

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

Copyright © 1907

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

APPRECIATIONS FROM PROMINENT MINISTERS

Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald
One of the Bishops of the M. E. Church, South

Sam Jones! That is what we loved to call him while he was yet with us. That is what we love to call him now since he is gone. The familiar name — a household word in all this land we love — meant so much that was dear and sacred to us. It meant more than can be known fully by any man who did not know Sam Jones.

Sam Jones! The name with us stood for a courage that stood all tests. In its mildest manifestation that courage amounted to audacity. In its highest sweep it reached a moral sublimity that it would not be easy to describe in words. Sam Jones fought real evils that had strong defenders. He knowingly roused the wrath of enemies who hated him for his cause's sake. Every evil thing felt weaker when he was in the midst.

The coming of Sam Jones always made a stir! It meant a fight between darkness and light. Sam Jones in Atlanta, Nashville and elsewhere was like Paul at Ephesus: the men who sold the whisky, shuffled the cards, and ran the faro banks in these American cities acted like the makers of the shrines of the goddess Diana. They attacked Sam Jones for the same reason; their craft was in danger as long as that voice of the man of God was left free to speak the truth. That voice burnt in their consciences like fire.

Sam Jones! To us that name stood for a faith like that described in that precious eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, telling us of **“the elders who by faith obtained a good report.”** When the telegram went from lip to lip in Nashville saying, “Sam Jones is dead!” great was the shock in all circles. It seemed to me almost as if an audible voice whispered in my inner ear: Another name for that list of worthies who by faith obtained a good report.

Sam Jones's faith was the secret of his power. He had the faith that took Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. His faith was choice: the way was plain, the truth was clear, the life was real. If Sam Jones ever had doubts, he never carried them into the pulpit. No, no! He carried them to God in the secret place, that God who sees in secret and rewards openly his faithful servants. If a poor, bewildered, despondent soul came to hear the gospel as Sam Jones preached it, he felt the touch of a man with the power of a mighty faith in God.

Sam Jones spoke the language of certainty in the pulpit. Conversion as he knew it brought a great peace to the pardoned soul. Consecration as Sam Jones knew it and preached meant a complete self-dedication to God that brought from God a joy that was divine.

Sam Jones, when he drew the line between the church and the world, describing the joys that last in contrast with the things that perish with the using, had in his testimony the note of victory from a man who had fought that battle and won it. That note of certainty in his preaching was the outcome of an experience that was all his own. What he had felt and seen with confidence he told.

Sam Jones did verily possess that power of faith that produced its fruits as described by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 11:23, 24: "**Subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises.**"

The victories of Sam Jones were the victories of faith — the faith that chooses Christ, the faith that believes Christ, the faith that obeys Christ, the faith that receives with holy gratitude the peace, the love, the power that Christ imparts to the receptive soul.

Sam Jones was so very human that he got close to all sorts of people. That humanness in him made his pathos irresistible. Sam Jones was akin to everyone who had known trouble. And that took us all in, for none have escaped. He was a follower and an apostle of that Christ who to those that were able to bear it made sorrow the badge of discipleship and the door of entrance into the larger liberty and clearer light promised to those who are told that if they suffer with Him here they shall also be glorified together with Him.

Sam Jones's gospel was a glad gospel. His Saviour was a Saviour mighty to save.

But Sam Jones, it goes without saying, was not blind to the tragic side of this world whose mysteries we cannot fathom, this world whose tragedies were deep enough to bring to its rescue the Son of God, this lost world which He came to seek and to save. Sam Jones's conception of sin was bitter; he had felt its sting! He had wrestled with its mystery; he had groaned under its intolerable burden. He looked upon sin as the enemy of God and the destroyer of men. To Sam Jones Satan was no abstraction or creature of the imagination, the imaginary head of a shadowy kingdom of darkness. No, no! The hell against which Sam Jones warned his hearers he described in New Testament language. It should not be thought strange that those warnings, thus expressed, were so often attended by that strange power of conviction accompanying New Testament truth expressed in its own very words.

Yes, truly, Sam Jones believed in a God who hated sin. The lurid pictures he drew of the sinfulness of sin, and of the doom of the sinner unrepentant and unpardoned could not have been drawn in milder colors by an honest preacher who believed what Sam Jones professed to believe.

“He was awfully in earnest, and that earnestness expressed itself in the language of the Book itself — and this was a secret of Sam Jones’s power.

But the secret that lay deepest of all is found in the fact that the Holy Ghost bore witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, according to His own promise, and in the use of His own marvelous methods. To Sam Jones the Pentecostal dispensation meant the coming of Pentecostal power whenever and wherever it was invoked under Pentecostal conditions. Sam Jones was a battery charged, and trailed directly against the forces of evil. Bless his brave, true heart! His answer to the threats that were sometimes made against him was usually expressed in terms of mingled defiance, ridicule and pity toward those who threatened.

