

*Wm. A. Davies.*

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CHRISTADELPHIANS ONLY

# A STATEMENT

SETTING FORTH THE GROUNDS  
FOR

CHRISTADELPHIAN  
SCRIPTURAL OBJECTION TO  
SERVICE IN CIVIL DEFENCE FORCES

(NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS 1941)

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# A STATEMENT

## SETTING FORTH THE GROUNDS FOR CHRISTADELPHIAN SCRIPTURAL OBJECTION TO SERVICE IN CIVIL DEFENCE FORCES (NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS 1941)

Many Brethren and Sisters are seriously perturbed at the situation in the Brotherhood which has followed the Government's imposition on conditionally registered conscientious objectors of compulsory full-time service in the Civil Defence Forces.

The signatories to this Statement are among those who feel they cannot conscientiously undertake this service under the Crown, or counsel their Brethren and Sisters so to do. They do *not* constitute a Committee, but append their signatures merely as Brethren who feel moved spontaneously to support the issue of this Statement, regarding it as their bounden duty, by directing attention to the facts which have influenced their decision, to help their Brethren in arriving at theirs.

In normal circumstances they would deprecate circularising the Ecclesias, but this matter is urgent, and no other practical means being available, they are reluctantly compelled to adopt this course.

### THE FUNCTION OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCES.

1. It is the Country's fourth line of defence, the other three being the Navy, Army, and Air Force.
2. In point of importance it is regarded by the Government as *on a par* with the three fighting forces (National Service Act, 1941, sect. 1, par. 2: sect. (1) *j*). On July 10, 1941, the Minister said: "Approximately speaking . . . the material worth of service in the Army and that in Civil Defence is the same" (Hansard, vol. 373, col. 296). Civil Defence Forces have been described by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Security as "*a necessary supplement to the Armed Forces.*"
3. It is defined in the National Service Act, 1941 (sect. 12, par. 1), as "a civil organisation *established for forestalling or mitigating attacks by the enemy.*" Evidently it is a vital factor in the defence of the Realm.
4. The Minister of Home Security (the head of the Civil Defence Forces) stated in Parliament on May 20, 1941: "If to-day I bring forward a proposal which takes a great service out of the hands of the local authorities, it is not because I want to do so, not because I like to do so, but because the work of firefighting has in substance become a *military* operation and not a municipal operation" (Hansard, vol. 371, col. 1416).

*This highly important statement* explains why Fire Brigades have been taken out of the hands of local authorities, and shows the difference between service in fire brigades which Brethren undertook in 1914-18 and the present National Fire Service.

5. Numerous statements by responsible Ministers and in the Press establish the fact that service in the Civil Defence Forces is an integral part of the Military effort. Mock invasions have stressed the close linking up of the Military and the Civil Defence Forces. In this connection it should be noted that in a recent prosecution under the Army Acts (*Daily Express*, 22.11.1941) the President of the Court Martial referred to the position of "a person *not otherwise subject to Military Law accompanying troops on active service*". Section 184 of the Army and Air Force Act, 1939, indicates that *such are liable to trial by Court Martial under Military Law*.
6. Judges at some Tribunals have many times stressed the fact that applicants who are already enrolled in A.R.P. can have no conscientious objection to non-combatant service.

### THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN THE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCES.

- a. A man is deemed to have been taken into the service of the Crown for the duration of the War, and on the Crown's terms (sect. 2, par. 4; sect. 3, par. 1).
- b. He is required to render full-time service in the Civil Defence Force to which he is attached, and to do such *further* duties of *any other* Civil Defence Force as required (sect. 3, b—f).
- c. He is subject, while serving, to the rules for the time being in force, and whilst not so serving to such provisions as to government and discipline as may be prescribed (sect. 3, g—h).
- d. The condition under which he was registered as a conscientious objector (which he could have refused had it violated his conscience) is suspended, and conscientious objection to the service now demanded is not recognised by the Act (sect. 3, par. 4).

From the above it is clear that a Brother enrolled in a Civil Defence Force—

- A. Enters the service of the Crown as part of a Force which is a "necessary supplement to the Armed Forces."
- B. Is enrolled for the purpose of assisting in the defence of the realm against foreign attack.
- C. May express a preference for service in a particular Civil Defence Force, yet is made liable for *all or any* of the duties of Civil Defence, whether such violate his conscience or not.
- D. Must obey every lawful order. Like Military Law, the regulations govern the whole of every day.
- E. Cannot resign, no matter what conditions may develop, he is *bound* until the end of the present emergency.
- F. When accompanying troops on active service may be tried by court martial for disobedience to any lawful orders by a competent authority, as being under Military Law. Conscientious objection is no defence to such a charge.

## WE SHALL THEREFORE NEED TO ENQUIRE—

1. Whether the aims of the Civil Defence Forces are such as can be conscientiously espoused by the Brethren of Christ.
2. Whether we can submit to be bound in an organisation in which conscience is not free.

