

# 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-SEVEN

### “DEAD SOLDIER OF THE CROSS COMES HOME”

The last home-coming of Mr. Jones cannot be told better than to quote from his home paper, the *Cartersville News*:

“Rev. Sam P. Jones, the great evangelist, is dead. He died on Monday.

“What a pang of sorrow this announcement has caused. Not alone to the people of Cartersville, his home town, is the knowledge that he is no more a source of deep gloom, but to the people all over the Union, which was his field.

“The news of Mr. Jones’s death when it first reached the city through the Western Union telegraph office, was not believed. Almost everyone who heard it thought there must be some mistake about it. It said he was found dead in Louisville. His whereabouts had been pretty well known to most of the people. He was supposed to have been on his way home from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where he had been holding a meeting, but his supposed itinerary did not include Louisville. However, the doleful news was later confirmed by a private telegram. When the people began to no longer doubt the awful truth, then there was great manifestations of sorrow among all, every eye looking into every other eye with a distressed cast which meant with no mistaking, an overpowering common sorrow. Many there were who could not mention the event without breaking down in a flood of tears. The force of the great loss to the community pressed down with great weight upon the hearts of all.

“The particulars of Mr. Jones’s death as finally obtained were about these: He was on his return from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He had been holding a two-weeks’ meeting there. He was coming home over the Choctaw division of the Rock Island Route. The train reached Perry, a small town fifty miles out from Little Rock, Ark., where a freight wreck detained it. On the train with him were Mrs. Jones; his two daughters, Mrs. Annie Pyron and Miss Julia Baxter Jones; his assistant and secretary, Mr. Thomas Dunham; and Rev. Walt Holcomb, of Nashville, Tenn., who has been assisting him in his meetings. They were all aboard the sleeper.

At about six o'clock Mr. Jones arose from his berth and put on his clothes. He then sought the porter of the car and had his shoes shined, joking the porter in a light vein the while. He awoke his daughter, Mrs. Pyron, complaining of indigestion and a pain about his stomach. He asked her to prepare him a cup of hot water. While the water was heating his daughter sat down beside him on the seat in the open space in the sleeper. He seemed to continue in pain, and Mrs. Pyron called Mr. Holcomb. Then the others of the party were called. As Mr. Holcomb, with Mrs. Pyron, was ministering to the sick man as best he could, Mr. Jones fell suddenly over the seat, striking the hard part and causing a small abrasion of the skin on his face and hands. He evidently tried to speak, but made no audible utterance. He died practically in the arms of Mr. Holcomb. A physician was summoned, but reached the train too late to be of avail. Heart failure was supposed to have been the cause of his death, but this was doubtless super induced by an attack of acute indigestion, to which Mr. Jones was subject, and from which he had suffered greatly.

“At Little Rock the body was under the care of an undertaker, embalmed and prepared for the homeward journey. Mr. Tom Dunham says that the sorrow, when it was known that Mr. Jones was dead, was wonderful to witness. At Little Rock men, weeping, pushed their way to where the body lay, saying they had been converted under Sam Jones's preaching and expressing what wonderful things he had done for them, individually, and as it was there, so it was at every stop that was made where the people could get access to the presence of the sacred remains. All along in the towns and the country, people stood with bared heads on the side of the track in respect to the great man, whose corpse was passing. At Memphis, Nashville and Chattanooga the interest and sorrow manifested was especially great.

“Mr. Jones's remains arrived at his home on his birthday, a birthday, too, that had been planned for as a happy occasion, where the members of the family and the relatives would gather. A birthday dinner was to be a special feature. The big turkey had been killed and all the preparations for a home feast had been made. It was the evangelist's fifty-ninth birthday, and enjoying it with his friends and family, he was to have gone on to Holly Springs, Miss., there to open a meeting, assisted by Rev. Walt Holcomb and Prof. Smoot. Alas! That death should have destroyed the plan!

“Mr. John W. Thomas, Jr., president of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis railway, like his father, has been for some time a warm personal friend of Sam Jones. When he knew of his friend's death, and the place and circumstances, he immediately interested himself in the matter of assisting to get the remains to their intended destination. He sent a special engine and coach to bear the remains from Memphis to Cartersville.

“At one-thirty o'clock Tuesday afternoon the special bearing the remains of the evangelist reached Cartersville. Bulletins, telling the whereabouts of the special at different times after it left Chattanooga were posted in public places, and the announcement had been made that the fire bell would be rung for twenty minutes before the arrival of the special to give the people notice.

“As soon as the first solemn peals of the bell were heard, and even before, the people began to gather about the depot, and by the time the train arrived practically the population of the entire town had gathered. On the train with the remains were:

“Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Pyron, Miss Julia Jones, Mr. Thomas Dunham, Rev. Walt Holcomb, Mr. Edwin Smoot, Mr. Ruohs Pyron, Mr. B. C. Sloan, Rev. French Oliver, Rev. J. A. Bowen, Rev. G. W. Duval and Mr. Sam P. Jones, Jr.

“The body was removed from the special to the city park, where the box was removed from the beautiful casket. The casket containing the remains was then placed in the hearse by Mr. J. W. Jones. A procession of citizens was then formed to escort the remains to the home. The hundreds of men that gathered all formed a line. The mayor and council were present in a body, and formed a part of the escort. The solemn procession moved toward the home and made a touching spectacle. All through the gathering and in the march people of both sexes, and all ages, were seen weeping. The love and appreciation of Sam Jones in his own community was never more fittingly exhibited than in the manifestations of grief shown when the last that was mortal of the great man had reached the confines of the town.

“At the home the procession of citizens formed a single file on each side of the walkway and in the space between the files the body was carried into the home. A loving invitation was then given for everybody to go in and view the remains.

“In single file the hundreds that gathered moved into the west parlor, where the remains lay, and going by the casket took a last look at the familiar face of the man they so loved. In through the front door went the thousands of white friends, while from the rear came the hundreds of colored people who almost worshipped “Mars’ Sam,” and the two files met and passed at the casket of their beloved friend — stood uncovered and equal in the presence of the mighty dead.”

One of the truest pictures of perfect devotion was that of Mr. Thomas Dunham, who never left Mr. Jones from the time he died until he was placed in the vault at Westview. Tom Dunham had only two objects in life for the past twenty years — to be near Sam Jones and to be of service to him, and when the object of that unflinching devotion died he felt the world to be a void. He was converted under Mr. Jones’s ministry in the great Cincinnati meeting, and since that day has been one of his most devoted friends, and a real “body-friend.” While his devotion during Mr. Jones’s life was something remarkable, it was not until his death that it was perfected. All the way from Memphis he stood at the head of the casket, and, without eating or sleeping, gazed upon it almost every moment.

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