

Life and Sayings of Sam P. Jones:

A Minister of the Gospel

The Only Authorized and Authentic Work

By his wife
Assisted by
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Co-worker of Mr. Jones

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CHAPTER TWO

TOLEDO MEETING

Perhaps the most novel situation that Mr. Jones had ever encountered was in Toledo, Ohio. A committee from the Ministers' Union had invited him to Toledo for the purpose of fighting the influence of the Golden Rule policy of Mayor Samuel M. Jones, who had made himself famous by his doctrine of "Do as you would be done by." The mayor had injected his principles into the city government, and dealt with the vices of the city upon that platform, which was not approved by a number of the ministers and the Christian laymen. Consequently the services of Mr. Jones were sought in order that the people might be shown the evils attendant upon the Golden Rule regime. It was truly a case of Sam Jones versus Sam Jones.

The newspapers of the city, with one exception, the *Bee*, were favorable to Samuel M. Jones, the mayor, and against the coming of Sam P. Jones, the preacher. They were loud in their denunciations of the Georgia evangelist, and great injury to the city was predicted upon his coming. They appealed to the people from the standpoint of the popularity of the Golden Rule policy that was inaugurated, and as they said, successfully administered by the mayor. Speculations and predictions of dire calamity were read every day before and after the coming of the evangelist, and efforts were made to convince the people that the Georgian would come to the city only for the purpose of stirring up strife and overthrowing the policy of the best mayor the city ever had.

But with the *Bee* as the sole defender of the evangelist, his case went before the people of the city. The people read the adverse criticisms of the papers, but did not make up their minds finally, and reserved their judgment until the coming of Mr. Jones, when they could see and hear for themselves.

Upon his arrival in Toledo Mr. Jones was met by the committee that had invited him. He was put in possession of facts regarding the moral and political status of affairs, and with this information he went forward to the attack single-handed.

At the opening service, which was held in the Armory Hall, there were more than five thousand eager people to hear the evangelist. Every seat in the building was taken, and hundreds were turned away, unable to find standing room.

The arrangements for the meetings, which were in the hands of a committee, were, perhaps, the most complete and satisfactory that Mr. Jones had ever experienced. Every detail had been carefully looked after by the committee, which had worked in harmony from the beginning, and the effect of united action was apparent. Mr. Jones often remarked that the arrangements made for the meetings at Toledo were splendid, and that he had seldom seen such harmony among the members of a committee.

He was introduced by Mayor Samuel M. Jones, who was given a rousing ovation when he appeared upon the platform with his wife. It was readily seen that the mayor was extremely popular with the people, and that his policy was generally approved. This did not seem to disturb the evangelist, however, for he had found it his duty many times before to attack officials in high places and officers of great popularity when he felt that their policy was wrong, or that they were not doing their duty.

The two Sams were loudly applauded as they shook hands upon the platform in view of the people.

In his introduction the mayor said in part:

That it had been his privilege to perform many pleasant duties, but none which had ever put more sunshine into his heart. He was delighted to see before him such a vast audience, as it was an indication that a great many Toledoans were interested in the welfare of men's souls — interested in a gospel that would put sunshine into all hearts. Many men, he said, were misunderstood, but there was always the comforting assurance that Christ while on earth was misunderstood. Things as they exist are awfully wrong, but he had faith in Jesus Christ and with that faith fixed in the hearts of men, everything would be righted after awhile." In conclusion he said:

"It gives me pleasure to introduce to you Rev. Sam P. Jones, and there are other Joneses. This Jones is my fellow worker."

After the mayor took his seat, Mr. Jones arose and proceeded immediately with his sermon. The first sermon was along serious lines, and he did not indulge in the sensational attacks on sin and sinful things that he usually employed at the beginning of a meeting. For more than a week Mr. Jones kept up this seriousness, to the evident disappointment of some of the people who had come to hear him scalp some of the city officials, and others who were considered evil-doers.

It was after the first week of the meeting that Mr. Jones, in preaching to men, opened his guns and fired into the city officials. Mr. Jones never preached with more power, or with more fearless onslaughts upon the sins of men and public officials who would allow the laws of the land to be broken every day with no apparent effort to enforce them.

“You have got an apostle in town,” said Mr. Jones, “who can do everything by love; he works the Golden Rule on everything. My! My! If love would have regulated this town, it would have taken wings long ago, and would have flown away. Is it love that runs seven hundred saloons wide open seven days in the week, forty shameless houses all night long, and one hundred and fifty gambling-hells that carry your old men and your young men down to hell? You go down the street to that white-aproned, bull-necked saloon-keeper and say, ‘Jim, I am going to love you to death.’ ‘Go on,’ he will say, ‘love as long as you please, but don’t shut me up.’ If the devil were mayor of this town, he would not change a single thing. The devil would not change your chief of police either. If I could not find a mayor and police commissioner who would enforce the law and close these resorts of hell on the Sabbath I would take to the woods on Election Day. The owners of the saloons, the gambling houses, and unclean resorts of this city are worse than mad dogs, and would any man in this house attempt to use the Golden Rule on such an animal? I stand for something in my town, and when a mad dog gets loose in the streets of my place I use a double-barreled shotgun on him. I have got something above my eyes, neighbor. I have got too much sense to use love on a rabid beast.”

The sermon was one of the most powerful that the evangelist had preached, and its effect upon his audience was unmistakable. Mr. Jones won a great victory for municipal reform in Toledo, and changed the moral atmosphere of the city.

In Toledo, perhaps one of the largest woman’s meetings ever held was conducted by Mr. Jones. Despite the fearful state of the weather, the ladies of the city turned out in enormous crowds. They braved the storm of snow and rain, and waded through the mud and slush and filled to overflowing the great Armory Hall. Mr. Jones preached to them concerning the influence that they could and should exert over the men in the coming election for mayor. He said that every woman had an influence for good or evil over some man and that if the women of Toledo would exercise that influence properly they would be able to carry the city for God and right. There were women from every walk in life present at the meeting, and the impression made upon them by Mr. Jones was marked.

The meetings at Toledo lasted for three weeks, and with each day the services became more productive of good results. Thousands of people were converted, and many thousands were at the altar during the meetings, asking for the prayers of the Christian people.

At the close of the meetings Mr. Jones was extended a warm invitation to return to the city at any time he could do so, and was assured of the fact that his work had accomplished inestimable good for the people of Toledo. Those people who had abused him and questioned his motives before he came to the city had turned completely around and were loud in their praises of his work.

~ end of chapter 22 ~

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