In the conduct of this enquiry we first consider—

### OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.

We are commanded to “do good unto all men” (Gal. 6, 10), to “love our neighbour as ourselves” (Matt. 22, 39), and to act the part of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) toward any who may be in trouble. We will therefore gladly render every possible assistance to an injured man, be he soldier or civilian—but we will *not* join the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.) in order to discharge this Christian duty. One reason for this difference of attitude is that the R.A.M.C. is an integral part of a machine designed solely for the efficient prosecution of war, in which as Christians we can take no active part.

It is not denied that some of the duties of Civil Defence are humanitarian in character, and thus bear an aspect of good neighbourliness, but before we decide that this fact constitutes a justification for undertaking service in the Force, another aspect must be considered. There is no doubt that the humanitarian aspect is not the *principal* object in view, the Civil Defence Force being primarily *designed as a means of defence against foreign attack*, and as such, “a necessary supplement to the Armed Forces.” Hence the argument against service in the R.A.M.C. applies equally against service in the Civil Defence Forces—both are an integral part of the War Machine, and service in either should be firmly refused. And here another question, of equal importance, arises, namely, whether a people who are—

### “IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT”—

who are, by faith, citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2, 11-12), and who realise that God “rules in the Kingdom of Men,” *can* take any active part in the struggles of the Nations.

The Christadelphian Petition prepared for presentation in 1878, declared “your petitioners entertain the conviction that they are debarred from taking any part in the conflicts that arise between nations” (“Without the Camp” p.16).

We are instructed to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness,” and may not therefore do anything which would hinder that work. But the “things of His Kingdom” and those of the “Kingdom of Men” are incompatible—hence our position as “citizens” of the former is defined, in relation to the latter, as “strangers and pilgrims”—we are just passing through an unsympathetic and antagonistic world, in which we are commanded neither to “strive” nor “resist evil.” It is difficult to see how, by undertaking service in the State’s Civil Defence Forces, for their purposes, and on their terms, we can hope to help forward the Kingdom of God, or uphold the ideals of the Commonwealth of Israel. On the contrary is it not utterly inconsistent for us to engage actively in

duties which aim at *preserving* a State which forms part of an "order" which we are hoping to assist Christ to *destroy*? But some may ask—If the State demands our services, can we scripturally refuse to serve? Have we not a duty to the State?

## OUR DUTY TO THE STATE.

"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20, 25).

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (Rom. 13, 1-2).

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King as supreme . . . for so is the will of God that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2, 13-15).

The above Scriptures make it clear that submission to "the powers that be" is a Divine command; but it is equally clear from Acts 5, 19-29, that when any ordinance of man runs counter to God's Law we must refuse submission to it. The reason for this is not difficult to see—we are God's "bond servants"—and His service is our life's task. *This fact cannot be too strongly emphasised.* As part of our service to Him we submit to human ordinances, but obviously only in matters in keeping with His revealed will. For this reason our attitude towards the claims of "the powers that be" must be such as was required of first century bond servants (Col. 3, 22-3), who were counselled to "work heartily (R.V. marg. "from the soul") as unto the Lord." From this it is also evident that any service which we cannot consistently perform "from the soul" should be refused.

Is the defence of the realm a work in which Saints can co-operate wholeheartedly with the world, "as unto the Lord"? Some Brethren believe that recent bombings of this country were a foretaste of the Divinely foretold "fire on the isles" (Ezek. 39, 6)—would these agree to be compulsorily organised by the unbeliever to help them resist the just judgments of God upon a wicked world?

In the contest between God and the wicked we are not neutrals, but are definitely "on the Lord's side," although for the present our work is limited to "testifying": but in the contest between nation and nation *we have no part*—our position as citizens of Zion is one of strictest neutrality, and co-operation with any one of them is therefore out of the question.

## WE ARE A "SEPARATED" PEOPLE.

There was a time when we were *of* the world as well as *in* it. At that time we enjoyed all its associations, we joined in with its pleasures, and we worked and laboured with it for the attainment of its ideals; but at that time we were without God and without hope.

But having believed and embraced the Promises of God, we have become "fellow citizens with the Saints and of the Household of God," and are no longer interested in the associations of the world; we do not

join in with its pleasures, and we certainly do not work or labour with it for the establishment of its ideals ; but with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength we serve the Lord in heaven, and His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Apostle exhorts us to "lay aside every weight" that we may run "the race set before us," and if we are wise we will not only discard any association which would retard our progress in this "race," but we will also be very careful to engage in new associations only if they are *helps* to our undivided allegiance to Deity.

"Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2, 3-4).

