form 9 -- National Service Act). The Magistrate signs an order which states: "I find that he holds a conscientious belief that does not allow him to engage in any form of military service and that he is, by virtue of the provisions of section 29A of the National Service Act, exempt from liability to render service under that Act".

Treasure it! It is a hardwon privilege gained for the modern generation of Christadelphians by the faithful efforts and patient suffering of many brethren in the past. Moreover, having gained it, do what you can to assist the younger generation to understand the vital principles involved in this aspect of our faith.