

The Life Boat Articles (1902-1903)

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"The Prisoner's Friend" *The Life Boat* 5, 4 , pp. 78, 79.

A. T. JONES

ALL mankind were prisoners. They had been taken and enslaved by a merciless oppressor, who was determined that this imprisonment and this oppression should be perpetual, for of him it is written, that he "opened not the house of his prisoners," and that he would "not let his prisoners loose homewards." Thus he intended to hold them while they lived, and even when they died he shut them up in his prison cell, intending that there they should be held perpetually.

But God did not create man for such a destiny as that, and he pitied the prisoners in their bondage. It is true that these prisoners were in great measure responsible for their imprisonment. They had committed evil deeds which gave to the oppressor opportunity to make them prisoners and to exercise his cruel power over them. Yet, responsible as they were, guilty as they were, God "looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to *hear the groaning of the prisoner*; to loose those that are appointed to death." (Ps. 102:19, 26.) He determined that the captives of the mighty" should be taken away and the prey of the terrible oppressor should be delivered.

God sent his only begotten Son, and that Son, who dwelt near to the heart of God, freely came to this land of the enemy, of the oppressor, and of the forlorn prisoners. He came to meet the oppressor upon his own ground and in his own kingdom to break the power of the oppressor, to break every yoke, to deliver the prisoners [*sic*] and let the oppressed go free. He came proclaiming "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." He came to the prisoners just where they were. He submitted Himself to the same trials as themselves, the same sufferings, the same temptations. He did this in order that he might know in truest experience the real nature of their bondage, and that so he might be a complete deliverer. So completely did he make himself one with these forlorn prisoners in their experiences, that he gave himself up to death, and allowed himself to be shut up in his prison cell by the oppressor who had the power of death. For, inasmuch, "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

And so, though He was in the power of him that had the power of death, shut up in his prison cell, yet by his majestic power, He broke the bands of death,

burst the prison cell and came forth triumphant, exclaiming, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of the grave and of death;" and leading at the same time from their prison cells "a multitude of captives."

Now there is this unfortunate circumstance that some of those who are already prisoners become yet further prisoners. A second imprisonment falls upon them, beyond the original imprisonment. Unfortunately there are thousands of these to-day, and to them this number of THE LIFE BOAT is especially addressed, confidently bearing a message of hope. For though those in this double imprisonment may be in great measure responsible, thoughh [*sic.*] they may have committed evil deeds, which has brought upon them this additional imprisonment; yet, when the merciful, pitying, sympathizing God looked down from heaven to hear the groaning of those prisoners who were imprisoned but once, how much more will he the same merciful, pitying, and sympathizing God, hear to-day the groaning of those prisoners who are doubly imprisoned; how much

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more gladly will he deliver those who may be doubly appointed to death.

Every soul who has known the bitterness of the hard bondage and the cruelty of the imprisonment inflicted by the oppressor can sincerely sympathize, and does sincerely sympathize, with those who are in the bondage of a double imprisonment. And, of all things those who have know the bitterness of the hard bondage and the cruelty of the imprisonment of that terrible oppressor, and who know also the blessedness of the glorious *deliverance from all bondage*, that there is in the great Deliverer the perfect liberty with which Christ makes free—of all people *these* can sympathize with those who are doubly imprisoned, as well as those who are in prison at all, may know that blessed deliverance, that glorious liberty of those who are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And all these can, in sincere sympathy, join in the prayer indited by the merciful God, the prisoner's truest friend: "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die." (Ps. 79:11.)

May 1902

"The Better Self" *The Life Boat* 5, 5 , p. 107.

A. T. JONES

THERE is a true self in every man as well as a false self. When the prodigal son was away from his home feeding hogs, and was so hungry that he was willing to pick up the husks that the hogs had sucked the juice out of and see if he could not wring some more out of them, when he looked at himself he came to himself. Ah! He came to *himself*. There is a true man in a man always. There is a true self in every man—the divine part that God has created in man to glorify

Him. The divine destiny that God has set for every soul that ever comes into this universe is that he shall be conformed to the image of God, that he shall be like Jesus Christ. There is a better self, but too often the other self has taken the precedence. This other self has become the throne of Satan, and is rejoicing against the better self, compelling the better self to drag along in the way of the evil self. But some men reach that point where God *can* call them to their *better* selves.

And do not forget that when that men, sitting there watching those hogs, came to himself, the first thing that he said, was, "I will arise and go to my father." Do not forget that the first thing that the better self recognizes instantly, as soon as it awakes and gets its eyes opened, is the Father.

