

# **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 EIGHT**

### **THE ORPHANS' HOME AND REVIVAL WORK**

In the previous chapter we have seen how the calls for evangelistic work multiplied while he was serving the Newberne and Monticello circuits. At the last place his presiding elder and the quarterly conference decided that the calls from other brethren were so urgent that he might spend some of his time in assisting them. Mr. Jones had realized that he was giving almost half of his time to outside work, and at the close of the conference his presiding elder recommended that he be appointed to the agency, believing that he was the only man that could raise the money to cover the indebtedness of the Orphanage, and thereby enable him to do more revival work.

The Home was overwhelmingly in debt. It could hardly have been sold for enough money to have cancelled the indebtedness. Vincent R. Tommey, Judge Meriwether, and others, could not go further with the debt and interest. They saw the rapidly increasing popularity of Mr. Jones, and felt that as agent he could care for the orphans and raise the debt, and have a wider sphere for his work as an evangelist.

In December of 1880, at the conference held at Rome, presided over by Bishop McTyeire, Mr. Jones was made agent of the Orphans' Home. In view of his desire to devote more time to the work of an evangelist, he received the appointment gratefully, believing that it would give him larger opportunity to do revival work. The demand for such service was so urgent, that he felt that the Spirit was leading him in that direction, so this seemed to be a providential opening.

Instead of the Orphanage being in debt eight or ten thousand dollars, as many supposed, he found by the time old notes and debts were paid that the amount was nearly twice this amount.

In canvassing for money he found people were not very anxious to pay old debts, but his remarkable ability in raising funds overcame the objections, and everywhere he went money came in by basketfuls. Some of the collections were marvelous. He paid off all the debts and raised money to erect the handsome main building, now known as the "Sam Jones Building."

In writing to the *Christian Advocate*, he gave an account of where he had been, and what he had done, covering a period of several months. In the letter he says:

“The eyes of the world are upon an agent, and their ears are not open to his cries. Some respect him, some pity him, some despise him, while on the other hand, an agent respects the generous, pities the poor and despises the miser, so he strikes his balance-sheet, and moves on.

“I began Friday night, sixteenth of December, at the old, but trusty town of Lexington; a fair congregation and twenty-five dollars cheerfully given to the Orphans’ Home; thence to Winterville, a good congregation and twenty-three dollars. I wonder if that town will ever be as large as the great heart of Bro. John Winter? I spent a pleasant night with him; left him Sunday morning, thinking more of my race. Thank God for every oasis in an agent’s Sahara. Thence to Athens, a city made a hundred times larger than its corporate limits by its noble men and their noble deeds. They gave me cheerfully more than two hundred dollars, and kindly said, ‘Come again.’ And from thence, we went to Thomson on Christmas Sunday. I could say much for this people — noble, kind, generous - A bad day, fair congregation and one hundred dollars for my cause. Three p.m. at Harlem; good congregation, twelve dollars contributed. The month of December gave me nearly four hundred dollars.

“First Sunday in January I was at eleven a.m. at Paine’s Chapel, Atlanta, a good house with kind people. ‘A man may take a neighbor’s part, yet have no cash to spare him.’ The collection was thirty-three dollars and sixty-five cents. Sixth church, three p.m.; the youngest of the Atlanta churches, but grand in Christliness; they gave me fifty-one dollars and twenty-six cents. St. Paul church at night; this church is noted for its heroic struggles against wind and tide, and its patient continuance in well doing. They gave me thirty-seven dollars. If, wherever there was a will there was a way, I would have gotten one thousand there. At Oothcaloga, Calhoun circuit, second Sunday, eleven a.m.; they came through cold and mud and gave me twenty-three dollars. I said, ‘Thank you,’ and left, feeling good. At Adairsville, three p.m., I got one hundred dollars, minus ninety-four dollars and forty-five cents. Thence to Calhoun at night; I had a fine congregation, got twenty-two dollars and came away wondering that I did not get more. On the third Sunday I was rained out. Fourth Sunday, Rome, Dr. Potter — how I love him, how I prize his counsel, how his words impress me. (How that turkey dinner depressed me). His church loves reverences and admires (and I trust will obey) him. I have been nowhere and found the people and preacher so universally pleased with each other. I got over one hundred dollars there, mud or no mud. January gave me about three hundred dollars.

