

# **Life and Sayings of Sam P. Jones:**

A Minister of the Gospel

The Only Authorized and Authentic Work

By his wife  
Assisted by  
Rev. Walt Holcomb, a  
Co-worker of Mr. Jones

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## **BOOK TWO**

### **HIS ACTIVITY**

#### **CHAPTER TWELVE**

##### **THAT MEMORABLE MEETING**

In speaking of the Nashville meeting, Mr. Jones always referred to it as “that memorable meeting.” To him, it was the greatest meeting he ever conducted. It seemed to take a stronger grip upon the consciences of men and to extend further in its practical results than any other meeting that he held. The conversions reached into the thousands, and the accessions to the churches in and around Nashville exceeded several thousands.

In speaking of the meeting six months afterwards, the presiding elder of the Nashville district said he believed ten thousand accessions were made to the churches in Nashville, and within a radius of one hundred miles of the city. The great indifference that had settled down upon the church life and the great worldliness which had eaten the heart out of the religious life was practically broken up. The liquor traffic and all of the sins and vices which accompany it received such heavy blows that the result was a great victory for temperance, sobriety and right living.

It is doubtful if there was ever a meeting held under such conditions and for the same length of time that the results were so extensive and abiding. It will go down in history as one of the most marvelous works of grace of any age.

Perhaps he was never so bitterly opposed in any work as that in Nashville. An invitation had been extended him by the Protestant Ministers’ Association and he had accepted the call. This was early in the year 1885. However, there was just a little apprehension in the minds of the ministers as to the propriety of holding the meetings in an auditorium. Mr. Jones had asked that they arrange for a building or tent that would seat not less than three thousand people, and if possible would accommodate five thousand.

Having failed to convince the ministers of the necessity of such a building, he compromised with them by making a date to spend one Sunday in Nashville in April. This would give the ministers an opportunity to hear the Georgia evangelist and see whether he could draw a crowd too large for the churches. He preached three times on Sunday, occupying the pulpits of the First Presbyterian church, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the McKendree Methodist Church. The immense crowds that attended filled the churches to overflowing, and hundreds went away without getting a sight of the preacher.

In the “Athens of the South,” Mr. Jones fired some of his biggest and hottest shots. The stiff and solemn church-members laughed in spite of themselves, while some of the fastidious were unmercifully shocked. The backsliders and sinners were held up to such ridicule and their backsliding and sins were so pictured to them, that they stood condemned as they saw themselves. Then his pathetic appeals softened and stirred every heart and the large audiences were completely broken up. The preachers hardly knew what to think or say. While they were friendly to the evangelist and desired to see a great work done in Nashville, they were really shocked, and some of them went away very angry, while others defended the bravery of the minister. Mr. Jones was the subject of the conversations of the majority of the people of Nashville.

He went on to Knoxville, where he was booked for an evangelistic meeting. Great power attended his ministry there, and no building could accommodate the crowds that went to hear him. The conversions were many, and the churches greatly revived. It was a marvelous work of grace.

During this time, the newspapers of Nashville had been discussing the sermons of Mr. Jones. The editors had given their opinions and the reporters had given their views to the public. The columns were open to the friends and the foes of the evangelist. Probably the warmest month that daily papers ever had discussing a minister was the one that intervened between Mr. Jones’s first appearance in Nashville and his return to conduct the great union meeting. One of the daily papers said:

“Nashville is still buzzing over the visit of this unique evangelist. In the daily newspapers he has been assailed bitterly and defended warmly, and almost everywhere Sam Jones has been the principal topic of conversation, and still the stir continues. We have not escaped condemnation for what we said in recognition of the good work done by him in many places, but the responses which have reached were mostly approving. One good result, at least, has been attained. There is an unusual interest in religious questions in Nashville.”

The Union had the following editorial the morning that Mr. Jones finished his first visit to Nashville:

“After listening to him attentively, we set him down as a ‘crank,’ his expressions in the pulpit surpassing anything we have ever heard. While not rushing to the defense of the pulpit, we have ever held it in reverence, regarding it as an educator in modesty, dignity, gentility, and morality.

We must deprecate the lowering of its dignity so that the coarseness, vulgarity, slang, and positive misrepresentations shall not emanate from it. 'Like priest, like people.' If Mr. Jones's style and language suit the good people of our city, then we can no longer rightfully maintain our boast that Nashville is the 'Athens of the South.'

It is said that Mr. Jones has cancelled an engagement in Texas to visit here. It were better for him to reconsider his action. We are quite sure that he could exhibit to better advantage in Texas than here. Our people are past the age of being ridiculed or abused into religion. Moreover, he defends his execrable grammar, his coarseness and his slang with: 'I am trying to get down on a level with my audience,' which is hardly the highest compliment that could be paid our people. We have as much culture, refinement and esthetic taste in Nashville as any city of its size in the Union, and that this so-called reverend gentleman should be permitted to say such things in our leading pulpits, and then be invited to come again, amazes us beyond expression."