It is of these "entanglements" that the Apostle warns the Brethren in 2 Cor. 6, where at verse 14 he says—

### **"BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS."**

What these words have signified in the Brotherhood for many years past is indicated by the manner in which they have been applied to "alien" marriages. Apart altogether from any other characteristic of the alien partner, *the fact that he or she was an unbeliever* has always been regarded as a sufficient ground of action against an offending brother or sister. Without question, any such union is an "unequal yoking," for so a Brother binds himself to shoulder a lifelong obligation to a partner who is not only out of sympathy, but often openly antagonistic, to the objects of a true Christian life.

It will be evident that the Apostolic rule here laid down is one of wide application in the life of the Saints, and a careful study of the application of the principle involved in this question of marriage with the alien, will help to exhibit its bearing on other problems as they arise, including the one now before us as the outcome of the State's demand on our services in connection with Civil Defence.

In all probability the words of Deut. 22, 10, would be before the Apostle's mind when laying down this rule (cf. Deut. 25, 4 ; 1 Cor. 9, 9). The yoking of ox and ass is a self-evident "unequal yoking," and its lesson is emphasised when it is remembered that this was also a yoking of "clean" and "unclean" beasts, an idea that seems to be reflected in the Apostle's counsel for believers concerning their relations with unbelievers.

"Yoking" speaks of working in joint harness for the achievement of a common aim, but when the "yoking" is with *unbelievers*, on *their* terms, and for *their* purposes (as is the case in regard to compulsory service in the Civil Defence Forces of the Crown), then it involves a joint labour to achieve *their* aims, and is clearly an "unequal yoking" such as the Spirit here forbids.

The question as to whether the original Greek indicates the idea of "inequality" need not trouble us, because it is indisputably true that the words with which the Apostle enforces his counsel (2 Cor. 6, 14-15) clearly indicate such an idea. (It is worthy of note, however, that

Liddell and Scott, Bagster, Parkhurst, Companion Bible, Farrar, and many others, support the rendering of the Authorised Version, whilst the Revisers have also seen fit to retain the A.V. rendering.) Examine Paul's list of contrasts in the verses just quoted (righteousness and unrighteousness, etc.)—is it not evident that any yoking of Saints with the unrighteous, the darkened, the worthless (Belial), the infidel, or the idolater, is bound to be “unequal” in character? How much more so when it is on their terms and to foster their aims, and when all objections on the grounds of conscience are forbidden!

But “yoking” has also another aspect, that of servitude; in fact, in the majority of cases in Scripture the “yoke” has this reference to bondage. For example, Jesus says: “Take my yoke upon you”—this is “bond-service” in Christ, no matter how “easy” the yoke may be—for which reason the Scripture exhorts us “become not ye the bond-servants of men” (1 Cor. 7, 23, R.V.). But it has been said that—

### **“TOTAL WAR HAS MADE BOND-SERVANTS OF US ALL.”**

This is not strictly true. Obviously none are *absolutely* free; service is demanded of us all, but some of this is *restrictive* only, whilst other service savours of bondage.

The *restrictive* services include work under civil or private control undertaken as a condition of exemption from Military Service, Government work in “protected” establishments, land work, etc.; but in the case of all these services, release or transfer to other work can be obtained if good cause is shown. This is occurring every day, and in many cases the “good cause” has been that of conscience, for the very good reason that in all these services conscience is free.

Services which savour of *bondage* include Military Service, and service in the Civil Defence Forces; and under the provisions of the National Service Acts, 1939-41, men and women are *bound* in these services “until the end of the present emergency”—they *cannot* resign, and conscience is *not* free. In the light of the words of the Apostle Paul quoted above (1 Cor. 7, 23) it is clear that these services must not be undertaken by the Brethren of Christ.

### **“SHOULDEST THOU HELP THE UNGODLY?”**

(2 Chr. 19, 2.)

An example of the folly and danger of “unequal yoking” is given in the case of Jehoshaphat to whom the words just quoted were addressed after he had sought to help the ungodly Ahab against his enemies, and had as a consequence narrowly escaped with his life. Here are the facts as the Scriptures give them:—

1. He had made affinity with Ahab, who had “sold himself to work wickedness before the Lord” (1 Kings 21, 25).
2. Asked by Ahab to form a military alliance, he had agreed, saying: “I am as thou art, my people as thy people” (1 Kings 22, 4)—thus the godly became as the wicked—this was an “unequal yoking.”
3. Though he stood firm in refusing the advice of the false prophets,



and insisted on hearing a Prophet of the Lord, so "yoked" was he that he was found to be too weak to follow the Prophet's advice, and joined the wicked for his purposes.

Although from a human point of view it might be said that he went with reservations, as evidenced by his requiring the assurance of a Prophet of the Lord, yet the Divine pronouncement plainly exhibits his error—"Shouldest thou help the ungodly, *and love them that hate the Lord?*"

In the Divine judgment on the matter the heart of Jehoshaphat had gone astray, and by thus yoking with an unbeliever he had compromised his standing as a godly man, and imperilled his very life. To us God says:—

"Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Cor. 6, 17).

