

## **SOME FAITHFUL WITNESSES**

FROM an English newspaper, The Rugby Observer, March 3, we quote the following: –

The first conscientious objectors to come before a Rugby Tribunal made their appearance yesterday before the Rural Authority. There were three claims. Two were made by Colporteurs living at Biltonhill and in the employ of a Tract Society, and their objection was to either combatant or non-combatant service.

The first, a widower, on his application wrote that while he appreciated the noble sacrifices that had been and were being made on behalf of King and country, the reason of his application was that five and a half years ago he became a Christian, and that he then vowed to God that he would give himself to His service and work out his life to the best of his ability on the principles of Christianity. He would regard employment in any branch of military service as a complete violation of his oath to the King of kings; he would feel that in his own conscience he would have broken a sacred oath to the Almighty.

Addressing the Tribunal, applicant said when he accepted the principles of Jesus Christ he knew that sooner or later it would cost him something, and he had realized that as the spirit of militarism had permeated all the institutions of the country, it would need courage to hold to those principles. But while he realized that militarism had no room for conscience, he was determined to be guided by his conscience in the matter. He had sworn allegiance to the King of kings, and while he had all respect for those who had sworn to England's King, he was bound in honor to the Lord.

## **"I HAVE NO COUNTRY"**

The President: "Don't you think it is quite compatible with the Christian life to defend your country?"

"I have no country, sir. I gave up my citizenship. While I have always realized the privileges of being born in this country, and have been surprised at the privileges granted by the conscience clause in the Military Act, and had decided to stand to my principles even if that clause had not been added – yet my oath of allegiance is to the King of kings."

Replying to further questions appellant said the instructions of Jesus Christ were that they were to use no violence to any man. Jesus Christ instructed: "It is said you should love your friends and hate your enemies; but I say unto you, love your enemies."

Rev. Challenor: We are aware of the Sermon on the Mount, but there is non-combatant service you could take up.

Applicant: Do I understand that I am discussing whether I am to take up non-combatant service?

Rev. Challenor: In the R.A.M.C. your work would be like that of the Master, to alleviate suffering.

Applicant: In this I should consider what the Master would do. It may seem to be very good to alleviate the sufferings of the brave soldiers at the front, but I hear them say on coming back, "It is ten hells in one." Take a man who is in the jaws of death, and I am asked to nurse him back to life. For what purpose? To send him back to those ten hells in one. No, I am of the opinion that it would be better to let him die and await the Lord's coming.

Mr. Flowers: Do you refuse to take the military oath?

Absolutely. I have taken my oath to the King of kings.

Rev. Challenor: Many other people have taken an oath to the King of kings.

Applicant: I hope they will have determination to keep it.

Mr. Wratismaw: Suppose a burglar entered your house, would you not resist him?

I have no house here.

But suppose you had?

Well, a burglar usually enters a house to look for wealth. If I saw a burglar in my house, I should ask him what he was after. If he said "wealth," I should say, "Well, I am going to help you find it, because I have none."

Yours is a paid service, surely.

I receive nothing in the form of wages from the Society.

Does not the Tract Society pay a commission to its men?

That is so. If I do no work I get no pay.

Replying to a question as to whether he would not defend his mother from violence, applicant quoted the incident of the betrayal of Jesus Christ when Peter was reproved for taking up a sword. No cause, he said, was grander than that, but Christ rebuked Peter for using the weapon.

Mr. Wratismaw: You will not fight and you will not tend the wounded. Are you prepared to go to one of the military prisons in Germany and say, "I am willing to put myself in this prison that one of those wounded soldiers may go back?"

Applicant: I should ask myself, "What would the Master do?" I remember that while our Lord was on earth John the Baptist was in

prison, but our Lord did not release him; He allowed him to be beheaded in prison. I am prepared to go to prison. I am prepared to go to prison for my own conscience. If a man is imprisoned unjustly *the Lord* will deal with his captors, *not I*.

But you do not mind seeking the shelter of this country?

If this country denies me the privilege of living in it I am quite prepared to take a passport to leave it.

I hope you would accept it.

Exemption from *combatant* service only was granted.

Applicant: My conscience will be the final decider in this matter, and I shall keep to my conscience at all costs.

### **SHARP PASSAGE WITH APPLICANT**

The previous applicant's companion sought exemption on similar grounds. He said he had consecrated his life to the Lord's service from the age of 14 years, and participation in any form of military service would violate the principles of Christian truth to which he had pledged himself. He said his views were identical with those of the previous applicant.

