

PREFACE

It is desired that every Brother and Sister who gets this book be in a position to realize and appreciate fully, God's great mercy in the deliverance from cruel military experience, of Christadelphians in England, United States and Canada.

It was eighteen months from the date our English Brethren presented their petition to Parliament to the time the "Military Certificates" were provided, granting exemption from "Military Service" conditional upon them entering into work of "National Importance" to Christadelphians who joined the Church before the War, and those imprisoned were released; the others remained in prison, many of whom endured their full sentences, varying from eighteen months to two years.

In Canada "The Military Service Act 1917," which was supposed to follow the English Act No. 2, did not make provision for Religious Objectors being given alternative work of a non-military character, and from the date of presenting our first petition till the Deputy Minister of Justice sent on to the Military Department for approval, the provisions for the release of Conscientious Objectors, contingent upon them entering upon work of "National Importance," was seventeen months. The termination of the War, Nov. 11, 1918, closing out the necessity of the same being put into effect, our Brethren soon afterwards were released from prison and all duties, by a Government Commission which inquired into their cases, and who were adjudged by it to be genuine Conscientious Objectors, none suffering imprisonment for longer than eleven months and most for a much shorter period of time; this clemency was extended, also, to our Brethren who joined the Church after the Military Act came into force.

In the United States, almost in every case, exemption was granted to Christadelphians, civilian farm work only being imposed upon them in lieu of military duties.

Nothing in this book is to be construed as discounting British Citizens' obligation to fight for their country; it is their duty to do so. But for Christadelphians to fight is quite a different matter.

The true Christadelphian attitude in relation to the question of "Military Service" has been maintained at all costs, which attitude has been so emphatically vindicated by the successes which crowned Christadelphian efforts in England, the United States of America and Canada. Evidences of the most demonstrative character have been offered to the world and "The Powers That Be," that while Christadelphians must be, as a matter of duty, subject to "The Powers That Be," they are citizens of a Kingdom "not of this world." That they are simply "strangers and pilgrims" until their Lord returns from Heaven, and till then they are neutrals who observe the injunction—"Servants of the Lord must not strive." They take no part in politics; they do not vote, and therefore British institutions do not consider such liable to be called upon to fight. In every other respect, however, they are submissive to the Laws of the Land. Nevertheless, a "Bona-fide Christadelphian," though not permitted by his Lord to fight, is enjoined to "Bless and curse not," and, "as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them." He will therefore always do his best in a civilian occupation—by choice or at the behest of the State—to help his fellowman in the hour of his distress.

The Canadian Christadelphian Standing Committee