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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ADONIRAM JUDSON.

BY W. O. CARVER, TH.D., D.D., LOUISVILLE, KY.

In this centennial year and almost on the anniversary of his baptism in India (September 6, 1812), it is fitting that some effort be made to give a definite statement of the influence he has exerted in the world by reason of his service as a Christian missionary. In this paper no effort at all is made to recount Judson's history. That is taken for granted here. Of the names of the first generation of modern missionaries that stand for heroism in the minds of Christians generally those of Carey and Judson would, no doubt, on all hands be placed in a class by themselves. This is partly due to the circumstances of their service and partly to the heroic mould of the personality of the men. Neither of them stands alone in service. Neither could have become a missionary at all, or could have achieved such greatness as is accorded him, except by the help of others. Both were ready always to acknowledge this. Indeed, one of the great lessons taught by both these men is the true greatness of humility and the power of a devotion to a great cause wholly free from self-seeking. With Carey this humble self-effacement is largely an original grace and one of the easiest of all his achievements in character.

Judson was ambitious, eager for reputation, determined to lead and to shine. He was consciously brilliant, capable and cultured and eager to be known as a factor in the world's life. This ideal in his young manhood held him aloof from the ministry and from personal acceptance of Christ. Yet his insight was clear. He knew what it meant to be a follower of the Man of Nazareth. In a great crisis he definitely denied self, took up his cross and became in remarkable degree a follower of Jesus. This surrender was once and for all. It was never difficult to labor with him, for his purpose was single, his motive pure, his docility obvious, his mastery desired. The grace of God has done no finer work in leading captive a strong and ambitious will.

The pioneer character of his work, the obstacles in his way, the dangers incurred and the extreme sufferings and privations he bore and the splendid spirit in which he endured them all have combined with other features to make Judson one of the most popular of all the heroes of the Church. Almost every group biography of heroic missionaries includes an account of him. He is universally admired and his example cited by men of all communions. Some heroic missionaries have the histrionic temperament and a gift for getting into dramatic situations. They see the dramatic and heroic in incidents that would be commonplace to other men. They keep diaries from which it is easy to make up a great story. Judson was as far as possible removed from all this. Without condemning this type one may still accord the larger praise to one who endures hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ without the too obvious consciousness of his heroism. Judson was such a soldier. He even made too little of his experiences. When he found out the tendency to make him out a great hero he sought to destroy all the correspondence and records that could be used to lionize him. In this one way perhaps he gave evidence of a lingering consciousness of his once great ambition for the glory of men. As a rule

he behaved as if he had never been self-conscious nor had a struggle to be humble.

He suffered bravely and uncomplainingly the wrongs and oppressions inflicted directly or indirectly by the British and Burmese governments, he took without reviling the spoiling of his goods and the indignities and cruelties imposed upon his person in the repeated and extended imprisonments under conditions of shame and suffering no longer to be met with in any part of the world. This is the more noteworthy that he was a man of delicate and refined sensibilities, always careful of his body, and peculiarly sensitive to uncleanness, immodesty and coarseness. To know that about him and then to read of the foul prisons, the excruciating tortures and the unspeakable surroundings of his prison experiences makes one marvel at the possibilities of endurance for the faith of the Gospel, and for the redemption of lost men.

Worst of all were the bereavements by the death of his two wives and his children and the witnessing of the hardship and destruction wrought on them by reason of association with him in the most of his missions. One can endure all things that fall upon him personally for the sake of Christ, but to see his most dearly loved ones suffer because they are his, under the conditions of his duty, this most of all tries faith and breaks the spirit. This, too, Judson bore and his faith failed not.

The courage and faithfulness of this man have been the means of calling many another young man into the service of the Master and into the work of foreign missions. One of the Haystack Seven, he became the most famous of that band. His career more than that of any of the others justified the optimistic vision and the valiant devotion of these young students. Every one of them deserves the reverent recognition of the Church of our Lord. Luther Rice is brought before our readers in the splendid article of last number and this, and along with him all the others are named. This band of young

men is one of the most significant groups of disciples of Jesus ever united in prayer and consecration since the first Apostles who waited on the Master and took up His mission. Samuel John Mills, Jr., was no doubt the master of the group and, so, "the father of foreign missions in America." But Judson is the best known of the group and it was his name more than any other that was on the lips of the centennial celebrants at the dedication of the Haystack monument in 1909.