The next morning the preachers held a meeting in the" Methodist Publishing House to perfect the arrangements for the proposed meeting. After hearing his sermons on Sunday, some who had been friendly to his coming now openly and bitterly opposed his return.

However, better counsel prevailed, and the committee determined to make preparation for the meeting. We give here an account of the ministerial meeting as reported in the *Nashville Banner*. This will give our readers an idea of the condition of affairs at that time:

"The committee appointed to arrange for a suitable place for holding the union services to be conducted by Rev. Sam P. Jones met in conference with the city ministers this morning at nine o'clock at the Publishing House. Dr. Leftwich was called to the chair, and Dr. McNeilly led in prayer. Dr. McNeilly afterward took the chair. Dr. Elliott said he didn't think that all of the preachers should step out of their shoes and step into those of Mr. Jones. Dr. Leftwich moved that a sub-committee be appointed to correspond with a tent-furnishing house, and ascertain at what price a sufficiently large tent could be had. This motion was not acted upon.

"Dr. McFerrin said he thought they should have a tent, and, by all means, let Rev. Sam Jones come. He would do good, provided he could have the cooperation of the ministers. He had heard Mr. Jones twice, and he thought he said some things which would be better unsaid, and some things which could be said differently, but, on the other hand, said some wonderful things which went direct to the heart. He was in favor of his coming and would do all he could to help the meeting.

"Dr. Leftwich said it was not the time to discuss whether Mr. Jones was to come or not. He was already invited. This question was settled and he would, therefore, move that a tent be purchased and a committee be appointed to negotiate for its purchase.

"Dr. Barbee said he could not see the necessity of a tent. The crowds he saw at Mr. Jones's meetings were nearly all church-goers who attended various churches regularly. He did not agree with Mr. Jones, for he believed that the majority of the church-members in Nashville were Christians and making every effort in their power to live Christian lives.

“Dr. W. H. Strickland thought the discussions regarding Mr. Jones were wise, and it was well for him to know of these things and the objections made to his teachings. He mentioned several of the ‘vulgarisms’ which he, as a pastor and knowing his people as well as he did, could not endorse.

“Dr. McNeilly said he was tempted to endorse Mr. Jones out and out. He heard him twice, and it did him good. There were some particular things said by Mr. Jones which he didn’t endorse; but, as an evangelist, he thought Mr. Jones a success and he favored a union service and wanted Mr. Jones to come.

“The previous question was called, but amended so as to appoint a committee of five, who should procure a tent to hold not more than five thousand and not less than three thousand.”

The friends of Mr. Jones had access to the columns of the daily papers, and some of the most earnest and ardent Christians defended the evangelist in a manly way. A contribution of an “amused spectator” is as follows:

“The writer has been an ‘amused spectator’ and a listener to the attacks made upon the Rev. Sam Jones. Now, while we did not hear the reverend gentleman, we have been at some pains to notice the reports both verbal and written. While we do not think his language savors of the first schools of our land, he certainly follows the example of his Master, Jesus; and I must say he hits ‘square from the shoulder.’ If he misses the mark in attacking our Christian churches or their members, no harm can result to them. If not, and they deserve it, let them flinch and squirm. Our churches are too indifferent on many questions of vital interest to them. The liquor question, for instance. We see by one of the morning papers, since Sam Jones’s accusation, it is found that out of eighty-one wholesale liquor-dealers, sixty-eight are sheltered in the fold of Christian churches in our city.”

During that month the papers were full of bitterest criticism and warmest-appreciation of Mr. Jones.

Other daily papers copied them, and in some instances exaggerated them until Mr. Jones became the most-talked-of man in the ministry. The enemies of Mr. Jones and his cause had the same access to the papers, and they were as strong and fearless in their denunciation of the man and his methods as his friends were in their commendation of him.

There had been so many evil reports circulated regarding his sermons in Nashville, that the pastors of the Protestant churches of Knoxville, Tennessee, where Mr. Jones was laboring in a meeting, felt called upon to send a letter to the pastors in Nashville. We select a paragraph or two from this letter:

“Brethren, for twelve days we have had in our midst, and preaching to us and our people, the Rev. Samuel P. Jones, an accredited minister of the gospel in the North Georgia Conference of the M. E. Church, South, laboring as an evangelist, and that we have had full opportunities to learn the tendency of his teachings and character of his work.

“By reason of evil reports, some of us at the first were prejudiced against him, but having attended upon his ministry four times a day for eleven consecutive days, hearing his discourses, which he has handled by the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, we have found no fault in him; while, somewhat as a matter of taste, we could have wished some things could have been touched in a different style and some matters illustrated by a less humorous incident, nevertheless, we endorse the soundness of the gospel he inculcated in general. We offer a prayerful testimony to his zeal for the truth, his jealousy for the honor of our holy religion, to his effort to glorify God, and his earnest love for the souls of men; and we testify that his preaching has been evangelical and Scriptural and to the wonderful edification of saint and conviction of sinners.

