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ANN JUDSON

A Life of Self-denial

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ANN JUDSON

A Life of Self-denial

“If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

—Psalm 139:9-10

I. Early Years

The name of Adoniram Judson¹ is well known to all who have the least familiarity with the history of missions. He was one of the first foreign missionaries, if not the first, to go forth from the United States. Many believers also know the basic facts of his life today. Yet how much do these same believers know about Ann Judson, that is, Mrs. Adoniram Judson? Was Ann simply the wife of a man who wanted to be a missionary? Or was she his equal in commitment, spirituality, and willingness to suffer for the sake of Christ and the souls of men? Hear her story and make up your own mind as you learn about the life of Ann Judson, missionary to Burma.

Ann Judson was born into a Congregational² household in Bradford, Massachusetts, just before Christmas in 1789. The philosophy of life in her home was that one should seek to be happy and to enjoy life to the fullest. Thus, this highly intelligent, cheerful young lady was very popular with her friends, and usually the center of attraction at gatherings and social events. Although [she was] the youngest of five children, none of them overshadowed her. Where she was, no one could be sad or unhappy. She did attend church faithfully and maintained a pattern of prayer, but her main concerns were friends and socializing.

Then in the summer of 1805, when Ann was sixteen years old, revival came to her quiet New England town. A new teacher arrived at Bradford Academy. He began to talk about salvation, heaven and hell, and the need of personal conversion. Conversions began to take place in great numbers. Ann’s parents, brothers, and sister were converted, as was one of her closest friends, Harriet Atwood. Then Ann was also converted to Christ!

She wrote in her diary that though she had been raised with a strong moral foundation, she had seldom felt any serious impressions from the Holy Spirit. She had believed that by being good and moral, she would escape hell. Though convicted at times, she ignored it. She filled her life with pleasure and good times, until one day she read the verse, “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1Ti 5:6). She then read *The Pilgrim’s Progress*³ and resolved to live a religious life, thinking then she was on her way to heaven. Thus, she vacillated⁴ between resolving to give up pleasure and good times, and returning to her parties and fun. She even wept at times in realization of her sins, only to slip back into the fun of her social life.

This went on for a number of months until she visited an aunt, who inquired about her spiritual condition. The aunt warned her about trifling⁵ with the work of the Holy Spirit in her life. Nevertheless, she continued to vacillate and even became filled with an aversion to a holy God, perhaps because He stood in the way of her continuance in such a way of life. Finally, while reading Bellamy’s⁶ book *True Religion*, she saw the truth about the character of God and the sinfulness of her own heart and was converted to Christ. Now her life was changed as she became a lover of God and His Word, and a possessor of true happiness based on the work of Christ for her—not based on the false foundation of the

¹ **Adoniram Judson** (1788-1850) – son of a Congregational minister, pioneer missionary to Burma, and participant in America’s first foreign mission agency; after being converted from skepticism to Christ, he developed a burning zeal for missions. Judson preached the gospel in Burma and translated the New Testament into the Burmese language; born in Malden, Massachusetts. For a helpful biography, see Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson*.

² **Congregational** – Congregationalism is a Christian movement that arose in England in the late 16th and 17th centuries. It occupies a theological position that combines the Presbyterian baptism of infants and the Baptist teaching that each local church is self-governing under Christ’s authority.

³ *The Pilgrim’s Progress* – a classic Christian allegory, written by John Bunyan (1628-1688) while he was imprisoned 12 years; first published in 1678, it has been in print continuously ever since. Some claim it to be the second best-selling English language book in the world after the Bible.

⁴ **vacillated** – wavered between different opinions.

⁵ **trifling** – not taking seriously.

⁶ **Joseph Bellamy** (1719-1790) – New England Congregational preacher, author, theologian; studied under Jonathan Edwards and was a powerful revivalist of the Great Awakening; preached in Bethlehem, Connecticut, for 52 years.

pleasures of this world. She even began to show an understanding and ability to express the most profound truths of theology. She began to pray that the Lord would prepare her heart for the work He had for her to do for Him.