God sends you and me with a message to open men's eyes, to bring them to themselves, by whatever means, by whatever ministration it may be, that will bring a man face to face with himself and get him to see himself and come to himself; and then we may always be sure that there is this word in his heart, "I will arise and to go my Father."

August 1902

"Can the Drunkard Have Hope?" *The Life Boat* 5, 8 , pp. 169, 170.

A. T. JONES

IS there hope for the drunkard? Is there deliverance for him from his bondage, or is he to say that he is too far gone, that his bonds cannot be broken, that he must submit to enslavement forever?

Of course there is hope for the drunkard, as really as for any other sinner. He is not to submit to his enslavement and consent that he is to be a bondman forever; there is freedom for him, yes, even glorious liberty.

The Lord Jesus died for *every* man. He paid the price—the *same price*, the infinite price, for every soul *individually*. Thus every soul individually is redeemed. And to every one of the redeemed, to every soul individually, he has proclaimed, and still proclaims, "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

This freedom from bondage, this glorious liberty from captivity, is not a theory, it is not a conclusion logically derived from formal premises, for a man to argue himself into. It is a *substantial thing*, that has been wrought out in the life, and by the faith of the Lord Jesus in human flesh; and is a *gift* to be *received*. It is a free gift to every soul on earth. And whosoever accepts this gift of freedom from bondage thereby receives the substantial thing of a *new life*, a life of freedom indeed, and stands in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

But the slave of drink may be ready to say, "That is entirely too general to apply to my case. I want something specific." Well, here it is: "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin." The Lord Jesus was tempted exactly

as is the man who is addicted to strong drink. So entirely and so personally was this so, that he knows exactly how the drunkard *feels* in his temptation to drink. For he was "*touched* with the *feeling* of our *infirmities*." Have you the infirmity of the habit of strong drink, that bears you

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down under the temptation? The Lord Jesus knows just how you feel; for he has felt the same temptation. And when he felt that temptation that you feel, he resisted it, he conquered it, he triumphed over it, and his victory is your victory today. And there is the hope, the deliverance and the triumph of the drunkard today.

Yet still the drunkard may be inclined to say, "But I do not see how that reaches my case; for Jesus never was drunk, he never drank strong drink. How then could he feel my infirmity? How could he know my temptation, who have been drunk—yes, and even my father before me—so that it is really hereditary." Yes, all that may be true in your case, and yet Jesus meets you even there and was touched with the feeling of your infirmity. Indeed, it would be difficult to find in the present generation of men a single species of sin that has not a cast of heredity. But yet in it all Jesus meets mankind just where they are and knows just how they feel under the infirmity of temptation. Read these words of infinite grace: "Forasmuch then as the children (of man) are partakers of flesh and blood. He also himself likewise took part of the same. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made *like unto His brethren*" (Heb. 1:14, 17). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14). "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*." (Rom. 8:3).

When He came thus in flesh like ours, flesh the same as ours, it was at the end of a line of direct and unbroken descent of four thousand years of men of flesh and blood such as only this sinful world knows. And in that line of descent were men who, whether by accident or appetite, got drunk, as well as committed other sins that are common to fallen man. And when the Lord Jesus took human flesh "the same" as ours, at the end of a line of descent such as that, it was human flesh such as under the law of heredity human flesh would be. And thus He could be "tempted in all points like as we are," because He was "in all things like" us. And this for the very purpose "that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:17, 18).

He was tempted on the point of strong drink, as in all other points like as we are. But by trust in God He never yielded. He triumphed over every temptation, and in that triumph He has accomplished assured victory and triumph for every other tempted soul in this world.

And *this* is the hope of the drunkard. And it is a blessed hope, sure and steadfast, an immovable anchor of the storm-tossed soul. Oh that everyone would just *now* flee for refuge and lay hold upon this hope set before them, in the temptation and the triumph of the Lord Jesus in our flesh.

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"Heaven in the Home" *The Life Boat* 5, 10 , p. 227.

A. T. JONES

Heaven in the home: it is possible to have it there. Heaven belongs on the earth, and of all places on the earth, surely most of all in the home.

The Lord Jesus came to this earth to bring heaven to the people as much as He did to take the people to heaven. Indeed, in a sense, He came for the purpose of bringing heaven to the people; for heaven must be brought to the people on earth and they must become acquainted with it, and desire it, and be made fit for it, before they can possibly be taken to it. And even when the glad throng of every kindred, tongue, people and nation, have reached heaven, it is with joyous anticipation that they exclaim, "We shall reign *on the earth*" (Rev. 5:10). That will be when "The new heaven and the new earth" shall have taken the place of this old one; and the great voice from heaven announces, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4). Thus of very truth, heaven belongs on the earth.