“His labors here have resulted in awakening professed Christians to a greater fidelity and zeal in the service of God, in public and in private, and in the establishment of many family altars, where they had never been erected before, and in convincing sinners of their lost conditions and leading them to flee for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel; and hundreds have given good evidence of having passed from death unto life. In his hands, the trumpet has given no uncertain sound. He has preached the word, he has been instant in season and out of season, has reproved, rebuked, exhorted with all long-suffering, he has shown God’s people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

When he had finished his remarkable meetings in Knoxville and Chattanooga, he returned to Nashville to begin the much-discussed revival. A large tent that would seat about eight thousand was located on Broad Street. The first service was held at three-thirty p.m., Sunday, May 2, 1885. Long before that hour, however, every seat under the canvas was filled and the aisles were crowded, and there were fully two thousand persons standing on the outside of the tent. The board-pile and rafters of the foundation of a new building being erected nearby furnished additional standing room, and the crowd extended from the main entrance of the tent over the entire lot and down the street for over a half block. At three-thirty Mr. Jones pushed his way through the crowd, and finally succeeded in reaching the platform.

Among the ministers seated on the rostrum were Bishop Hargrove, Rev. W. E. Cunningham, Rev. B. F. Harris, Rev. J. W. Lewis, of St. Louis; Rev. W. B. Crawford, of Mobile, Ala.; Rev. Dr. J. Witherspoon, of the First Presbyterian church; Rev. Dr. Spowles, of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, and the following ministers of the Methodist Episcopal church of this city: Rev. Dr. McFerrin, Rev. Dr. Leftwich, and Rev. Dr. R. K. Brown. The choir was composed of the members of the choirs of the city churches. Professor McIntosh, of Oxford, Georgia, led the choir.

Dr. McFerrin made the opening prayer, in which he asked God’s help for the preacher, congregation, and the people of Nashville. He asked that the Lord would make the congregation feel the responsibility that rested upon them in this hour, when so many thousands had assembled together and that everything that happened in the tent would be done in fear of Him who created us. His prayer was earnest, sympathetic and touching.

The congregation then sang, “Take the name of Jesus with you.”

Afterwards, Mr. Jones was introduced to the audience and took for his text the first verse of the sixth chapter of Galatians: “**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.**” It was a most appropriate text for the occasion, and Mr. Jones preached with all his earnestness, zeal and power. In closing his sermon he made use of the following remarkable illustration of the battle of Franklin, and the capture of the fort called “Locust Grove”:

“Now this incident, and I am through: We all love bravery. Ah, there is not a man living who does not admire a brave man, though he is his enemy. I want to refer to an incident of this last war. I am sorry about that war — sorry we ever fired on the old Union flag. I was too young, but if I had been old enough I would have gone with my father and brother and my six uncles and fought with all my might. But I will tell you this much — there is not a man who walks the American soil to-day that would fight for the old Stars and Stripes any quicker than I would this minute.

“God knows my heart. I am loyal to the flag that floats over America, as I am loyal to the banner of Jesus Christ. But during this last war, you know when Sherman pushed his forces through Georgia, and when Johnston surrendered his forces in Atlanta into the hands of General Hood, that brave Southern general, who died since the war — a braver man never drew sword in battle — General Hood brought Johnston’s army, you recollect, back through North Georgia and into Tennessee, after Sherman drove Johnston to Atlanta. There Hood took charge of the Southern forces and came back into Tennessee. You recollect that memorable battle of Franklin, Tennessee. This instance, not historical, but in many respects true, illustrates just what I want to say to you.

“At the battle of Franklin, General Hood had his tent pitched upon a prominence, and he could overlook the whole battle to his right. As you remember, he had already lost one of his legs. While the battle was waging hot and thick, General Hood was limping up and down in front of the tent, and whenever he would turn and face the battle, he saw that there was a fort in a locust grove the Union forces held, and that fort was sending forth shot and shell “and death into his own ranks. As he walked up and down in front of his tent, and every time he turned around he would see this volley of shell and death as it hewed down his ranks, and he watched the volley from that fort, and directly he called his adjutant-general. ‘Adjutant-general, come here.’ The adjutant-general loped up on his horse, and General Hood said: ‘Adjutant-general, go and present my compliments to General Cleburne, and tell him, I ask at his hands the fort in the locust grove.’ The adjutant-general loped off down to where General Cleburne’s division was, and asked for General Cleburne. They said, ‘He is missing; he has not been seen in two hours. We think he is killed.’ The adjutant-general loped back to General Hood and said: ‘General Cleburne is missing. They think he is killed. They don’t know where he is.’ General Hood dropped his head and walked up and down in front of his tent, and every time he would turn he would see the volley of shell and death play into his ranks. Again calling his adjutant-general to him, he said, ‘Adjutant-general, go and present my compliments to General Cheatham, and tell him, I ask at his hands the fort in the locust grove.’ The adjutant-general loped off down to General Cheatham’s quarters, and they said: ‘General Cheatham is not here; he is missing. He may have been killed.’