Following her conversion, Ann began to long for others to understand the great attributes of her great God.⁷ She resolved to continue to maintain a constant warfare upon her sins that she might fully do His will. She read all the great theological writers of her day, even Jonathan Edwards.⁸ She taught school for several years in Salem, Haverhill, and Newbury, a work she took very seriously. She prayed for the conversion of her pupils, and her journal began to evidence an overwhelming desire for God to be glorified in conversions in foreign lands. By reading the life of David Brainerd,⁹ she was both greatly humbled and excited to live a holy life before a holy God.

Then on June 28, 1810, when she was twenty-one years old, four students who were offering themselves for foreign missionary service visited her church and were hosted by the Hasseltine household. One of these young men was Adoniram Judson. Understandably, Ann captivated him immediately. No doubt, he wondered if she might be an answer to one of his prayers. Not only did her beauty captivate him, but more importantly her deep spirit of piety; and, yes, there was her burden for missionary work. He wrote her a month later asking if they could commence courtship. She replied that he would have to ask her father. That led eventually to the writing of the following letter to her father—his proposal of marriage:

I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure for a heathen land and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean and to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India and to every kind of want¹⁰ and distress and to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all of this for the sake of Him Who left His heavenly home and died for her, for the sake of perishing immortal souls, for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this in the hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise that shall rebound to her Savior from the heathen saved from eternal woe and despair through her means?¹¹

John and Rebecca Hasseltine let their youngest child decide for herself. During her time of decision, she had a deep spiritual struggle of self-examination, of fully counting the cost involved in finding an answer. Many were strongly against it. After all, she would be the first woman to go as a missionary from America! But once decided, no one could deter her from God's call upon her life. In the spring of 1811, her friend Harriet Atwood made the same decision when she agreed to marry Samuel Newell, who was also one of the four visitors.

On New Year's Day of 1811, Adoniram Judson wrote,

May this be a year in which your walk will be close with God, your frame calm and serene. May it be a year where you will be raised above earthly things and be willing to be disposed of in this world just as God shall please. As every moment of the year will bring you nearer the end of your pilgrimage, may it bring you nearer to God and find you more prepared to welcome the messenger of death as a deliverer and friend. May this be the year in which you change your name, in which you will take a final leave of your relatives and native land, and in which you will cross the wide ocean and dwell on the other side of the world among a heathen people. What a great change this year will probably effect in our lives.

On February 5, 1812, they were married and bid an emotional and teary farewell to their family and friends. On February 6, an ordination service was held for Adoniram Judson and Samuel Newell; and they left for India on February 18, 1812, arriving at Calcutta on June 18, 1812, ready to serve their Lord in whatever manner He chose. Little did they realize then what route that pathway would take!

II. Into India and Burma

As Ann departed from these United States, she recorded the following in her dairy:

Took leave of my friends and native land... Had so long anticipated the trying scene of parting, that I found it more tolerable than I feared. Still my heart bleeds. O America, my native land, must I leave thee? Must I leave my parents, my sister

⁷ See *The Attributes of God* by A.W. Pink (1886-1952), available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁸ **Jonathan Edwards** (1703-1758) – American Congregational preacher. Regarded as America's greatest evangelical theologian and well known for his preaching in the Great Awakening along with George Whitefield. Author of *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, and numerous other titles; born in East Windsor, Connecticut.

⁹ **David Brainerd** (1718-1747) – American missionary to the Native Americans; had a particularly fruitful ministry among the Delaware Indians of New Jersey. During his short life, he endured numerous difficulties. As a result, his biography has become a source of inspiration and encouragement to many Christians.

¹⁰ **want** – lack.

