

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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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

HIS BODY LIES IN STATE IN ATLANTA

The Atlanta people, who felt such a loss at Mr. Jones's death, desired an opportunity to see him before his burial. The General Council of the city met and adopted the following resolutions:

“Whereas, We have learned with profound sorrow of the sudden death of Rev. Sam P. Jones; and

“Whereas, He was much beloved by our citizens, because of his constant interest in the upbuilding of our city and his many efforts to advance and improve its social and moral condition, and our people desire to pay tribute to his memory and to testify to their regard for him and his work; therefore, be it

“Resolved, by the Mayor and General Council, That we extend to his family this formal expression of our sincere sympathy, and that we feel a personal bereavement by his death; be it further

“Resolved, That we request his family to permit his body to lie in state in the Capitol of Georgia that his thousands of friends may view his remains and give expression to their appreciation of his life and service.”

On motion of Councilman Wikle, the following committee was appointed to go to Cartersville to attend the funeral:

Councilmen Wikle, Patterson, Martin, Terrell and Poster, and Aldermen Quillian and Harwell.

In response to this earnest request, his body was carried to Atlanta the morning after the funeral.

The special train left Cartersville at eight-thirty o'clock. Mr. John Welch, the engineer, upon whose engine Mr. Jones had ridden so many times, and who himself was one of Mr. Jones's oldest friends, pulled the throttle.

Mrs. Welch rode on the engine with her husband. They had draped the engine in black and white, and in front of the engine, just under the headlight, was a life-sized portrait of Mr. Jones appropriately draped.

The casket was borne to the train by the pallbearers who assisted at the funeral, and who accompanied the remains to Atlanta.

At least two thousand people were gathered at the depot when the special left. A great many close and intimate friends from Cartersville and Atlanta followed the remains to the city. As the train started off many were in tears. Mr. Jones was something more to Cartersville than the great revivalist; he had been a friend and neighbor.

All along the way at each station great crowds assembled to see the train go by.

At ten-thirty o'clock the party arrived in Atlanta. Two hours before the arrival of the train a throng of people began to gather. They stood about the depot, on the streets, and lined up on the viaduct under which the special train passed. As the muffled whistle announced the arrival of the train, the people uncovered their heads 'and stood reverently around the station, on the viaduct and in the streets.

The local ministers and a committee of the Council appointed to have charge of the body while in Atlanta met the train. The committee stood on each side of the depot entrance, the ministers to the light, and the prominent citizens to the left. The floral offerings, consisting of roses, chrysanthemums, orchids, and many other flowers, had been fashioned into wreaths, crosses, and other designs, were first removed from the baggage-car. Through the passageway the pallbearers bore the casket, covered with floral offerings, to the hearse, which Mr. Patterson, the undertaker had waiting outside.

The family and friends of Mr. Jones were then directed to carriages. Mrs. Jones and the family were driven to the home of Mr. R. P. Milam, while the body was taken to the Capitol.

The cortege proceeded slowly through a dense crowd up Pryor to Decatur street, thence to Peachtree, along Whitehall to Mitchell, and across Mitchell to Washington street and the entrance to the Capitol.

All along the streets people bowed their heads out of respect to the memory of Mr. Jones. Waiting at the Capitol was even a greater throng than that which had been at the station, and upon the streets. One of the most touching scenes was when Rev. H. L. Crumley, Superintendent of the Decatur Orphan's Home, with a dozen or more little girls wearing the blue uniform of the institution, walked down from the Capitol to the street with their arms full of flowers. The pallbearers removed the casket to the Capitol. The orphan children followed close by. The casket was placed under the great dome of the Capitol, where hung the life-sized paintings of Toombs, Stephens, Grady, Hill, Gordon, and other distinguished men. Mr. Jones had been personally acquainted with many of these great men of Georgia, and held them in the highest esteem, while they appreciated his ability and work as a minister.

When the casket was placed in the center of the Capitol building, while the thousands of people filled: the rotunda and every entrance, waiting for a chance to take a last look at the quiet features of the beloved dead. Rev. French E. Oliver, of Chicago, who was one of the speakers at the last tabernacle meeting, standing at the head of the casket, paid the following tribute to the memory of his departed friend:

“Rev. Sam P. Jones was the greatest admixture of contrast that ever combined in one human being, so far as my reading, observation or personal acquaintance can gauge. He had the dauntless courage of a thousand brave men, and the sympathy and tenderness of the sweetest woman. He was the great diagnostician, studying the pathology of the pandemics, endemics and epidemics of mankind, morally and religiously. Then he became a master surgeon, driving the scalpel into the diseased parts, causing excruciating pains to the one into whom he drove the instrument — but he was in the next moment the soft-handed, sweet-voiced nurse, administering the balms and tonics to the suffering sinner.

“He was a whole fearless regiment, sweeping across the battlefield with cyclonic fury, leaving the field strewn with the wounded and dying; then he was the whole Red Cross society, following in the wake of the caustic cataclysm, bringing the comfort of a thousand loves to the aching hearts. Brother Jones never gave a thorn without a rose; he never gave honey-comb without the honey; he never hurt a man in this world, in his great ministerial career, but for the purpose of tearing off the mask and allowing men to see themselves.