“The adjutant-general hurried back and said: ‘They think General Cheatham is killed also.’ General Hood commenced marching up and down, and every time he turned he saw that fort as it threw out its shell and death. He stopped again, and said: ‘Adjutant-general.’ His adjutant-general came up to him, then he said: ‘Adjutant-general, go and present my love (no compliments about this — go and present my love) to General Cockrell, and tell him I ask at his hands that fort in the locust grove.’ The adjutant-general went down to General Cockrell’s division, and he said: ‘General Cockrell, General Hood presents his love, and asks at your hands that fort in the locust grove.’

“General Cockrell straightened himself on the saddle, cast his bright eye down the line, and said: ‘First Missouri Brigade, Attention!’ and dropped his finger on the fort. And they charged with a fearful loss on that fort, and captured it and silenced the guns. And Cockrell called his adjutant-general and said: ‘Adjutant-general, go and present my love to General Hood, and tell him I also present him the fort in the locust grove.’

“Brethren of Nashville, at this hour, as adjutant-general of the Lord Jesus Christ, I point my finger at the citadel of sin in Nashville, and tell you that my Lord and Saviour presents you all His love, and He asks at your hands this fort that is desolating so many hearts. And I hope that in less than one month from to-day I can say, ‘Blessed Christ, Nashville presents her love to you, and also presents you the whole city saved by thy precious blood. (Cries of “Amen”). O Lord, grant it. And I want every man and woman here to-day that wants to join in the warfare against sin, whether you are in the church or not, if you would be on the right side and try to win the city to Christ, I want every one that would see the city presented to God to stand up. Let everyone stand up that says, ‘I am in for bringing the whole city to Christ.’ (Nearly the whole congregation arose). Well, thank God, we have thousands. Very few sitting, and thousands standing up and saying, ‘We will take the fort for Christ.’”

At the close of the sermon the great audience was wild with enthusiasm. It is doubtful whether a sermon ever produced such a profound impression. The people rose to their feet en masse, with tears streaming down their faces, declaring their willingness to help in the great work. It was one of the most thrilling scenes that mortal eyes ever looked upon. The picture is vivid in the minds and hearts of the older residents of Nashville even to this day.

In the evening before the hour appointed for service, the people were seen going in droves toward the tent. By the time appointed for the service it was difficult to get anywhere near the tent. Mr. Jones came upon the platform rather early, and before preaching made some prefatory remarks regarding the discussions that had been going on in the papers during his absence from the city.

“Now,” said he, “all that I ask of the papers and their contributors is that they give me a fair deal. You have acted in a cowardly manner in publishing denunciations of me, without backing them with your name. I never pay any attention to an article with a nom de plume, for a nom de plume is nothing more or less than a turkey buzzard with his feathers stamped off. Now, if you have anything to say about me, bud, just put your name to it, and I will take care of you. If you can say anything worse about me than I can about you, just ‘I am in.’”

This manly and fearless way of addressing them made a deep impression upon the audience. They admired his courage and manliness. He completely silenced those who opposed him, and there was very little condemnation in the papers during the entire meeting. Mr. Jones announced four services daily during his entire stay in the city. At sunrise he would begin the work of the day. He would preach at ten o'clock and in the afternoon would conduct a service and preach again at night. He then announced his text and preached a sermon in which "he swept the deck and burned the broom."

All sorts of shams, hypocrisies, worldliness, covetousness, drunkenness, gambling and impurity came in for their share of the most terrific denunciation. What he had to say about these prevailing sins was unlike anything Nashville had ever heard before. He had his audience passing through all sorts of experiences, laughing, weeping, approving and disapproving. He showed his mastery of the situation by bringing them around to his way of thinking and sending them home agreeing with him in what he had said.

The next morning a large audience was out at the sunrise meeting, a still larger one at the ten o'clock service, and a still larger in the afternoon, and at night the tent was too small for the great crowd, and standing-room was at a premium, while the curtains were lifted and the people stood in rows, eager to hear what was coming next. Such was the interest from day to day that before the meeting closed he was addressing as many as six thousand people at the early morning service at six o'clock.

The marvelous victory that he had won in these first days completely captured the press of the city. We give an editorial estimate from some of the daily papers. The American says:

"Such is Sam Jones as he now appears to us, bold, honest, earnest, matchless in his command of an audience, fearing God but not man; loving religion and law, but despising the defeated wisdom of man and the conventionalities of fashionable society; rough, but magnanimous, aggressive but unselfish, devout but not Pharisaical — a bubbling fount fresh from the bosom of earth; nature's own, without the artificial gloss of a high cultivation — a sort of moral diamond in the rough."