¹¹ **means** – something or someone used as an instrument to achieve a purpose; in this case, as an instrument in the hands of God, used for His purpose.

and brothers, my friends beloved, and all the scenes of my early youth? ... Yes, I must leave you all for a heathen land and uncongenial clime.¹² Farewell, happy, happy scenes—but never, no, never to be forgotten.

She wrote on February 27, 1812, as they traveled on the ocean:

The full moon shone fully on the water, and all things around conspired to excite pleasing though melancholy¹³ sensations. My native land, my home, my friends, and all my forsaken enjoyments, rushed into my mind. My tears flowed profusely and I could not be comforted. Soon, however, the consideration of having left all these for the dear cause of Christ, and the hope of one day being instrumental of leading some poor degraded females to embrace Him as their Savior, soothed my griefs, dried up my tears, and restored peace and tranquility to my mind.

She was convinced that although they did not know what was ahead, God most certainly did. Such was Adoniram and Ann's belief in the providence and sovereignty of God as they spent their honeymoon on a ship headed for India. Surely, His presence was even in this place and each place they traveled.

Their destination was not in sight for several months, but they came finally to the land of India on June 14 of 1812. Their hearts skipped for joy as well as anxiety as they anticipated possible ministry there. Upon arrival, the Judsons were crushed by the sights of false worship, as well as by the poverty, slavery, and wretchedness of the existence of the people.

And problems faced them immediately. First, there was the search for a place to serve. Second, from their study of the Greek New Testament on the way over,¹⁴ Adoniram and Ann had become Baptists.¹⁵ On September 6, 1812, William Carey's¹⁶ associate William Ward baptized them at Calcutta in William Carey's Lal Bazar Chapel. They were concerned about what their Congregational church and families would say about this change.

But where to labor? This was the Judsons' greatest dilemma. They were forced to a decision when the East India Company¹⁷ gave them an ultimatum to leave India for London in November of 1812. They must have wondered if their missionary careers were over even before they had begun!

But the Lord opened the door for them to set sail for the Isle of France in early December of 1812. When they arrived there, it was only to face very surprising and crushing news—Harriet Newell, Ann's childhood friend and missionary companion, was dead! Harriet and her husband had come to India with them on the same ship, and then to the Isle of France on a different ship. But Harriet and her baby had both died at sea. Before leaving the Isle of France, Ann visited Harriet's grave and wrote of it in her diary on April 10:

Have just returned from Harriet's grave—not able to visit it before on account of the distance. The visit revived many painful, solemn feelings. Just a little while ago, she was with us on board ship, and joined us daily in prayer and praise. Now her body is crumbling to dust, in a land of strangers, and her immortal spirit has doubtless joined the company of holy spirits around the throne, where she can sing in much more exalted strains than when a prisoner here below.

One can only imagine the many mixed feelings as Ann visited her friend's grave; for she too was expecting a baby and had no idea where the baby might be born. Yet in God's providence, the Lord opened the door for them to go to Burma,¹⁸ which lies between India and China. A few others had sought to work there before, but the Buddhist religion

¹² **uncongenial clime** – regions with unfavorable climates.

¹³ **melancholy** – feelings of thoughtful sadness; dejected.

¹⁴ Judson wrote, "As you have been ignorant of the late exercises of my mind on the subject of baptism, the communication which I am about to make may occasion you some surprise. It is now about four months since I took the subject into serious and prayerful consideration. My inquiries commenced during my passage from America, and after much laborious research and painful trial, which I shall not now detail, have issued in entire conviction that the immersion of a professing believer is the only Christian baptism. In these exercises, I have not been alone. Mrs. Judson has been engaged in a similar examination and has come to the same conclusion. Feeling, therefore, that we are in an unbaptized state, we wish to profess our faith in Christ by being baptized in obedience to His sacred commands." (J. Clement, *Memoir of Adoniram Judson: Being a Sketch of His Life and Missionary Labors*, 30)