“February, still in the mud; can’t say of my own knowledge that the sun has risen but one time since Christmas, but through the mud I will go until I am up to my chin. First Sunday, eleven a. m., at Jackson’s Chapel, Cave Spring circuit, seventeen dollars for the Orphans’ Home; night at Cave Spring, good congregation, thirty-nine dollars. Edgewood next, second Sunday, was pleased with that congregation; they listened scripturally, and gave tolerably — twenty-seven dollars there. At night I was with Brother Christian at Evans’ Chapel; they are a religious people — kind, hospitable; they gave me sixty-three dollars. Third Sunday, Dalton, a fine membership, a strong church; they have a fine pastor, a good preacher; he is self-poised, successful. I got seventy dollars there.

“Fourth Sunday at Marietta; it was a benediction to be with those people; Brother Seals has his church in full sympathy with him in his labors of love, and works of faith. You may soon chronicle one of the greatest revivals. Marietta the place. Brother Seals the instrument. They gave me one hundred and twenty dollars. Add to the above amounts private donations and I have more than one thousand dollars as the result of my first three months this year, in spite of rain and mud, gloom and despondency.

“Now, Mr. Editor, we are taking all orphan children we can find or hear of, placing them in good homes. We are paying for our home, because we must have a place to which they must come, and a place from which they go. We are now a success, and nothing succeeds like success.

“Yours,

“S. P. Jones, Agent.”

“P. S. — Please let me return thanks to the generous public and the pastors who have universally been a help to me in my labors. God bless them all, preachers and people. S. P. J.”

In the year 1882, while engaged in raising money for the Orphanage, he conducted a great many meetings throughout Georgia. Some of the greatest revivals ever held in the State were conducted by him at this time. He preached in most of the leading pulpits of Georgia. His fame soon covered the entire State. All of these meetings were eminently successful, and hundreds of converts were made wherever he labored.

At Newnan, Ga., he held a meeting and raised a good sum for the Orphanage. The Newnan court was in session, and adjourned to hear him preach. The result was the conversion of two members of the grand jury, who had been unbelievers, and the meeting closed with members of the grand jury shouting.

At Athens, Ga., he preached in the First Methodist church to an audience that filled the first floor and the gallery. At the close of this meeting he raised a collection of nearly four hundred dollars for his Orphans' Home.

At Eatonton, in May, he visited the town again in the interest of the Orphanage. The Messenger says: “He is of the people; they like him, and he knows how to reach and touch their hearts. When he visits the community he never fails to leave the religious atmosphere in a healthier condition. He is an honor to his state and church, and thousands live to bless the day when they met and listened to his searching appeals in the great meeting he held here.” He received in money and first-class subscriptions for the Orphans' Home about three hundred dollars.

He spoke in Atlanta in the interest of the Home to a crowded house in the First Methodist church.

A paper said:

“Mr. Jones rose and made a most pathetic appeal; spoke of the good the home had done, and was doing; of the debt that had been carried, but was gradually being paid; of the success he had met with in different parts of the State, and the scenes of sadness and desolation he had visited — mothers that had worked and labored for their little ones and were ready to faint by the way, because bread could not be put into their mouths, and how one had said to him that surely God had sent him to her, in her sore distress, and had given her little ones up — torn her heartstrings to part with those little ones — rather than to see them starve, and blessed God that there was an Orphans’ Home.

He said that last year his wife said to him: “Mr. Jones, I don’t want you to take that appointment again,” but after the good she saw had been done in the past year, her parting word to him had been: “You run the Orphan Home in Decatur, and I will run your orphan home here in Cartersville.”

Furthermore, he said:

“Friends, when I came from home, wife said to me: ‘Come back to-night so you may see our children when they open their stockings in the morning.’ When I am awakened before day on Christmas morning and see the expressions of delight on my little children’s faces, hear them blowing their horns and beating their drums, I shall look at them and think: ‘Will we all be here next Christmas, or will they be orphans?’ How many in my presence can tell whether one or more may be missed before Christmas comes around; or, sadder still, how many may during this year lay to rest some dear little one whose prattle made their hearts glad last year?”

There was not a dry eye in the house, and strong men bowed their heads and were not ashamed of “the tears that did honor to their manhood.