The *Union* says: "This strange preacher walked into our city and attacked the vices and immoralities of social life and the evil practices of church-members like a frontiersman would fight a fire that threatens his fences and his barns. He spares nobody; he palliates nothing because respectable people do it. Social amenities and a growing friendship between the church and people with doubtful practices are held up and exposed as the devil's handiwork . . . Looking at him alone from a temporal standpoint it is well for the people of Nashville to hold up his hands. As a teacher of life's virtues, as an example of moral courage, he will long be remembered by the young men of our city and surrounding country. To speak or not to speak the whole truth is often a question of policy. Under the teachings of public and political life the young man debates the policy of telling the truth. Mr. Jones is proving to young men of the country that policy goes to pieces before truth and that with a good motive and a friendly feeling the severest condemnation of a wrong gives no offense. To be a coward before an audience and pander to a vicious public sentiment is weakness, and when it becomes common it is a calamity.

There can be no hope for a people whose public men are cowardly. We do not wish to be understood as sitting in judgment on the courage of the pulpit. We mean simply to say that Mr. Jones is displaying sound judgment and great courage, and at the same time a truly Christian spirit, in telling people plainly and bluntly of their shortcomings.”

The Banner says: “Rev. Sam Jones is a remarkable man, and yet he is a very plain, practical man. It is, in fact, his practical views that give him his power and influence. As Mr. Jones says, many sermons place sinners way out in some dismal swamp and to get to the way to heaven they must wade through mud and water, climb over logs, scramble through briars, and tramp weary miles before they come to the straight and narrow way, and then when they find it, in nine cases out of ten they lose the little path at some careless moment or during some dark night. Mr. Jones puts the route to heaven in a new and original light. He says there is but one broad road in the moral universe and at one end is heaven, at the other hell. ‘Everybody in Nashville,’ says the preacher, ‘is already in this road, and the way to heaven is simply in the opposite direction to hell.’ ‘If you want to go to heaven, sinner,’ said the preacher, ‘just stop short, face about and move off in the opposite direction from your present course, and you are on your way to heaven. If a man wants to go to hell, let him stop, turn his back on God and heaven and move off, and he will get there.’ This is the way he simplifies repentance.”

The great work continued day by day, not only moving the lower strata of society but touching the most refined, cultured and intelligent people of the city and the visitors from near-by towns. No preacher ever succeeded in getting hold of the thinking people of Nashville as did Mr. Jones.

At some of the services he would throw the meetings open for testimonials. The most prominent people in Nashville had received good from these services, and were anxious to give their testimony. General W. H. Jackson related his religious experience and thrilled everyone who heard him. The great soldier showed that he had fought a greater battle in his religious life than those he had taken part in during the war, in which he gained such a reputation for clear-headedness and courage.

He said in substance: “My friends and brethren and sisters of the city of Nashville: I have never been more impressed with any service in my life than this, and I am here to-day to add my testimony, which is feeble and imperfect. I may not have served my Lord and Master, but I want to say that no other life will do for any man or woman but his own. I am trying to do my best with all the temptations that surround me. Oftentimes during the war when I was unconverted, the fear of being cut off without any hope was to me a startling one, but I did not embrace Christianity then because I knew that the motive was fear, and I resolved if ever I got through that war, that I would change my course of life, not from fear, but from love and gratitude to God for the many mercies He had shown me, and for taking me through the danger which I had passed safely.

“When I returned from the war I had never given a single thought to Christianity. I was reared in a life, that of a soldier, which removes men further from Christ than any other; but after the war closed I determined to investigate the subject for myself and satisfy myself as to the authenticity of the Scriptures.

“The strongest work I have read on that subject was ‘*Greenleaf on Evidence*,’ from which Mr. Jones has quoted: ‘Then I hesitated yet awhile longer,’ and I remember the closing exercises at Jackson, Tennessee, and Bishop Andrew, one of the most noble of men, while I was still hesitating used this strong figure: ‘There is a man,’ said he, ‘who is revolving these questions in his mind, who is yet undecided. He reminds me of a man who has fallen overboard from a vessel, and his friends who have solicitations for his safety have cast him a line and beseech him to take it, and they would yet pull him up on deck and save him if he would catch the line. Just at that critical junction he stops to parley with himself, and discuss the question whether that rope will save him.’ The moment that he said that, I went forward and gave him my hand, and I have faith. I, like my Brother Jones here, have tried life in all its phases and I have seen men in all their stages, and though I don’t pretend to be perfect, I am often jostled from the paths of duty and rectitude, but I can say before God and man that my heart is in that direction and I hope to meet the duties of citizenship, and as a husband and father lead a life that shall bring us all to heaven.”