In the larger knowledge of the conditions of tropical countries, the better understanding of hygienic precautions, the improved facilities for living and traveling, the better relations between governments and missionaries we can see how Judson might have been saved much of his suffering and how the lives of his loved ones might have been spared to him. But in the light he had he did his best and never recklessly dared danger or disease, and his concern for his loved ones was tender and true.

Not only in drawing men into service, but rather more, perhaps, in sustaining men in service has the life of Judson been of worth. Missionaries in India particularly, and elsewhere as well, have been familiar with his career. If they have sometimes learned by his needless sufferings how to save themselves for service, vastly more by his heroic persistence in well-doing under almost insuperable difficulties and unbearable hardships have they learned to endure and persevere. Judson's experience, among others, is the classic one of the seven years' toilsome working before the first fruit of his toil came, the first convert. And this is because of his laconic word of faith when his home board inquired of prospects for success: "As bright as the promises of God." That word has been of untold benefit to the cause of missions in its influence on missionaries, in its weight with home directors when too eager for "results" that could find place in the annual reports, and to the supporters when they have wanted to see returns for their money. Carey

had had a similar experience just a few years before this. Robert Morrison was baptizing his first convert about the time Judson was finding his place in Burma. Carey's experience he knew, Morrison's he possibly learned also, his own is known now of all the interested saints of God.

The outcome in the work Judson began has contributed also to his fame and influence. He went to Burma largely of necessity. He was shut up to this by being shut out of India by the envy of the English in general and the opposition of the East India Company in particular. But he chose a country with people and possibilities, and not some non-strategic island with a handful of people. He was left almost, if not quite wholly, to his own wisdom and initiative in both the location of his work and its methods. On the field before the denomination with which he was to work and from which his support would come had as yet organized for the work or had any experience or even definite study of it, he was necessarily without direction from home. If this left him without interference it also deprived him of sympathetic counsel. If he made mistakes there have been none to see how he could have done better at any time. His success shows the wisdom of appointing missionaries of the largest fitness in character and preparation.

It was Judson's influence first of all that led Baptists of America to undertake foreign missions. Almost from the beginning some in America had given money to the support of the work of the English Baptist Society. Judson made necessary definite and separate American organization. It was he first who became a Baptist in India and, as Dr. Pollard shows in the current article already referred to, a sermon of Judson influenced Luther Rice in his own study of the questions that led him two months after Judson to accept baptism. Rice became the organizing leader and with the help of such men as Staughton, Fuller and others, determined the fact and form of missionary organization for Ameri-

can Baptists. The attitude of opposition in England served also to force independent organizations upon America when otherwise they would have become auxiliary supporters of the English society. Without going at all into these matters, we must here note that Judson's acceptance of Baptist views and church membership was the hinge on which turned the missionary history of American Baptists. His suggestion to a Baptist friend before leaving America planted one seed of organization and his correspondence later greatly promoted the work under the lead of Rice and others at home.

Judson was thus the fountain source from which sprang, first of all, the marvelous mission in Burma, and then the long line of missions of American Baptists in Siam, China, Japan, India, Africa and in Catholic lands. And of course, we must include the missions of Southern Baptists. That Baptists would, before many years, have been led in some other way to organize for this work is practically certain. But we are concerned with Judson as the personal originator in a work that has yielded more communicant members of churches in heathen lands than have resulted from the missions of any other denomination for up to this time this is true of American Baptist missions. This great addition to the Church of Christ and its inspiration stand in the front place as marking Judson's significance.

The remarkable growth of Baptists in America, already begun when Judson came to them, was greatly accelerated and guided by the missionary organization and the encouragement it gave. It has been the missions of Baptists that have made of them a denomination with any sense of unity, and community. Prior to this, and largely still so far as they remain apart from the common missionary tasks, Baptists are segregated and individualistic. Judson's coming, along with Rice, was the dramatic summons that aroused that enthusiasm with which the separate groups of Baptists were drawn to a

common interest and task. And progressively this common interest and task have advanced unity and co-operation among them. No one would claim that this growth is yet complete.

Judson's own culture and education have had no little influence on the use of educational agencies, in the work of American Baptists. Until recently Southern Baptists have employed these means in very limited measure. Even the Baptists of the North have been hesitant and slow in employing them, as compared with some other denominations. But the leadership of Judson and Rice determined that matter favorably to such agencies. When Baptists from America, in December of this year, assemble in large numbers to celebrate the Judson centennial with their brethren in Burma, next to the joy of seeing more than a hundred thousand in full fellowship with them, will be the grateful pride in the great educational plants and system by means of which the religion of Christ has become a fixed and powerful factor in the present life and future hope of the Burmese people.

