



Sam Jones

A NEW BIOGRAPHY

E. A. Johnston

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By

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COVER PHOTO:

Poster of Rev. Sam Jones, dated 1893. The poster with graffiti scrawled upon the picture indicates the opposition Rev. Jones often encountered. The inscription on the right hand border reads, "He is a slinger of fine slang." The one beneath his bow tie says, "Choke him"

This original was discovered in Anson, Texas, stored in a trunk belonging to Rev. J. D. Reeves, great grandfather of Rozelle Brown of Cartersville, Georgia. Poster donated by Cecil & Rozelle Brown, July 23, 1999.

From the Rose Lawn Museum in Cartersville, Georgia. Cover photo provided by Jane Drew, Director

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FOREWORD

The magnitude of the ministry of Sam Jones was truly amazing—it was crazy what God was able to do with this broken-down alcoholic.

There are some books about Sam Jones, none of them fully tell the impact, implications, and reach of his ministry. It has been a burden all these years to want his story to be told correctly.

God answered my prayers when He sent Dr. E. A. Johnston to write this book. May the Holy Spirit guide you through its pages.

Bobby Lawrence
Founder, Anchor Ministries, Inc.
Cartersville, Georgia
(Great-great nephew of Sam Jones)

SAMPLE PAGES

INTRODUCTION

When I wrote my two-volume definitive biography on the great British evangelist George Whitefield, I felt only John Wesley could measure up to him in regard to his vast usefulness and incredible giftings. But now, that I have studied closely the life and ministry of Samuel Porter Jones I have to admit he was very much like the British evangelist, in the interest and immensity of the crowds that flocked to hear him, and like Whitefield, has also been forgotten by history which is unfathomable when one studies the account of his huge life in his time period of the mid to late 19th century.

There is no evangelist in that period other than Charles Finney and D. L. Moody who figured so prominently in American history other than the likes of Sam Jones. He was a household word, babies and candy bars, city streets and light bulbs were named after him. He was the most famous man of his generation other than his contemporary Teddy Roosevelt. Even President Roosevelt stood in awe of Sam Jones' contribution to American society, offering the evangelist a standing invitation to dinner at the White House whenever he was in the Capital city!

He was an absolute sensation wherever he went, and he captured the hearts and minds of the masses in every major metropolis he visited.

The Georgia evangelist always created a stir when he came to town. Sam Jones wouldn't leave the Devil alone; he preached hard against sin and delineated what sin was; he called men to their duty of repentance in plain language—that being a Christian meant “quitting your meanness.” Sam Jones had the power of God upon his ministry and those who resisted God's work often ended up being swept away by sudden death as the hammer of God's judgment fell. There are corpses strewn all over the land from people who heard Sam Jones preach but fought God's Spirit and revival. One man who publicly denounced the evangelist and his meetings was found dead on the sidewalk, and the people leaving Sam Jones' meeting had to pass by his corpse on their way home.

Dr. Robert E. Lee, in his introduction to a book of sermons of Sam Jones, encapsulated the impossibility of accurately describing the man called Sam Jones in his day — Dr. Lee wrote:

“To portray fully all that he was as a man and his message and his methods is like attempting to play

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on a tin whistle."

It is almost impossible to accurately express just how big and famous Sam Jones was in the second half of the 19th century. When he died his body was petitioned by the Governor of Atlanta to have his remains displayed beneath the dome of the State Capital building, where thirty thousand people filed by his casket in emotional distress—one woman was so overcome she dropped dead at his casket! What national figure could attract so much attention in death as he did in life other than Sam Jones?

As a research scholar, I have not written an academic treatment on Sam Jones. Rather I chose the route of popular biography to re-introduce him to Christians in our day. We need to know about Sam Jones. We need to know what he preached. We need to know historical examples of the power of God in revivals. Especially in our day of sad spiritual declension in the church and apostasy in our denominations. We need to know how God has moved in former times in revival through the lives of consecrated men so we too know how to ready ourselves for revival in our day. This book is a testimony to show the magnitude of what God can

do in and through a man wholly yielded to Him. The purpose of this new biography on Sam Jones is not to worship a man in hagiography but to give him his due place in history. It is my hope that the monumental ministry of Samuel Porter Jones will inspire you to better know the God of Sam Jones and to believe that our only hope today is in a heaven-sent revival.

E. A. Johnston, Ph.D., D. B. S., Fellow of the Stephen Olford Institute for Biblical Preaching, evangelist and author.

Note:

At 244 Cherokee Avenue, in Cartersville, Georgia is "Rose Lawn" the home of Samuel Porter Jones. It is a mansion on the U. S. National Register of Historic Places, and it was the family home until his wife's death in 1926. It is where six of their children were born: Laura, Robert, Julia, Mary, Paul, and Annie. It is open to the public for tours. Contact: Director, Jane Drew, 770-773-5060 for more information and donations.

PART I: THE MAN

“Hell is nothing but selfishness on fire.” — Sam Jones

SAMPLE PAGES

CHAPTER ONE

A PRINCE FALLEN IN ISRAEL

“And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?” (2 Samuel 3:38).

* * * *

America mourns at the bier of Sam Jones. Railroad engineers across the country tap their train whistles intermittently to mimic the sound of weeping souls, as thousands viewing the lifeless body now lying in state under the great dome of the Georgia state capitol in Atlanta. No less than 30,000 mourners with bowed heads and muffled sobs pass through the capitol, paying final respects to a man used by God to transform their lives for time and eternity.

Such was the scene in Atlanta, Georgia on October 16, 1906.

There was no greater spokesperson for right and against wrong than Sam Jones the Southern evangelist. He said more quotable things than any man of his generation. He preached to more than a million people each year for twenty-five years. He

saw more than 500,000 souls profess Christ under an itinerant ministry that crisscrossed the Nation. Thousands of saloons were put out of business because patrons were saved through his ministry and they renounced their former ways.

Newspapers in all the great cities of America printed his sermons, distributing more than 1,000,000 copies of his sermons throughout the republic. His image hung framed in drawing rooms in every major city. Candy bars and babies were named after him. Entire cities like Nashville and Chicago were shaken by spiritual revival as a consequence of his preaching. The moral life of communities was transformed. He fearlessly preached sin black and hell hot and he sounded the alarm that “ye must repent or you will likewise perish!” He was a man who with great command of the English language and unusual control of tens of thousands who packed his meetings to hear his famous sayings like, “Being a Christian means quitting your meanness.”

When President Theodore Roosevelt spoke in Atlanta, he addressed a crowd of 50,000 people at Piedmont Park. Upon learning that Sam Jones was in the audience, he had him rise and join him at the podium. The President then placed his arm around