As the meeting progressed the opposition passed away, the people, admiring the courage, earnestness and ability of Mr. Jones more and more each day. One of the papers, speaking from the people’s viewpoint, had the following article, entitled, “What the people think of the new preacher”:

“Another day of the new preacher’s work has greatly increased the interest in him. The greatest interest is among the more thoughtful people. Men who year in and year out attend to their private affairs, and talk only business, men who read books, and themselves dispense information, scientific men, professional men, on streets and at their places of business talk Sam Jones and they go and hear him. Going once they go back, and each succeeding time they go away more and more impressed. Among themselves they discuss his merits and his powers. These discussions embrace any peculiar features of the extraordinary work. One of these is the fact that no police are needed at the immense meetings. At night, the tent being rolled up, they may be called outdoor meetings. Fully ten thousand people surround the stand, and yet there is perfect order. Nobody is watched; nobody is reproved. All prejudice on account of the severity of his language, the bluntness of the way of his illustrations, and the lack of clerical reserve in his anecdotes has given way. A strong prejudice created by some of the first sermons preached by him, has taken refuge in tears and prayers.

“It has occurred to us that if Mr. Jones, in his first sermons, resorted to and used illustrations which were offensive to good taste, though pointed and pithy, for the purpose of arresting attention and bringing out the people, he underrates his own powers. These illustrations to be startling — it is probably supposed — may be dashed with extravagant expressions, but they, it seems to us, weaken rather than strengthen his character. In this, we say, he underrates his own power. This is not necessary. In what we say, we have no reference to his humor, or to the ever-recurring use of illustrations, which, under the power of his earnest eloquence, become not only chaste anecdotes, but gems set in the thread of thought. Without these he would not be the wonderful character he is, but a comparison may be made so strong that it becomes offensive, and then it is remembered as a mistake.

“One of the most pleasing sights in the work which Mr. Jones is doing is the outspoken sympathy and friendship of the entire ministry. Of course preachers differed about his work, and about his methods. Preachers are in some respects like other people. Some of them have in them a good deal of human nature, and rivalry sometimes gets the better of their Christianity. But in this case there was a real question whether the new preacher might not tell too many anecdotes, and whether his coming was not a confession that the church organization was inadequate for the work.

“But the new preacher has removed the last doubt; he has melted up their creeds and molded them into bullets with which to fight the devil. And when he turns around and tells them to say ‘Amen,’ they speak like they were all orderly-sergeants. They have manifestly left off their several church uniforms and are marching under the banners of church union, with Captain Jones for commander.

“With the community at large, this unity of action is disarming criticism. The question among thinking men has been, when will Jones run out? Are his happy hits an endless chain? But three times a day he appears before a vast audience, pale and sallow, rather light of build, with an intensely thoughtful face, but with no signs of giving down; indeed, his physical energy seems to have increased with his work; and every sermon is on a new line, with a brand new set of anecdotes and illustrations, and with new thoughts; all as bright and sparkling as if they had been gathered from a lifetime work.

“It will be well for the cause in which this extraordinary man is engaged, when the public comes to understand him better than they do.

“His humor in the pulpit and his flights of imagination in illustrating and painting the vices of men, as well as his own transit, as he tells it himself, from a bad to a good life a few years ago creates a doubt in the minds of some as to whether he is not meteoric, and to pass away into the darkness, though his life and works now penetrate like a headlight.

“What we would like to impress on the public mind is that his anecdotes and illustrations are parts of his fixed character; that they are neither idle jests nor impulsive action. They are used for a great purpose; and further, that twelve years of faithful work without a break is a good guarantee of stability. These suggestions are prompted by a lively sense of the fact that the whole people as well as the church have a deep interest in a man of such wonderful powers and such rare courage. His influence may widen until his exalted courage may be a standard for men to measure by.

“But, nevertheless, there are many thinking men who feel a deep interest in him, that believe the high pinnacles which he has reached is the edge of a precipice over which he may fall when the praises and the flattery of men undermine his humility. To guard against this is his own work.”

The newspapers were devoting much time and space in reporting these wonderful meetings. While he was preaching to great audiences in the tent, there were also thousands being reached by the press.

Here is where it first appeared that the press could not report Mr. Jones adequately. In spite of the best reports, they failed to do him justice. This was true down to the close of his life. One of the papers, in speaking of this very fact, used the following:

“People who hear the great Georgia evangelist from day to day, and then read the newspaper reports of his sermons, complain that the reports do not do him justice, and this is true. No report of his sermons, even if we had the space to give every word, would do him justice. Besides his words, there is a magnetism about him which becomes a part of the sermon, but this is not the main trouble about the reports. Many of his expressions are harsh. They are strong and harsh. These the reporter catches and utilizes because they are so striking that they could not be overlooked. The soft and mollifying words which accompany them, and the true Christian spirit in which these utterances are made do not and cannot accompany the report. Mr. Jones is now being thoroughly discussed in the city. Every class of people seem to be busy in asking and answering questions about him, but it is not gossip in bad sense. The expressions are nearly all kindness. The voice of the community, however, is well-nigh universal in its praise for the courage with which he condemns evil practices and the boldness with which he declares the law, regardless of the station in life where the practices are found. People love a courageous man, and this refined community first settling that he is a good man, are enthusiastic over his boldness in speaking the truth.”