We have responded to His call—but we shall imperil this glorious relationship, and perhaps forfeit it altogether, if we now submit to impressment into an organisation of unbelievers established for the purpose of achieving State aims which are thoroughly inconsistent with the purpose of our calling in Christ.

### **TO SUM UP THE ANSWER TO OUR TWO-FOLD ENQUIRY, IT IS CLEAR:—**

1. The aims of the Civil Defence Forces are not such as Christ's Brethren can conscientiously foster. The good works of Civil Defence are but a very small part of the whole, and the fact that the Force is an integral part of the War Machine puts it on a level with the non-combatant branches of the Army in which as a Body we have always refused to serve. We cannot wittingly become defenders of the State and remain true to Christ.
2. We cannot submit to be bound in an organisation where conscience is not free. If a Brother decided to enter the service and to choose its better part (*first aid, etc.*) the fact would still have to be faced that *the Act makes him liable for all or any of the duties of the several Defence Forces*. Furthermore, he would be under discipline, and be required to obey every lawful order. In the Civil Defence Forces, as in the Army, a "lawful order" may very often be an "unlawful" one to the servant of Christ. The example of Jehoshaphat, cited above, should be a sufficient warning to any such who think to enter this service "with reservations"—the yoke will in most cases be found to be too strong. Freedom of conscience is denied, resignation is impossible; the position is therefore untenable for any true Saint.

### **WHAT THEN MUST THE "SEPARATED" DO ?**

*On the basis of the facts detailed above our advice to Brethren and Sisters is : Refuse to be embodied in the Civil Defence Forces on the ground of a religious conscientious objection.*

### **A FINAL WORD.**

Although the days before us may be days of difficulty, we must never

forget that in all things we should seek our Father's pleasure regardless of consequences. Loyalty to Him should be our first consideration, and where our duty is clear, the possible consequences of faithfulness are of less than secondary importance ; " for our God whom we serve is able to deliver us—and *He will deliver us* " (Dan. 3, 16-18). But if deliverance be delayed in order that we may be tried, faith in God's promises not to try us beyond our strength, to be with us in trouble (Ps. 91), and to deliver us, will enable us to remain steadfast, and finally to come forth unto Him " purified " as the most fine gold.

## ADDENDA.

### FIREGUARD DUTIES.

From the foregoing it will be evident that in our view the defence of the State is inconsistent with our calling in Christ : what then should be our attitude to the Government's Compulsory Fireguard Scheme ?

Many Brethren were performing duty as Fire Watchers in Factories, Business Premises, and Residential Areas for some time before the compulsory scheme was introduced. These duties were undertaken as were hospital stretcher-bearing duties, voluntarily, and solely in a spirit of neighbourliness, and certainly not with any desire or intention of taking an active part in the defence of the State. We were careful NOT to join the A.R.P.

But now this Fireguard duty is made obligatory for all men between the ages of 18 and 60. Brethren already on the rotas of Factory or Business Premises will not as a general rule be affected, at least for the time being, and in our view they could continue to discharge these duties *as hitherto* with a clear conscience : but should the occasion arise they should make their position clear to the responsible authorities (in terms similar to those stated in next paragraph).

Those Brethren who are not on the rotas of Factories, etc., are liable for inclusion in a " pool " from which Fireguards are to be provided for all vulnerable areas (including War Factories) where there is a shortage of men, *as part of an organised defence scheme*. As soon as these Brethren receive official intimation that they have been included in this " pool " they should (if they have not already done so) write to the authorities stating that as Christadelphians they are not prepared, on conscientious grounds, to do duty as part of a Force organised in the nation's defence, and that they must refuse any duty which would violate their conscience.

### REGISTRATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS, AGED 16-18.

Brethren and Sisters whose children will shortly be called upon to register and be interviewed with a view to " encouraging " them to join certain Youth Organisations (including certain duties in the Home Guard) will, we think, find much food for thought in the foregoing statement, and particularly that section which has to do with our call to separation. A clear mind as to our position in this evil world, and a firm stand for the principles of the Truth, will do much both to help and encourage our children to adopt a course pleasing to God.

## Signatories



ALBERT H. BEALEY,	BRISTOL
R. BRITZIUS,	BIRMINGHAM
W. H. CARTER,	BIRMINGHAM
E. W. COLLARD,	NEWPORT
G. E. DANCER,	BIRMINGHAM
S. G. DAVIES,	CARDIFF
B. EVANS,	LLANELLY
C. M. HANDLEY,	PORTSMOUTH
E. A. RUSSELL,	SWANSEA
A. WILLIAMSON,	BIRMINGHAM
E. WOODALL,	BIRMINGHAM

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