When Mr. Jones had concluded his remarks, the treasurer arose and stated that a few years ago the debt of the Home far exceeded the value of the place, and its influence had been crippled much by this embarrassment, but to say that our property, which was valued at ten thousand dollars, has only a debt of three thousand eight hundred due on it shows a brighter day coming for us. The people are helping us, and God’s blessing is with us. If you could see those children as I have seen them, join with them in their little games, eat at the table with them, be with the boys while they work in the field; if you could see them thus, you would all contribute liberally to their support. Mr. Jones then proceeded to take a collection, and the congregation responded very liberally. A stranger gave a check on the New York Exchange National Bank for one hundred dollars. As a result of the collection one thousand dollars was raised.

*The Atlanta Constitution* says: “We have never commended a more admirable charity than the Orphans’ Home. The care of helpless little children, the providing of a home for homeless babies — the reclaiming of waifs from the streets, from wretchedness and want, or worse — appeals strongly to the sympathy of all fathers and mothers. When this work is done without endowment, by heroic appeals to the public, and faith in human nature, and economy and efficiency, we fail to see how any man or woman can refuse it their aid. The Orphans’ Home stands on its record. It has provided shelter, a home, food, clothing and schooling to thirty-six orphan children at a total cost of less than twelve hundred dollars, or less than thirty dollars per annum to the child.

This is marvelous in its cheapness, and yet the happy faces of the children, their plump figures and rosy cheeks, show that they have had abundance. The secret of the thing is in the fine management of the farm on which the Home is located — of the poultry-yard, garden, dairy and barnyard, and in putting the children at work on the farm and in the house.

“Mr. Jones, the agent of the Home, appeals to the public for five thousand dollars with which to build an additional house in which to put other children who are now applying for admission. The managers are able to feed all the children who apply, but they have no room for them. With five thousand dollars he agreed to build a new house that will accommodate from fifty to eighty more children, and to begin the work when two thousand five hundred dollars is subscribed. This amount ought to be subscribed without a day’s delay, and we believe our people will subscribe it when they are called upon.”

In this chapter it is impossible to give detailed accounts of the great revivals that Mr. Jones held during the first four years as agent. Most of the meetings were held in Georgia, while some of his great revivals were in adjoining States. He visited Louisville, Ky., and assisted Dr. J. C. Morris in a wonderful meeting at the Walnut Street Methodist church. Dr. Morris, in speaking of the meeting, said: “From his first appearance he became identified with the religious life of that rare congregation, and was enshrined in their truest, tenderest Christian affection. My own heart knitted to him, and to the sad day of his departure from among us I recognized him to be the friend of God, and of his fellow men.”

He held great meetings in Atlanta at the First church, with General Evans as pastor. The second was with Rev. Howell H. Parks. Trinity church, that city, was also a field where he worked repeatedly during the pastorate of Dr. T. R. Kendall. Many prominent members of those two great churches were either converted or led to a deeper consecration during his ministry at that time. With Rev. J. O. A. Cook as pastor of the St. Luke’s church, Columbus, Ga., he had a glorious meeting. For nearly a month great crowds gathered at this church, and many were brought to the Saviour. In Augusta, Ga., at the St. John’s church, during the pastorates of Rev. W. H. La Prade and Rev. Warren A. Candler, now bishop, the work was greatly honored of the Lord. In Savannah, Ga., there were also great meetings held in the Trinity and the Monumental Methodist churches. He visited Macon, Ga., and assisted Dr. Jos. S. Key, now bishop, in a great work. His preaching made a profound impression upon the people and the pastor, and in after-years Bishop Key said: “He stayed with me near a month in my home. I came to know him thoroughly, and my opinion of him and my estimate never changed, except that he grew greater and broader and sweeter in his spirit and manner. His first sermon in that meeting arrested attention and drew a crowd to hear him. I have told him many years later that, like a mockingbird, his first song was as good as his last.”

Dr. A. J. Lamar tells how Mr. Jones’s meeting broke up the one that he was holding in the Baptist church. His meeting had started off remarkably well, but for some unaccountable reason to Dr. Lamar, the audience fell off Monday night to half; on Tuesday to one-fourth, and on Wednesday he had only a few of his deacons, and the great congregation was gone. He was dumbfounded. He turned to the deacons and said: “What has happened to this meeting?”