¹⁵ **Baptists** – The Baptists of this country [USA] hold that the Word of God is the only authority in religion, that its teachings are to be sacredly observed, and that to religious doctrines and observances there can be no additions except from it; they hold that a man should repent and be saved through faith in the meritorious Redeemer before he is baptized; that immersion alone is Scripture baptism; that only by it can the candidate represent his death to the world, burial with Christ, and resurrection to newness of life; that baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper; they hold the doctrine of the Trinity, of eternal and personal election, total depravity, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, progressive sanctification, final perseverance a special providence, immediate and eternal glory for the righteous after death, and instant and unending misery for the ungodly. (William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, 74)

¹⁶ **William Carey** (1761-1834) – English Baptist missionary and Reformed Baptist minister, known as the "father of modern missions." Carey was one of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society. As a missionary in the Danish colony, Serampore, India, he translated the Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit, and numerous other languages and dialects.

¹⁷ **East India Company** – an early English joint-stock company that was formed initially for pursuing trade with the East Indies, but that ended up trading mainly with the Indian subcontinent and China in tea, silk, and cotton. It also administered many aspects of government in India on behalf of the British. It resisted Christian evangelistic efforts in order to avoid conflict with native religions, which would create opposition from their native work force.

¹⁸ **Burma** – today known as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, a country in Southeast Asia, bordered by China, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India. With a 1,200-mile coastline along the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, it is the 40th largest country in the world with more than 58 million people.

filled the nation; it still lay unevangelized, and its government opposed Christianity. Some missionaries in India warned them not to go to Burma because of its instability. But again in God's providence, with a decree upon them to get out of India and with time running out, they could find only one ship leaving India—and it was to Rangoon, Burma! It was a very miserable trip: Ann gave birth to a stillborn child and she almost died as well.

When they arrived in Rangoon, they found the town infested with flies, rats, and all kinds of other vermin. Understandably, the Judsons were very gloomy and dejected through the first night upon arrival. But God restored Ann's health, and they began to settle in, offering much prayer for God's blessings. During the next several years, Adoniram and Ann mixed with the local people and learned the language. They even met with the officials of the land in order to gain acceptance. They took every opportunity in private conversation to try to introduce the gospel.

At the beginning of 1815, Ann fell deeply ill once again, and there were no doctors in Rangoon. She had to travel back to India for treatment. She again recovered and returned to Burma, where she gave birth to her second child, Roger Williams Judson, on September 11, 1815—all of this with no doctor or assistance except her husband, Adoniram. They were not only encouraged by their new, healthy son, but also by the advance they were making in the language and by their ability now to share the gospel in the language of the people. But then in a few short days she wrote in a letter home to America the following sad words:

Little did I think when I wrote you last that my next letter would be filled with the melancholy subject on which I must now write. Death, regardless of our lonely situation, has entered our dwelling [again] and made one of the happiest families wretched. Our little Roger Williams, our only little darling boy, was three days ago laid in the silent grave. Eight months we enjoyed the precious little gift, in which time he had so completely entwined himself around his parents' hearts, that his existence seemed necessary to their own. But God has taught us by afflictions what we would not learn by mercies—that our hearts are His exclusive property, and whatever rival intrudes, He will tear it away... We do not feel a disposition to murmur, or to inquire of our Sovereign why He has done this... Oh, may it not be in vain that He has done this.

This experience was one of the saddest that Ann and Adoniram would bear. Following little Roger's death, they threw themselves afresh into the work to which God had called them. But their thoughts were on eternity as well.