That last element of Sam Jones’s power — a pity that was like the pity of the pitying Christ for sinners — was the chief element of his power as an evangelist. That pity can have but one Source. It cannot be counterfeited successfully. It cannot be resisted by even the coldest and hardest hearts. The preaching that lacks this pity, whatever else it may have that might commend it to the carnally minded, is only a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. The love of Christ constrained Sam Jones. That love he expressed mostly in Christ’s own way, reciting to the people in Christ’s own words what He had said, or illustrating His love by Christ’s own acts.

In one of Sam Jones’s evangelistic gatherings there was usually that which reminded us of New Testament times and doings. The great crowds, the tenderness that melted all hearts, the satire that made sin look so cheap and silly, the methods that broke over all conventionalities — what came with Sam Jones was something like what is here described. It got to be so that where he came at the call of any community, a great stir of this sort was looked for, and there was no disappointment — for God was with him. The notes of victory in his last battle were still in his ears when he started to his home in the Georgia hills, but, as it proved to be, to that home prepared for him by his Lord up yonder where sin and sorrow cannot enter. To that home Sam Jones had directed many in the name of his Master. They are together with Him now.

Among the readers of this chapter those who know Sam Jones as I did will repeat with me the words we find in I Corinthians 15:57: **“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Nashville, Tenn.

Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman., D.D.
Secretary General Assembly's Committee on Evangelistic Work

It has been my privilege to know Rev. Sam P. Jones for a number of years. I first heard him in 1887 when I was a pastor in Albany, N. Y., and he was conducting meetings with Prof. E. O. Excell at Round Lake, not far from Saratoga Springs.

I heard him preach a sermon on "**All things work together for good,**" and I can still repeat the outline, and remember the sermon as if it were preached yesterday, and the impression it made upon me. I came away from that service with one of the most distinguished preachers in our country, and I heard him say after he had listened to the same sermon: "I have heard to-day the greatest preacher which it has ever been my privilege to hear."

I consider Sam Jones one of the most remarkable men of his generation. He was peculiarly called of God to rebuke sin. His wit and his wisdom came from an inexhaustible source of supply. He was not always understood. Now that he is gone, however, the references of all the newspapers to him, almost without exception, say that he has made his place in church history, and the followers of Jesus Christ, not only to-day, but in days to come, will rise up to call him blessed.

He loved God, as was clearly indicated in his preaching, and he loved men. Some of the greatest sermons that have ever been delivered to men flowed from his lips and rose from the depths of his heart. God not only gave him wide observation and a great experience, but he trained him through trial and suffering to be the man that he was.

And yet I am told that no one knew Mr. Jones until they had met him in his own household. I have a vivid picture in my mind now of his being at the World's Fair at St. Louis with the most of his family, and it was a constant delight to me to look across the dining-room of the hotel and see his face wreathed in smiles as he talked with those whom he loved.

A friend of mine who was recently his guest, says that he was a veritable priest in his own household, and that the members of his family loved him with a passionate devotion. He was as true as steel, and as honest as the day is long.

He was the most generously paid man on the platform to-day, and yet he was constantly giving to those who were in distress. It was his delight to work beyond his strength that he might have wherewith to give to those who needed it.

Two of my friends who have labored with him constantly, each said the same thing, without knowing that the other said it — "Sam Jones was the cleanest, whitest and purest man in all this world."

Personally, I thank God that he ever lived.

Tribute by the Rev. A. W. Lamar

The death of Rev. Sam P. Jones was a national loss. No man who has lived in America has ever spoken to so many people as he. For thirty years he went up and down the land preaching civic righteousness; preaching temperance; preaching family religion; preaching salvation. He gathered and held longer greater audiences than any man of whom history tells.

There was a charm to his wonderful voice; there was a fascination in his quaint and homely way of putting things; there was a keen edge to his sarcasm; there was a spontaneity to his wit that astonished; his repartee was invincible; his humor disarming; his reasoning cogent and unanswerable; his philosophy was deep, underlying even his most trivial utterances; his eloquence was often sublime and overpowering. He had the eye of the eagle for seeing things afar, and the heart of goodness to love the truth seen. He understood human nature in all its moods and tenses, and he knew how to play upon every string of the harp of a thousand strings. He understood, as few public speakers understand, the uses of humor and pathos in public address. For this reason his spiritual surgery amputated more limbs than any other spiritual surgeon, and killed fewer patients.

Princely soul! Generous! Gentle! Fearless! Gifted above the millions of men, yet full of true humility! Lover of God, and lover of men — will this earth ever hear again the voice or throb to the footfall of another like him?

~ end of chapter 33 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