Asked by the Rev. Challenor if he did not consider it his duty to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded, he replied that if he did not *undertake* such service he would not *be there* to attend to the wounded.

The President: If you were in that incident in the Bible you would not be the good Samaritan?

To my understanding the parable is not applicable to military service. I would gladly help any one who needed it, but to work in non-combatant service is to assist those engaged in combatant

service. He added that the citizenship to which he belonged was the citizenship of Heaven.

Exemption from *combatant* service was granted.

Applicant: I would like you to understand that my determination is not to serve in any branch of military service, and you as a Tribunal, have a right to give me the exemption I claim. You have been instructed by the Local Government Board to give me exemption in such circumstances. At the same time, I shall appeal if you will not grant it.

The President: You can appeal to the County Tribunal.

Applicant: You have the power and you have the intelligence to judge my claim.

The President: Perhaps the County Tribunal will have more intelligence than we have.

Applicant: It might be so of course.

### **SOME LETTERS ON THE SUBJECT**

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

As you are aware, compulsory military service has been enacted in this country within certain limits. I come under the provisions of the act and would like to have your advice, which for the past fourteen years I have esteemed and sought to follow as presented in the DAWNS and TOWERS.

I applied for total exemption from all forms of military service, but succeeded in getting exemption from combatant service only. A special non-combatant corps is being formed for conscientious objectors to combatant service. Do you think a properly educated conscience would be violated by engaging in such a service, if

compelled to do so? A number of the brethren in Glasgow have been refused even exemption from combatant service at the first appeal court, but I expect all will get recommended at the second and practically final appeal court for non-combatant service. Not to appear when called by the military authorities would mean trial by a civil court as a deserter and then a handing over in charge of an escort to the army officials. To refuse to drill, etc., after that, I suppose, would mean repeated punishments, ending probably in a court martial and a sentence of death. Do you think a properly educated conscience would make us endure all that rather than engage in non-combatant work? I would be deeply grateful for an early reply, as I may be called upon to decide for myself very soon. With fervent love as ever,

Your brother in Christ,

ALEX. KIRKWOOD.

Reply by the Editor

The question is one for the conscience of each individual. For our part, it would seem to be a participation in the war if one were to engage in laying out and digging trenches, putting in foundations for cannon, etc. – the things implied in the term "engineering."

It would seem to the Editor a somewhat different case if a soldier of the Cross were demanded by an earthly government to enter the hospital work – such as the Red Cross – for relief of the sick and wounded, etc., even if the care of **[R5894 : page 143]** the wounded and the nursing of them back to health would the sooner prepare them for slaughter.

The Editor's conscience would not balk at Red Cross hospital work.

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DEARLY BELOVED PASTOR: –

Greetings in the name of the Lord from all of like precious [R5895 : page 143] faith in this place, who are anxious to assure you of a deep and constant love for you.

At the suggestion of these we are writing to inform you of a wonderful manner in which the Lord has used His people here to witness His glorious character and Plan – in a way so unexpected and with such clear evidence that we are but instruments in His hands.

You are aware of the position in which many of our dear younger brethren are now placed by reason of governmental legislation, and we are assured, beloved Pastor, that you are entering into these experiences with us, in that if one member suffer the others suffer with that one; even as it has been our privilege to enter (in spirit) the measure we have known to be laid upon you.

It was necessary for six brethren to appear before a local Tribunal three days ago, this particular tribunal being regarded as one of the "warmest" in the country; and it was therefore with the expectation of a rough time and with no anticipation of an opportunity of witnessing to any appreciable extent that these brothers faced the ordeal.

But the Lord has His hand in matters, and His power was manifested in a most wonderful way. It was our conclusion that here also was fulfilled, "Take no thought what ye shall speak, for in that hour it shall be given unto you," as the brothers in turn, young in years and young in the Truth (most of them only two or three years old "in the Lord"), stood up to these mighty ones (which they surely were, having years of knowledge behind them, and being lawyers and business men, all of them city counselors, or aldermen. Truly, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise"!

The power of the Truth confounded the mighty, too. The whole was something they had not met before, and had not reckoned with. To see these youths standing up to the learned ones, meeting their arguments with a reasonable answer, and replying in the spirit of the Master, was a witness most effectual – by far the best extension work we had done for some time.