As Adoniram translated and worked further on the language, Ann started a girls' school; her students eventually numbered about twenty and then thirty. Though Rangoon was a wretched place, they would not leave—for they were convinced that if they left this place, the blood of the Burmans would be upon them. They knew they would need to take the long perspective and avoid the temptation to go for visible but false success. God began to send inquirers, but it was not until July of 1819 that the first convert was recorded—after six years of labor in spreading the Word of God. Then two new missionaries were stricken with tuberculosis. It was evident that Edward Wheelock¹⁹ was dying, but his wife refused to admit it. She became paranoid, thinking Ann and Adoniram were against them. She determined to take her husband away from Burma against all the advice of her friends, whom she would not believe. On a ship sailing for Bengal on August 7, 1819, Edward Wheelock threw himself overboard and drowned.

Was Ann discouraged and ready to quit in the face of all these disappointments? She wrote to her sister that if she were to have the choice to make again concerning the missionary adventure, she would make the same decision. She said that if she had learned anything since leaving America, it was an increasing knowledge of her unspeakably wicked heart. There was no spirit of turning back in the soul of Ann Judson or Adoniram Judson—regardless of the past or the future!

III. Later Years

It took six years for the Judsons to see any converts to the Savior; but by 1820, ten true converts had left all to follow Christ, knowing full well that they put their very lives on the line for Christ, even daily. Then, just when it looked like the ministry was beginning to blossom, Ann fell ill once again; a return to America was the only hope of her recovery. She would probably have to be away from Burma for two years, which would be a clear loss to Adoniram and the entire ministry. On August 21 of 1821, she left for Calcutta; but from Calcutta, she could not secure travel in a ship bound for America, and finally instead had to sail for England on January 5 of 1822. When Ann arrived in England, a Methodist member of the Parliament became her sponsor and graciously cared for her. She then sailed for America on August 16, 1822, after having been away from Adoniram for almost a year. She wrote upon departing England:

Should I be preserved through the voyage, the next land I tread will be my own native soil, ever-loved America, the land of my birth. I cannot realize that I shall ever again find myself in my own dear home at Bradford, amid the scenes of my early youth where every spot is associated with some tender recollection. But the constant idea that my dear J. [Mr. Judson] is not a participator in my joys will mar them all.

So it was that Ann Judson finally came home to America for a visit due to her failing health—ten years after the trying scene of her departure in February of 1812. She remembered how she and Adoniram with Samuel and Harriet Newell had been so idealistic. Now both Samuel and Harriet were dead, and she truly had not expected ever to see her parents or

¹⁹ Edward W. Wheelock (d. 1819) – one of two early missionaries sent to join Judson in Rangoon.

family again. Though the visit was full of great joy, her health took a turn for the worse. The cold weather severely bothered her, and the pain in her side and the severe cough returned to plague her. Furthermore, the medical practices of America in that day did not help her. They were still practicing the procedure of “bleeding” a patient, thinking that would help; actually, it only weakened her already exhausted and ailing body.

Nonetheless, she was determined to return to Burma in the spring of 1823. She sailed for Calcutta on June 23 and arrived in Burma on December 8. Adoniram was exuberant to see her as she arrived unexpectedly, due to the slow and even absent communications with America. He had almost concluded that she would never return, not because she did not desire to, but because of her health. Now, united once again, what a time of rejoicing they shared as they renewed their love for the Lord and one another. And, as Ann now discovered, Adoniram had translated the entire New Testament into the Burmese language in her absence! All of this gave a new spark of faith and hope to the work God had given them to do—even in such a difficult place as Burma.

As time passed, the Judsons decided to relocate their work to Ava, where they might be closer to the authorities and rulers of the land. But soon thereafter, war broke out between Burma and Britain. Adoniram and Ann found themselves completely out of favor with the rulers of Burma. The officials considered them spies for the English. Ann’s health was much improved but still shaky. As the war with Britain went poorly for the Burmese, their wrath against the missionaries swelled to a heated fervor. On May 23, 1824, Rangoon fell to the British, and that did not help the condition of foreigners in Ava. On June 8, 1824, the king ordered the arrest of Adoniram and other foreigners. They were thrown into Death Prison—a miserable place because of the heat, the lack of windows, the presence of all kinds of swarming vermin, and a continual putrid stench. Ann sought to get Adoniram help from the governor, but none came. She was able to save his precious manuscript of the New Testament by burying it in the garden; then she hid it in a pillow, which she secretly conveyed to Adoniram in prison.

