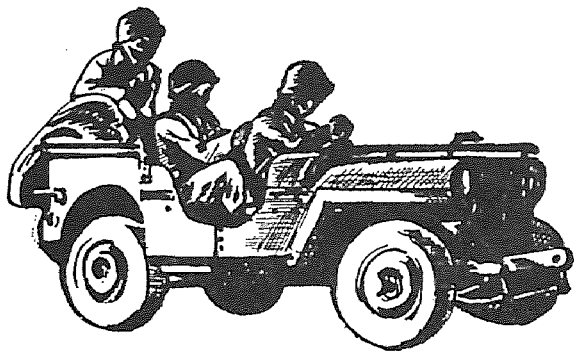


A SERGEANT  
ENLIGHTENS A CHAPLAIN



*Frontis-piece  
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The American Bible Society*

A YOUTH STANDS UP FOR  
HIS CHURCH

*Second Edition 1944*

*by*  
DELBER H. ELLIOTT



The writer has in mind four persons who are witnessing for Christ and their Church—two with the armed forces, one a government employee, and one a teacher in the public schools. These four suggest the character of Sergeant Sam McMillan. Sergeant Sam and Chaplain Cole became acquainted in the back seat of a jolting Jeep. After the next Sabbath service at the Shreveport base, the Chaplain arranged for a conference with the Sergeant at four o'clock.

Sabbath, May 7, 4 P.M.

Cole—Sergeant, I was interested in what you told me about your Church. But I think you are cherishing some strange traditions which you would do well to forget. Perhaps I can help you in your thinking.

Sam—Thank you, Chaplain, I appreciate your interest. Can we agree on a basis of discussion? Shall it be on the Bible as our authority or on tradition, of which you speak?

Cole—Oh, the Bible! That's my standard.

Sam—Mine too! Where do we start?

Cole—Well your Church sings only the

Psalms. Nearly all churches sing the hymns, which are simpler and more easily understood. Why don't you folks get in line?

Sam—Now Chaplain, you are starting out on custom and tradition. Give me a Bible reason for dropping the Psalms from worship.

Cole—Don't we read that the disciples once sang a hymn?

Sam—Yes, in Matt. 26:30: "When they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives." It was during the Passover and the hymn which they sang on that occasion was the Great Hallel, composed of Psalms 113 to 118.

Cole—But there is another place where it says to sing "with hymns and spiritual songs."

Sam—Yes, two places, Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with melody in your heart to the Lord." A translation of the Old Testament into Greek was in use in Paul's time, in which titles were given to the Psalms. In 67, the title is "Psalms"; in 6, "Hymns"; and in 35, "Spiritual Songs". You see, all three are included in the Book of Psalms.

Cole—Where did you get that Greek stuff?

Sam—I majored in Greek in college.

Cole—Here is one of our camp hymn-books called, "Hymns for the Living Age". What objection can you have to this?

Sam—What about its authorship? Did you read that article in the Presbyterian about this book? It said that 67 of these hymns were written by Unitarians, who do not believe in the deity, atonement or resurrection of Christ. Yet you ask Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists to sing them. The author of the Psalms is God by his Holy Spirit.

Cole—But there is no Christ in the Psalms.

Sam—I wonder at you making that statement. The Psalms are full of Christ. Who but Christ can be the center of the 2nd, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 72nd and 110th? The incarnation, deity, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Christ are prominent in the Psalms. Christ himself said: "All things must be fulfilled which are written . . . in the Psalms, concerning me."

Cole—Well, if I can't meet your argument on the Psalms, I can prove that you should

have instrumental music. Your Church must feel lonely when it comes to that.

Sam—Not so lonely as you think! The Churches of Christ which claim a membership of half a million, the Free Methodists and a number of smaller bodies, and the Holy Orthodox Apostolic Church, claiming one hundred million members, do not use them.

Cole—But the greatest Christian leaders are against you.

Sam—Here are some that are not: Martin Luther, Lutheran, classed the organ "among the ensigns of Baal". John Calvin, Presbyterian, said that instrumental music does not belong in the Christian Church any more than "the incense, the candlestick and the shadows of the Mosaic law." John Wesley, Methodist, said that he had no objection to instruments in their chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard". Chas. Spurgeon, Baptist, said that he would like to see the pipes of the organs "either ripped open or compactly filled with concrete".

Cole—The great musicians are against you.

Sam—Are you sure? The greatest choirs sing without an instrument. The Westminster, St. Olaf's and the Augustana are a capella. The great German and Welch

choruses seldom have any accompaniment.

Cole—What else do you claim on your side?

Sam—History! For 600 years after Christ, instrumental music was not used in the Christian Church. Then it was introduced by a pope of the Catholic Church.

Cole—I see you have claimed about everything.

Sam—Not yet! The best is yet to come—the Bible.

Cole—Here's where I am going to put up an argument. I can prove that instrumental music was used in Old Testament worship—2 Chron. 29:25, "And he set Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries and with harps . . . for so was the commandment of the Lord". God commanded them!

Sam—Read the verses that follow: "When the burnt offering began . . . the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded, and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished".

Cole—So what?

Sam—Just this—the sacrifices and the instruments were used together as a part of the ceremonial worship. Why should we bring one back without the other?