In quietness and confidence is surely our strength. The applicant had no control of the subject; he had simply to answer questions put to him in rapid succession by several members of the Tribunal; but it was remarkable what a comprehensive witness was given. The first brother's main theme was the errors of Christendom, whilst the second pointed out the Law we are under – not the Mosaic, but the Law of Christ; whilst the third had no alternative but to cover the terms of our covenant, and what it means to us; the next the establishment of the Kingdom; and the last emphasized the answers of the one preceding him and dealt with the destruction of the present order of things to make way for the better one under Messiah's Kingdom.

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform" and a great witness has gone forth to a class we could not hitherto reach. And, then, all the papers have published something upon the subject. The Truth has thus been brought into prominence more than ever.

The decisions are against the brethren, so we take it to be the Lord's will that another witness should be given. I am glad to tell you that all the brethren are one in mind and attitude in the matter, and are rejoicing in the privilege of sharing experiences so like the Lord's and in having such opportunity of demonstrating their faithfulness to Him.

And now, dear Brother, we must thank you for your able ministry of the Truth of God to us, and we thank Him for the knowledge received through you, our beloved Pastor.



How valuable is the knowledge the Lord has permitted us to have! We are appreciating it more and more as the days go by, for so many do not know the things of which we have knowledge, and consequently the strange happenings of today disturb them much and they have not the "peace which passeth knowledge."

Be assured, dear Pastor, that we continually bear you up at the Throne. May the Lord sustain you to the end! We rejoice with you in the increasing evidence that our deliverance draweth nigh. With fervent love from all,

Yours in the Lord,

— . — *England.*

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: —

Greetings in our Lord Jesus! As you will no doubt have been informed, the Military Service Act has been passed in Great Britain, which gives the Military authorities power to call to military service every able-bodied man in the country between the ages of 18 and 41. It is Conscription pure and simple. Provision was made for conscientious objectors to be partially or totally exempted from the Act, if their objection was proved to be a bona fide, conscientious one. Many of the dear brethren throughout the country have already been up before the appointed Tribunals, claiming exemption from military service, either combatant or non-combatant. In every case that I know or have heard of the claim for total exemption has been disallowed, but mostly all have been granted to have non-combatant military duties. As the desire of the brethren is to be outside of the Act entirely, believing that it is only another way of engaging in military operations, most of them, I understand, are appealing to the Appeal Tribunals for the full benefits of the total exemption clause, which was provided in the Act for conscientious objectors. I myself

have appealed and am waiting to appear before this Second Tribunal, the Appeal Tribunal. The Act provides for a third or Final Tribunal to be held in London, but it is within the power of the second or Appeal Tribunal, to keep any case from going further than the Second Tribunal.

When up before the First Tribunal held in the Town Hall, Newcastle, on seeing that I was showing from the Scriptures that a Christian was breaking the Law of his God to engage in warfare with carnal weapons, the military representative, Colonel Hicks, asked me the question, "What did Jesus mean when he told his disciples to sell their garments and buy swords?" Wondering just how to put the matter in few words so that they could understand the meaning of the incident recorded in Luke 22:36, the first sentence I uttered was interrupted by two or three members of the Tribunal, and the question was waived by further questions.

Requesting your prayers for myself and all the dear brethren who are being severely tried, and with much love,

Your brother in our dear Lord.

JAMES HAMILTON.

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## **NO DISCOURAGEMENT AMONGST THEM**

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

Greetings in our Lord and Head!

You are probably conversant with the trend of matters here in regard to the Military Act. So far as we are aware, all the brethren affected have asked for exemption in accordance with the conscience clause embodied in the Act.

The Tribunals to determine the validity of these claims are now sitting; but up to the present none of the brethren have succeeded in obtaining a complete exemption. There seems to be an entire disregard of the letter of the law in most of these cases. The brethren are, however, appealing to a further Tribunal in the hope that eventually they may obtain the full benefits of the Act.

You will be glad to know that though present circumstances are proving a test to all, and especially to the younger brethren, yet so far as we know there is no discouragement amongst them. Most are glad to have this privilege to witness openly and to suffer for the Lord and the principles of the Truth. With continued love as ever,

Yours sincerely in His service,

W. CRAWFORD. – *England.*

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### **CANADIAN CONSCRIPTION IMPOSSIBLE**

A brother of considerable information on this subject writes us to the effect that Canada, being a Colony and not a sovereign State, could not legally conscript her citizens for overseas service. She could, however, conscript for home service – for defense of Canada.

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