This great revival continued for three weeks. Mr. Jones held a number of special meetings for men and women which were largely attended and resulted in great good, and in the salvation of hundreds of souls. He also preached before the State Legislature.

The *Banner* says: “The Forty-fourth General Assembly may heartily appreciate the compliment bestowed by Rev. Sam Jones upon their distinguished body. He not only carried the gospel up Capitol Hill in his person, but dispensed the bread of life in language chaste and eloquent. There was not a word of slang, nor even an illusion by its uglier name to that place which Bob Ingersoll says ‘has no local habitation.’ There is a marked resemblance, not alone in facial organs and expressions, but in size and build, between General Basil Duke and Mr. Jones. One might by more than a casual acquaintance be taken for the other.

“The General Assembly should seriously consider one of his suggestions at least. It was his denunciation of the policy of incarcerating boys in the State prison with confirmed criminals. It is a policy by which the State helps along to perdition her first offenders whom an orphan asylum or house of refuge might save as worthy members of society.

“There are business men now in Louisville, who, if they had been sent to the State Prison (as Tennessee consigns her infant criminals), at tender age for the first offense, would be in the Kentucky penitentiary to-day. A great deal of his talk was on ‘Intemperance,’ and his views were very sane and sound. He created quite a favorable impression upon that august body.”

One of the most remarkable converts of this great meeting was Captain Tom Ryman. As Mr. Jones often said, there has been no more wonderful convert to God in the nineteenth century than Tom Ryman, of Nashville.

He went to the meeting as others did, came to the altar, knelt down like a child and gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was an old steamboat captain, who owned a number of steamboats which plied the Cumberland River, and considerable property along the wharf, and in one of his large buildings he had a large saloon. He had a bar on each of his steamboats, and was known as a man of wealth. He was brought to Christ by the preaching of Mr. Jones, and became a Christian in dead earnest. He cleaned out the bars on his steamers, tossed his liquors overboard. His saloon was converted into a hall for religious and temperance meetings, and was christened "Sam Jones Hall." He also changed the name of one of his largest and finest steamers to the "Sam Jones."

In this mission hall there was held a service every night. Captain Ryman employed mission workers to preach the gospel to the fallen. The mission was located in one of the worst districts of Nashville, and drunkards, gamblers and the fallen assembled night after night to hear the simple story of redeeming love. He put forth as much effort to save the erring and fallen after his conversion as he did to drag down and debauch and damn them before he found the Saviour. The good work of the mission will abide for years to come. Instead of having cards and liquor on the steamers, he made room for the Bible, and found time for prayer-meetings. The gospel was preached as effectively by example and precept on the steamers day by day as in the mission hall by night.

The great building known as "The Jones-Ryman Auditorium," which is considered the finest and handsomest auditorium in the South, was built by the inspiration of Mr. Jones, with the financial aid of Mr. Ryman. A few years since Mr. Ryman died and his funeral service was conducted by Mr. Jones at the auditorium. At the memorial service held in the auditorium in memory of Mr. Jones, a rising vote of the thousands packed into the building, changed its name to "The Jones-Ryman Auditorium," in honor of Mr. Jones, who inspired it, and the other who executed the plan.

There was such interest manifested in Mr. Jones and his welfare that an effort was made to have him make Nashville his permanent home. The citizens offered to give him a handsome home in the city. We print the letter tendering Mr. Jones this home:

"Nashville, Tenn., May 27, 1885.

"Rev. Sam P. Jones.

"Our Esteemed Friend and Brother: As the chosen instrument of God through the power of His grace and the Holy Spirit, you have done a great work in this city in arousing the people from their lethargy in the conversion of very many souls, and in the good seed sown, which will surely bring forth an abundant harvest hereafter and cause the lilies of peace to spring up at the feet of many and the glory of heaven to beckon us all on; as appreciative of your work, and believing as we do that this central city, the educational and religious point of the South, would be a better location for yourself and family, we, the undersigned committee, representing subscriptions from all classes, races and occupations of our community, tender you a home in our midst, and sincerely hope that no field other than the best location for the production of your glorious work will decide your answer.

Trusting it will be favorable to an acceptance of your removal here, we remain, with the best wishes of our hearts for continued happiness, peace and comfort to you and yours.

Very sincerely,

W. H. Jackson, Chairman.  
J. Horton Fall, Secretary.”

Interested gentlemen had obtained subscriptions to the amount of ten thousand dollars, which would be expended in purchasing him a home if it would be accepted as a permanent residence. The letter was handed to the evangelist at the residence of Captain T. G. Ryman, where he was invited to dine. About thirty gentlemen were present when Mr. Jones broke the envelope! Its generous contents quite unmanned him and tears gathered in his eyes when he knew the deep meaning which the offer expressed. In response, he wrote as follows:

“Nashville, Tenn., May 27, 1885.