Cole—But you sing the Psalms and the 150th says: "Praise him with the timbrel in the dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs". And you don't do it!

Sam—No, we don't worship him with a dance either. You must admit, Chaplain, that such language is highly figurative. Both the instruments and the dance are symbolisms of joy. If you are going to insist on a literal interpretation you will have to dance as well as fiddle.

Cole—Well, that about winds it up.

Sam—Not yet! We have said nothing about the New Testament. Let us have just one New Testament reference in support of instrumental worship. (two minutes of silence)

Cole—Sorry Sam, my time is up. But I do want to hear the rest of this. Meet me again one week from today.

Sam—Thank you, Chaplain, the Lord will, I will.

Sabbath, May 14, 4 P.M.

Cole—Tell me, Sam, why you are opposed to secret societies. Is your's the only church that object to them?

Sam—Oh no! Three branches of Luth-

erans with a million members, the Christian Reformed with 90,000, the Nazarenes with 100,000, the Free Methodists, the Brethren, the Mennonites and the Seventh Day Adventists are all against them. In fact about 30 denominations have a testimony against them with half of them making it a term of membership.

Cole—That's new to me. What is the big objection?

Sam—One is their secrecy. Christianity is a religion of light. Whatever is good should be shared and whatever is bad should not be concealed. If your church had been organized as a secret society would you have joined it?

Cole—No, but that is different.

Sam—Then the oaths and penalties are not Christian. They bind you to the unknown. Christ said: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself". Herod beheaded John the Baptist because he promised Herodias, with an oath, to give whatever she asked.

Cole—But these are religious organizations. They have the Bible and prayer in the lodge like the churches do.

Sam—That's our greatest objection. They do have a creed, an altar, printed prayers and a chaplain. But it is a religion without

Christ. In masonry for example, the Bible passages used either do not name Christ, or if so, His name is taken out. When 1 Peter 2:5 is used the words "by Jesus Christ" are left out. In 2 Thes. 3:6, "our Lord Jesus Christ" are omitted. Shall we profess the Christ religion in the church and support a Christless religion in the lodge?

Cole—But Jews and others in the lodge do not believe in Christ.

Sam—Shall we keep Christ out in order to let them in? "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . . what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Can the Christian drive a true and a false religion in the same team?

Cole—Sam, if you can prove all this, you have a devastating argument.

Sam—Chaplain, I am prepared to prove everything I have said from their own published works.

Cole—You have said a lot in a few words.

Sam—One more thing about lodge religion: It teaches salvation by works, without repentance, without the new birth and without Christ, when "There is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved".

Sabbath, May 21, 4 P.M.

Cole—Here we are. Let us get down to brass tacks. Why doesn't your Church believe in voting?

Sam—Where did you get that idea? We do believe in voting.

Cole—Why, I always thought that yours was a non-voting church.

Sam—Well, that is different. We believe in democratic government and that every citizen should vote his convictions if he can do so without violating some higher conviction.

Cole—What do you mean?

Sam—Well, if voting involves the taking of an oath which means placing the state above God, then we are stopped before we start.

Cole—I don't quite get it.

Sam—Here it is in a nutshell. The early history of America is strongly Christian. Christ and the Bible were recognized in nearly all the charters and documents of state. But when the Federal Constitution was drawn, its framers broke with the past and made no acknowledgment of a Supreme Being. The highest ruler it recognizes is "We the people". The highest law it ac-

cepts is the Constitution. You will agree Chaplain, that the Supreme ruler of nations is Christ and the highest law for nations is the Bible. If the oath of allegiance means that I accept the people as the highest ruler and the Constitution as the supreme law, I just can't take it. You see our trouble is not in the voting but in asking another to take an oath we could not take ourselves. Honestly now, Chaplain, would you take an oath in which you believed that you were subordinating Christ to an inferior position?

Cole—Certainly not! But surely it was never intended to be that way.

Sam—Prof. McIntosh of Yale might answer that. He applied for citizenship. Before taking the oath he declared that in doing so he placed the will of God above the Constitution. The lower court then ruled that he could not be a citizen. The Supreme Court sustained the lowest court and Prof. McIntosh remains an alien.

Cole—Have you any constructive remedy to offer?

Sam—Yes. Our ministers are preaching and public speakers are being sent up and down the land arousing sentiment for a Christian amendment to the Constitution which would acknowledge the supremacy of Christ over national life.

Cole—Did your Church break off from the Presbyterians when it added these principles?

Sam—Our Denomination did not break off from any church and these principles were never added. We have just continued the principles of the original John Knox Presbyterian Church.

Cole—I suppose you folks hardly credit the rest of us with being Christians.

Sam—We do not think that way at all. We do not hold these principles as essentials of salvation. We agree with others on the great fundamentals of the faith. These are other phases of truth which we think too important to ignore.

Cole—If these things are not essential to salvation, then why bother about them?

Sam—We believe that all Bible truth is important. The broadest creed is the one that binds to the greatest amount of truth. You wouldn't cut off your fingers or feet because you could live without them. Then why weaken the body of God's truth by cutting away any of its parts. "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary".

Cole—Thank you, Sergeant, you have changed my thinking, God bless you and your Church.

*But 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: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.*

I PETER 3:15.

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