By 1825, Ann realized she could not continue to visit the prison very long, for another child was due anytime. On January 26, 1825, Ann gave birth alone to a daughter, Maria Elizabeth Butterworth Judson. After a confinement of three weeks, she brought little Maria to prison to see her father. Shortly thereafter, she continued her rounds, carrying little Maria everywhere she went, seeking to visit everyone she could in hopes of getting Adoniram released. Her efforts delivered her husband from death several times; for as orders came to execute him, he was spared because of her petitions. Living constantly on the edge like this was not easy. She realized that any moment she might learn that her husband had died by the hand of man or through natural causes, due to his sickness and the abominable conditions of the prison.

Then on May 2, 1825, Adoniram was moved; when Ann came to the old prison, she could not discover where he had been taken. She ran down one street after another, seeking to catch a glimpse of the prisoners or get some information about where they had gone. An old woman finally told her that they had been taken to Amarapoora. After further checking, she fell into a deep despair. She had come to a moment of horror and more death, it seemed. She lay quiet for a while in her discouragement, and then determined the next morning that she would go to Amarapoora to find Adoniram. She would have to take little Maria, who was only three months old, with her into the unknown.

The next morning, Ann set off. She got a pass, and then a cart, and endured the painful ride over dusty roads. When she arrived at her destination, it was the most horrible prison she had ever seen in her life; it was even worse than his previous prison! But she had achieved her objective: she had found Adoniram and he was alive—barely alive. But where would she stay? What would she eat? What would Adoniram eat?

One of Adoniram’s jailers reluctantly provided a place for Ann to stay. She was given a filthy room that was full of grain, and that became her home for the next six months. She endured this without a single item of convenience—not even a single chair. For six months, Ann scrounged food for herself, her child, and her husband. She and little Maria were not well, and Adoniram was near death with mangled feet. He was a breathing skeleton with an unkept, dirty body.

On November 5, the ordeal ended: the war was over and Adoniram was released from prison. Ann returned to their home, but Adoniram could not follow; instead he was ordered to serve as a translator to help secure a peaceful settlement of the war between Burma and England. Though he was sick with fever, he traveled up river for six weeks—away again from his beloved wife and little Maria.

However, because of the lack of communication for those six weeks of translation, Adoniram knew nothing of the condition of Ann and Maria; and Ann knew nothing of the state of her husband. Soon Ann came down with spotted fever. She concluded at once on her own that the malady would be fatal. For a time, she lost her reason and was insensible to all going on around her. Dr. Price, one of the accompanying missionaries, also was released from prison at this time. He returned to treat Ann, and she did regain her senses. Her fever had run for seventeen days.

When Adoniram could return home, he was allowed to leave Ava on February 21, 1826, for the British camp of Yandabo. On February 24, the treaty of peace between Burma and England was signed. On March 8, 1826, the family traveled on to Rangoon. Upon arrival in Rangoon, they found the ministry in shambles—the building was in ruins and the little church of believers was scattered. They committed themselves to make a new beginning, not at Rangoon, but in the city of Amhurst. The cost of those years of war had been great, but they now hoped to put the work together again.

After settling in Amhurst, Adoniram left once again to serve in the peace negotiations. He was not as reluctant as before because he thought it would mean only a few months' absence from his family, but it became in actuality seven or eight months. Then, on November 24, he received a letter that he thought certainly would bear the sad news of little Maria's death. Quickly with deep concern, he opened the letter and read,

My dear Sir, to one who has suffered so much and with such exemplary fortitude, there needs but a little preface to tell a tale of distress. It were cruel indeed to torture you with doubt and suspense. To sum up the unhappy tidings in a few words—Mrs. Judson is no more.