But it is only Christ who has brought heaven to the earth; and only in him can it be found on earth. So it is written that we give "thanks to the Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 12, 13); and that kingdom is "the kingdom of heaven."

The word of God is "the word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:11-19), and the object of the Word of God is to cause that the days of men on the earth shall be as the days of heaven upon earth. For so is it written: "Therefore shall ye lay up these, my words, in your heart and in your soul, * * * and ye shall teach them to your children that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children * * * as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. 11:18-21).

The Word of God laid up in the heart and in the soul, and taught diligently to the children, makes the days of parents and children as the days of heaven upon the earth. And the Word of God, and the truth as it is in Jesus, if allowed to prevail in the home, makes *heaven in the home*.

God wants it so, and God has fixed it so, that all who go to heaven, shall as they go, have heaven within and all around to go to heaven in. And as the home is the one place on earth where all the life most centers, God has fixed it so that, of all places on earth, there shall be most of heaven in the home.

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"Are You Weak? Do You Need Strength?" *The Life Boat* 6, 7 , pp. 175, 176.

A. T. JONES

"Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. 2:10. The object of all creation is good works. He who is not created in Christ to good works can never do them, and he who is created and does not do them denies his creation.

Christianity comes as a result of creation as truly as the worlds came in the beginning by creation. It is a process of creation rather than evolution. "In the beginning God created the heaven 'and the earth.'" Gen. 1:1. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. 11:3. The same is true of all that was made during creation

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week; vegetation, the atmosphere, light, the animals—all were created, not evolved.

This should be the experience of a Christian. As far as good works are concerned, the life of man is as utterly void as was the world before its creation. God in Christ Jesus has sent the creating Word which takes man from nothingness, and creates him in the image of God. Naturally, man is dead and lost in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:13) but in Christ Jesus he is created unto good works. Yet, when the first step in creation is taken, that man's life is as utterly chaos as was the world after the first day's work of creation. The Spirit of God brooded over that creation, to bring it into accord with God's thought, so with the man whose life is utterly devoid of good works, the Spirit of God is brooding over his life to cause the good works to appear. This process must go on to perfection. Each successive step in Christian experience must come as truly by creation through the word of God as did the first step. It is natural for us to think we can do things without God, but anything that shall ever appear in you or me which we might think was good, can never be good without the inspiration of the Spirit of God. When the man came to Christ and called him good, Christ said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one; that is God." Matt. 19:17.

All that is good is from God, therefore every individual must become the fruit of the creative power of God, so that God shall be in the life and shall be the inspiration of that person. "The fruit of the spirit (not *fruits*) is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness . . . against such there is no law." Gal. 5:22. In other words, against everything except this there is a law. Then the source of our conduct is not the law, but God, through the Holy Spirit, and when God by the Holy Spirit becomes the inspiration of the life, the product is what the law demands. When there is anything in the life contrary to law, it is because the spirit is not in the life.

The person who says, "I have tried and tried to overcome this thing and that, and cannot do it,"—that person is an evolutionist. When Christ said, "Let there be

light," did He stop and wonder if there would be light and *hope* it would come after a while? Light did not come that way; He spoke and it was. The same word which God has spoken is given you to enable you to be more than conqueror. There is no cause for anyone who has named the name of Jesus having his "ups and downs."

An orange grower in Florida tells of a disease among orange trees. They will attain a great growth one year, but the next year the trees do not grow at all. The year following they again make a great show and the next year fall back again. They call this the "die back disease." Such trees bear no fruit. They have their "ups and downs." A great many Christians have this same experience. He that is created through the word of God will find that the power in this word will carry him straight through without having his "ups and downs."

Are you weak? Do you need strength? God's word is "Be strong."—Read that word; accept that word be your strength. 1 Cor. 16:13. "We live henceforth not unto ourselves, but unto Him." It will never do to spend our lives simply for our selves, doing no good to others. He has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God. Rev. 1:6. The world's idea of a king is one who sits on a throne, and whom everybody serves. The right kind of king is he who serves everybody. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Matt. 23:11.

Every Christian king will have some one to rule, and that is himself. Get control of your own spirit, and the evil that is within you. To the extent that you are master of your evil tendencies—that is true kingship. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." Prov. 6:32.

(Extracts from a talk given in Chicago, June 6, 1903.)