“To him the pulpit was no gilded prison cell in which to palaver, palliate or pander. He had no fear of poignant persecution, no bow to make before a reprobate task-master, ruling a degenerate company of pulpit puppets with a rod of gold. While some pulpits dealt in painted fire, Sam Jones dealt in real fire. Irrevocable conviction swept him into a relentless warfare, where he did more to strengthen the backbone of the American preachers than any man who has ever labored in this country. To him — as he told me a few weeks ago in his home — the pulpit was a throne, whereupon he was called to sway his scepter of righteousness, love and faithfulness.

“He had the conviction that he was sent of God — I know he was! To this age when cowardice, superficialities, poltroonism, policy-seeking and infidelity surged like billows over the religious as well as the political life of our nation, he was as truly God’s prophet saying, ‘**Thou art the man**’ as was Nathan in his day. His strength can only be measured by the burden he bore. The cross that he bore was heavy; he suffered pains which would have made a giant crouch and cower like a belabored hound — but he bore them as a prince of Israel, which he was. I heard him tell recently how the sorrows of the grave encompassed him, and when it seemed that his goal was despair, God seemed to speak audibly to him these words:

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow.
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless
And sanctify to thee, thy deepest distress.’

and when he turned and told his precious wife the answer of God to his heart, she said: 'My darling, God gave me the same words at the same moment.'

"I know how mellow his great heart was. I have prayed and wept with him in his own home, where the evidences of weakness or strength in any man are exhibited. He showed that he was a tower of strength; he fought a good fight; he finished his course. The intrepid warrior has faced earth's last battlefield. To-day he is wearing a crown which God gave him when he lifted the cross from his tired shoulders. He has met Jesus Christ and God the father, and now he may be talking with Daniel, or Abraham, or Paul or John. He has kissed his mother, and grasped his father's hand. His little babe which went before him has welcomed him into the city. Let an object pass one inch earthward or skyward at the point of equipoise where is registered the limit of the earth's attraction, as well as the limit of the sun's attraction, and instantly it will move earthward or sunward. Brother Jones reached that point in the spiritual firmament, for there is that point of spiritual equipoise between earth and heaven. Heaven's attraction drew him home to God forever."

The body remained in the Capitol from eleven a.m. to four p.m. The people began to pass through the building, and there was a constant stream of humanity for five hours. As they took the last look at the man they loved many tears flowed down their cheeks, and with deep emotion they passed by, frequently speaking of how he had helped them in their lives. One good, earnest Christian woman, as she took her last look at him, said, "Oh, I can't stand it," and as she walked away she fell to the floor. She was hastily carried into the office of the Comptroller, and was laid upon a lounge, but was soon dead. She was a personal friend of Mr. Jones.

It is estimated that at least thirty thousand people looked into his face during the hours. Finally the doors were closed, and the Capitol grounds were soon crowded again, when the doors were reopened, and for ten minutes the people passed by the casket. If his body could have remained there during the evening hours, after the day's work had ended, there would have been not less than one hundred thousand people who would have looked into his calm and blessed face.

The body was removed from the Capitol to the Westview Cemetery, the last funeral rite was read, and the casket placed in the vault to remain there until removed to the family vault in Cartersville.

Sam Jones is Home

Across the fields the light is softly stealing —
Sam Jones is home!
Though at the cross of pain sad ones are kneeling
In sorrow's gloom,
'Round God's great throne joy's songs are loudly pealing —
That he is home!

States on his bier their wreaths of fame are placing;

And Time its home
Has opened and Fame's fingers, his name tracing,
Write him her own;
But Georgia's arms for all time are embracing
Her son— at home.

Sin-shattered hearts that knew him here are feeling
The shadows lone —
But, ah, look up ye, who in grief are kneeling.
Ye hearts that mourn —
Above the clouds which round you now are stealing —
Sam Jones is home!

O. G. Cox

Memorial Services

A public tribute to the character and work of the late

Samuel Porter Jones

Ryman Auditorium

Sunday afternoon, October twenty-eighth

One thousand nine hundred and six

Two-thirty o'clock

Nashville, Tennessee

Program

Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald, Chairman
Mr. Allen G. Hall, Vice-Chairman, Presiding

I
Music

Invocation

Rev. Wm. T. Haggard

II

Orations

The Preacher

Rev. R. Lin Cave

The Man

U. S. Senator Edward W. Carmack

Music

III

Three-Minute Talks

Rev. W. F. Tillett

Prof. J. W. Brister

Prof. J. J. Keys

Hon. John Bell Keeble

Music

IV

One-Minute Talks

Limited to those converted under Mr. Jones' preaching

V

Addresses

His Last Days

Rev. Walt Holcomb

Music

VI

Invitation

Dr. R. A. Torrey

Doxology Benediction

Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald

~ end of chapter 29 ~

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