Unknown to Adoniram, his beloved Ann had died one month earlier on October 24, at the age of thirty-seven. Yes, it had taken a month for the news to get to him, and now she was gone and her body was already buried. He wept with open and engulfing sobs at the shock of the death of his beloved.

As Adoniram learned of the details of Ann's death, he penned these words to Ann's mother back in the states:

It seems that her head was much affected during her last days, and she said but little. She sometimes complained thus, "The teacher [her husband] is long in coming, and the new missionaries are long in coming; I must die alone and leave my little one; but as it is the will of God, I acquiesce in His will. I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid I shall not be able to bear the pains. Tell the teacher that the disease was violent, and I could not write; tell him how I suffered and died." The last day or two, she lay almost senseless and motionless, on one side—her head reclining on her arm—her eyes closed—and at 8 in the evening, with one exclamation of distress in the Burman language, she ceased to breathe...!

Oh with what meekness, patience, magnanimity,²⁰ and Christian fortitude she bore those sufferings!...Much she saw and suffered of the evil of this evil world; and eminently was she qualified to relish and enjoy the pure and holy rest into which she has entered... True, she has been torn from her husband's bleeding heart, and from her darling babe; but infinite wisdom and love have presided, as ever, in this most afflicting dispensation. Faith decides that it is all right; and the decision of faith, eternity will soon confirm.

Then on April 24, 1827, six months after her mother died, Maria joined her mother in death. Maria died at the age of two years and three months, having herself known little more than bodily suffering.

In December of that same year, Adoniram wrote his and Ann's family in America:

Death mocks at us, and tramples our dearest hopes and our lives in the dust. [It is a] dreadful tyrant, offspring and ally of sin. But go on now, and do thy worst. Thy time will come. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Yes, awful power, thou shalt devour thyself and die. And then my angelic Ann, and my meek, blue-eyed Roger, and my tenderhearted, affectionate, darling Maria, and my venerable father, you, my dear sisters that still remain, our still surviving parents, and myself, though all unworthy, shall be rescued from the power of death and the grave. And when the crown of life is set on our heads, and we know assuredly that we shall die no more, we shall make heaven's arches ring with songs of praise to Him, Who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood...

A few more falling suns and you will hear of my death, or I of yours. Till then, believe me [to be] your most affectionate brother. And when we meet in heaven—when all have arrived, and we find all safe, forever safe, and our Savior ever safe and glorious, and in Him all His beloved—oh shall we not be happy, and ever praise Him Who has endured the cross to wear and confer such a crown!

Conclusion

So we have seen something of the life of Ann Judson—one who, along with her husband, founded the Burmese church. Her tireless and superhuman efforts saved her husband's life during the time of war, so he could later more fully establish the Burmese believers. She, along with her husband, stirred the fire of missions among Baptists in America and inspired multitudes of others to follow to various fields of missionary service throughout the world. Her writings set an example of deep piety and commitment to Christ. Her awareness of her own sin, her strong understanding of the sovereignty and providence of God, her understanding of the necessity of a God-centered religion and not a man-centered one, her complete dependence on the Word of God, and her faith that overcame every discouragement—these are the characteristics of Ann Judson.

One writer summarizes her life as follows: "She was a woman who loved intensely, loved her husband, loved her children, loved the people of Burma, but above all, she loved her God."

We should add that she was one in whose heart the fire of God's grace and love burned. Could she ever have been so committed without that reality? Could she ever have suffered without that power? Could she ever have continued under such horrible circumstances without that consuming power of God? And is this not the need of our hearts and lives in comfortable America and throughout the world? Burn within me, fire of God! May that be our prayer today as well.

*For more on the life of Ann Judson, see Sharon James, *My Heart in His Hands: A Life, with Selections from Her Memoir and Letters* (Evangelical Press; Durham, England; 1998).

²⁰ **magnanimity** – great courage.