Judson was fundamentally evangelistic in temper and longing. Every missionary ought to be. Every true missionary is. Like so many missionaries to-day, Judson used to express his own eager desire to be winning converts what time he must spend in planting the institutions and training the natives for evangelism and for intelligent Christian living. But he knew how Jesus chose to indoctrinate the dozen rather than superficially to convert the thousands. No man is fit to work in an educational mission, or for that matter in a Christian school in America, whose heart does not long to be giving personal testimony of his experience in Jesus Christ and winning other men to His following. And the proof of such longing is that some such work the teaching servant is finding time to do in the midst of, and as part of, his pressing duties. Judson was too soon and too much a pioneer to have any such educational work as we know

in missions to-day, but all that has grown up in Burma is in full accord with his own method and is only the carrying out of his plans and the fulfilling of his hopes.

We have already thought of how William Carey and Adoniram Judson are the two most prominent missionaries in the beginning of the modern period. Both were Baptists. Both were men of very definite convictions and of very generous sympathies. Their influence has counted greatly in giving to Baptists a place in the common brotherhood of faith. All Protestant Christian bodies are ready to acknowledge their debt to these great saints. To be sure the manner of Judson's change of church affiliation aroused some bitterness and brought on him at the moment some measure of contempt. But his character was too noble, his motive too pure, his conviction too obvious, his sincerity too transparent for any but small minds persistently to look down upon him or accuse him of "the sin of lying" as was done by one indignant Congregationalist. One wonders whether this irate editor meant to designate a small number when he said: "Our respectable Baptist friends will not boast in the conversion of Mr. Judson, etc.," and to leave the implication that by no means all Baptists were respectable. At all events, we know that it was unfortunately true in those days that by no means were Baptists universally respected by Christians of other communions, however deserving of respect they may have been. Irritating as Judson's "conversion" inevitably was to all whose views of the matter and the subjects of baptism his conduct repudiated and condemned, still his change was in the end one of the most influential means of getting the Baptists' position understood and their insistent conviction respected.

Judson's ability, religion and honor were too well known, and his earlier associates in ecclesiastical faith had taken too much pride in him for them to resist the simple facts of his character and conduct. Once he had cleared his own conscience in the matter and settled his



own church relations, he went on about his business in his chosen work of missionary to the heathen. He bore himself as a noble Christian man. He gained nothing of material or temporal advantage by his change. That was clear to all. He sought in no way to exploit his change or to gain glory from it. He assumed no airs of superiority or excessive holiness. He did not nag or seek to irritate his former associates in ecclesiastical faith. In the matter of money expended on him by the American Board, in the matter of their feelings toward him, in his subsequent behavior, in all things in all respects in making this momentous change he bore himself as a true Christian gentleman and soon none remained who did not honor him and claim their share in him as a Christian leader.

That Baptists have often over-emphasized the conversion of Judson to our views and neglected to rejoice in his great work as a missionary of the cross has to be confessed. Many of us have boasted more in his change of faith than we have been urged by his example of devoted work. There are not a few of us who know of him only that he was led by the Greek Testament to adopt Baptist views of the ordinance of baptism and who, as Dr. Pollard has shown, do not accurately know this fact. But on the whole Judson's influence on Baptists has contributed to a more general and generous consciousness of oneness with the whole body of Christ.

Carey and Judson alike stand for fidelity to conviction as to the claims of Christ on the loyal soul. Carey had come from the Church of England as Judson came now from the Congregationalists, only Carey had come at the time of his personal trust in Jesus as Savior and had had several years in the Baptist ministry before he became a missionary. Both were identified with distinctively Baptist missions and saw in this course the way of wisdom for that time.

It does not follow that either of them would have opposed co-operation if there had been occasion and call for it in their day. It is evident that both would to-day, as always, stand for loyalty to conviction of personal duty. It ought to be said, too, that both stand strongly for openness of mind and heart to new views, to new leading of the Spirit of God. Without this neither of them would ever have been a Baptist. It is this same openness of mind and heart that is supremely needed in Christian souls to-day. It was this, more than anything else, that Jesus longed for in the men of His day and found in little children who became for Him the type of the children of His Kingdom.

Judson was in marked degree a man of childlike graces of openness, faith, frankness, simplicity and loyalty. He is a splendid type for the missionary, a fine lesson for all mission agents and agencies to study, and a great example for all the saints of God.