“Gen. W. H. Jackson, Chairman.

“Dear Sir and Brother: Your communication of this date was duly received. I have gratefully and prayerfully considered its contents. It pains me deeply to say to such generous friends whom I love so much that to leave my home and State involves more to me than I feel authorized to assume. My wife feels the same gratitude herself, and her judgment has always controlled me as her prayers have sustained me, and she, for reasons which control a mother’s heart, with six children to care for in the continued absence of husband and father, is disinclined to the move. You, sir, and the noble people of Nashville shall ever have our prayers.

“I am yours with my eyes full of tears and my heart full of gratitude.

Sam P. Jones.”

Before leaving the city arrangements were made for him to return at an early date and raise money to put the Y. M. C. A. upon a safe basis. The management had anticipated that they could not erect a building of more cost than thirty thousand dollars. The donations began to pour in and the amount was so encouraging that it soon developed the fact that a much larger sum could be realized. The hundreds rolled up rapidly and interest deepened every moment. In half an hour Secretary Humes announced that fifteen thousand dollars had been promised. The statement gave an impetus to contributions, and a contract subscription book. The appeals of Mr. Jones were used to marked effect, and contributions flowed freely. When the total reached twenty-five thousand dollars the excitement grew intense. At half-past ten o’clock the subscriptions had run to a still larger sum and solicitations closed for the night. The handsome Y. M. C. A. that now means so much to the young manhood of Nashville was put upon a permanent basis through the generosity and inspiration of Mr. Jones.

Near the close of this great revival the people began to raise the question “Will it last?”

One of the papers answered it in this way: "The meetings have been going on for about twenty-one days, during which time Mr. Jones has preached three or four times a day. At the time of this writing, six o'clock in the evening, the crowd at the gospel tent is a sight to look at, the whole city being in the notion to take part in the last services. The effect upon this community has been wonderful, and the question constantly is asked, 'Will the work the evangelist has done last?' But, to determine this question, the nature and the character of this work must be considered. We are not now considering the question of conversion, whether the hundreds who have professed religion have been genuinely converted; outside of this, over and above the actual conversions, the preacher has impressed the community as it was never done before. Men and women of all grades of society have been affected. This is not emotional.

"Hundreds of men have quit swearing. Many men who drank publicly have quit it, and there is in the minds of all our best citizens that the city is in a better condition, so far as the morals of society and the habits of men are concerned. The best evidence that the work will be lasting is found in the fact that all our best citizens are rejoicing in the change and in the fact that a great many men hitherto on the wrong side have openly and before the world changed front. Whether this work shall last depends in some measure on the future life of him who performed it. Mr. Jones will leave Nashville with the eyes of fifty thousand people following him. As long as our good people can turn to him, to his growing fame, and say he is still humble, he is still a devout man, he still practices what he preaches, they will, with pleasure and pride acknowledge his precepts, recognize his leadership and uphold the moral structure which he has erected. Judging from his lofty bearing, great intellectual strength, and unostentatious piety, there is every reason to believe he will not fall."

In closing the account of the great work in Nashville, we wish to include an editorial that appeared in the *Christian Advocate*, May 30, 1885. As Mr. Jones was a Methodist and the *Advocate*, the general organ of the M. E. Church, South, it seems fitting that this editorial estimate should be inserted at the close of this chapter. It is impossible to publish the entire account, as it covers four columns in the *Advocate*. We insert the first two paragraphs:

"Sam Jones 'has the floor.' His sayings and doings are the current subject of conversation, not only in Nashville, but all over the immense region of which it is the geographical and literary center. He is the man of the hour. His' preaching in Nashville during the past two weeks has been attended by unprecedented crowds, and with the most extraordinary results. Drunkards have renounced their liquor-drinking; gamblers have given up their evil occupation; church-members, convicted of complicity with sin, have broken off from wrong courses; thousands of persons of all ages, sexes, and grades of society have publicly announced their purpose to give up their sins and lead better lives. The Tennessee newspaper press has discussed the man editorially; all concede his remarkable power, but differ in their analysis of its constituent elements. With scarcely an exception they accord to him not only genius of a rare quality but evident honesty and glowing zeal for God and love to man.

"The pastors and Christian people of the various churches of Nashville have heartily co-operated with the evangelist in his labors, and while this is a season of salvation for sinners it is a love feast for the saints. Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples, Cumberland Presbyterians, and Methodists, are all united in the great revival, their pastors sitting together on the platform in the

big tent, and working together in conducting the exercises of singing, praying, and instructing inquirers. This feature of this wonderful occasion is especially gratifying to us. Christians must come closer together and work more unitedly before they bring the world to Christ. These union services in Nashville under the leadership of 'Sam' Jones point in this direction. Greater things than these will be seen before this generation passes. But he must be seen and heard to be appreciated."

**~ end of chapter 12 ~**

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