They looked at him with a quizzical look and said: "Did you not know Sam Jones was conducting a meeting at the Mulberry Street Methodist church?"

"Who is Sam Jones?" replied Dr. Lamar.

The deacons were greatly surprised, and said: "You don't know who Sam Jones is?"

Dr. Lamar replied: "In South Carolina, where I have just come from, I never heard of him."

"Well," said they, "Sam Jones is the greatest sensation Georgia ever produced. When he is in town there is no use to try to run against him. All our people are around to hear him to-night."

"Well," said Dr. Lamar, "let's adjourn this meeting and go over and see what manner of man he is."

He was introduced to Mr. Jones, and said: "Brother Jones, you have taken my crowd from me, but I don't see that you are getting many of them converted to-night."

"Well," replied Mr. Jones, "Brother Lamar, a fellow has got to catch his fish before he strings them. I am just drumming up my crowd, and will string them after awhile."

Dr. Lamar replied: "Well, I am coming to see you string them, and to help, if I can."

Mr. Jones replied: "That's the talk; we need the help of all good men."

During that meeting Dr. Lamar and his people were as enthusiastic as the members and pastor of the church in which it was held. In many other places he preached and won souls to Christ, and the friendship and love begotten in the hearts of the preachers whom he met in those early days clung to him through all the years of his life.

The pastors of Georgia have been among the best and closest friends he has had. For several years he took a nominal appointment, and continued to raise money for the Orphanage wherever he was called to preach, and his work began to extend in all directions, and he started out in the great work of world-wide evangelism.

For eleven years Mr. Jones was the agent and bore all the expenses of the Home. The treasurer drew upon him for whatever was needed. Being out of the State in his evangelistic work, he believed that someone ought to keep the Home close to the pockets of Georgians, and he joined with the trustees in asking that Rev. Howard L. Crumley should be his associate. He held a nominal appointment for two years.

At the end of two years Bishop Haygood decided that he had no right under the laws of the church to appoint Mr. Jones to the agency, as his time was not spent with the work of the Home, so Mr. Jones located in December, 1893, at the session of the annual conference held in Gainesville, Georgia, in order to devote all of his time to the evangelistic work.

There had arisen some technicality regarding his taking a regular appointment, and devoting his time to revival work. A few heated discussions before and after the action resulted. The brethren of the conference were anxious for him to remain one of them, but Mr. Jones didn't see how he could give up his large evangelistic field and confine himself to a single pastorate. Undoubtedly a strict construction of Methodist law justified Bishop Haygood in his course, but that law seemed to have been set aside in some previous instances and a very great number of Methodists regretted that its strict letter was not overcome by some means in this case. As for the conference it showed its continued admiration and love for Mr. Jones by electing him on the first ballot — at the first opportunity — by a very complimentary vote one of the lay delegates to the General Conference.

His thousands of friends regretted very much that he severed his official connection with the Orphanage, but until the time of his death he was one of the most liberal contributors to the great work. The institution was always very dear to his heart, and he considered his services there as the greatest that he ever rendered to suffering humanity.

Mr. Jones, at the Augusta Conference, in 1885, decided that with a small board of trustees, the business could be more easily handled, and had the conference to change the charter, and Messrs. W. A. Gregg, Robert A. Hemphill and George Muse became the sole trustees, the agent being ex-officio trustee. The plan has worked admirably. The Home has grown; from two to three hundred destitute children are helped each year; the babies, helpless cripples and every grade of destitution find a welcome in the Home, which was rescued and supported by Mr. Jones for eleven years.

When Mr. Jones gave up the work of the Orphanage, the committee made the following report:

“Mr. Jones has severed all official relation with the Orphans' Home. He has been the truest friend we ever had. For about thirteen years he has been its father. Never did the cry of the orphan go unresponded to. For many years he met the drafts from his own pocket. He built the main building and chapel and stocked the farm and met every claim. The orphans look with admiration upon his life-sized picture that adorns the sitting-room. They love him and with sincere sadness suffer the separation. This throws upon the Home the additional expense of one thousand dollars which Brother Jones has been accustomed to meet. The whole burden of the Home, amounting to about five thousand dollars a year, rests on the conference. They are your children, and you will furnish the five thousand dollars needed. Brother Jones has so long raised part, of this outside the conference that it will seem heavy to you. But we can raise it.”

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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