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### Recommended Citation

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Apostle to Burma:  
A Case Study of Ecumenical Evangelicalism in the life of Adoniram Judson

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HIS 499: Senior Seminar

Dr. AnneMarie Kooistra

December 5, 2014

Adoniram (1788-1850) and Ann Judson (1789-1826) boarded the *Caravan* along with Samuel and Harriet Newell in Salem, Massachusetts on February 19, 1812 with a directive from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to preach the Gospel in the Far East. Four months later, the missionaries arrived in India, but the Judsons sailed once more before they began a life of missionary labor in the kingdom of Burma. Amidst the joys of successful Bible translation and establishment of a Baptist congregation in Burma, Ann and Adoniram suffered tremendous loss: none of their three children survived infancy, and Ann died from sickness in 1826. After Ann's death, Adoniram wrestled his grief for several years before marrying the missionary widow Sarah Boardman (1803-1845). When Sarah died during a voyage to America, Adoniram married again, this time to the American novelist Emily Chubbuck (1817-1854).<sup>1</sup> Together they returned to Burma where Adoniram fell sick and died in 1850. Adoniram served the Burmese until his death—this was a man on a mission for life.

The Judsons' chief aim was not to found a school or eradicate social injustice, though these were important projects.<sup>2</sup> Religious liberty was not the primary goal, though Adoniram boldly confronted the emperor of Burma on the issue of persecution.<sup>3</sup> These missionaries simply

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<sup>1</sup>Emily Chubbuck wrote under the pseudonym "Fanny Forester".

<sup>2</sup> Ann Judson considered the education of heathen woman to be one of the liberating effects of bringing the Gospel to the "heathen." For a woman of antebellum American standards, she had been given exceptional educational opportunities. Her parents were strong advocates for female educations, and Ann began her studies at the Bradford Academy at a young age. See Joan Brumberg, *Mission For Life*. Also James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson* and Ann H. Judson, *An Account of the Baptist Mission to Burma*. Ann frequently discussed the hope of abolishing the Buddhist practice of suttee, a custom that required a widow to join her husband in death through self-immolation on the husband's funeral pyre.

<sup>3</sup> Adoniram Judson, "To the Rev. Dr. Baldwin, Rangoon, August 26, 1817," in Francis Wayland, *A Memoir of the Life and labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson. D.D.*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1853), 191-192. Here Adoniram defends his errand to the emperor in a letter to Dr. Baldwin, president of the American Baptist mission board.

thought of themselves as messengers—messengers to a Buddhist people who had not heard news of an eternal God and salvation through his son, Jesus Christ. Adoniram articulates this quintessential evangelical commitment in a letter to Ann Hasseltine’s father:

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 exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing immortal souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamation of praise which shall redound to her Saviour from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?<sup>4</sup>

Adoniram anticipated the sorrows to come in a life of missionary work—this was not a romantic undertaking. Adoniram’s pursuit of missionary labor and the translation of the Bible into Burmese was the result of an unusually radical evangelical commitment. The following pages will explore the influences that ignited this fervent evangelicalism.

Judson scholarship has long been obscured by the overabundance of hagiographic biography, but these non-critical writings do not properly represent the central scholarly voices or primary sources.<sup>5</sup> The earliest available accounts of the work of the Judson mission were letters and journals from Ann and Adoniram published in denominational periodicals in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Letters from Burma typically arrived twelve to eighteen months after being

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<sup>4</sup> Adoniram Judson, in Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph and Co., 1883), 20.

<sup>5</sup> The Judson story has remained a preeminent inspirational narrative for children’s church education and missionary recruitment. For a modern repackaging of the Judson story for youth, see Janet Benge and Geoff Benge, *Adoniram Judson: Bound for Burma* (Seattle: YWAM publishing, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Mission for Life: the story of the family of Adoniram Judson, the dramatic events of the first American foreign mission, and the course of evangelical religion in*

written, due to the long distance and slow travel by ship. Despite slow communication, the American Baptist missionaries were soon well known. Social historian Joan Brumberg remarked that, “By 1845, in those homes where Protestant evangelical religion predominated, it is unlikely that any individual—adult or child; male or female—had not at least heard the names of Adoniram and Ann Hasseltine Judson.”<sup>7</sup>

Although periodicals effectively communicated to nineteenth century readers, Emily Chubbuck Judson and Francis Wayland’s two-volume *Memoir*, Edward Judson’s *Life of Adoniram Judson*, George Knowles’ *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judsons*, Asahel Kendrick’s *Life of Mrs. Emily C. Judson*, and the published works of Ann Hasseltine, Sarah Boardman, and Emily Chubbuck Judson form the standard corpus of primary source documents on the Judsons.<sup>8</sup> The majority of nineteenth century hagiography liberally borrowed from these and extant periodical source materials, and by 1913, there were at least two-dozen biographical reiterations of the

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*the nineteenth century* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 46. The *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, and the American Baptist *Register* published extracts from Burma. Other Baptist publications, such as the *Christian Watchman*, *Columbian Star*, and *Latter day Luminary*, the *American Baptist Magazine*, and *Missionary Intelligencer* also gave attention to the Judsons. Brumberg focuses on the Baptist publications, but even after their Baptist conversion, activities of the Judson mission were reported in Congregationalist magazines as well. Congregationalist magazines regularly gave “Religious Intelligence” on the activities of the London Missionary Society and the work of the Baptist missionary William Carey, indicating that denominational separations were in part superseded by unity around broader evangelical commitments. For example, the 1813 *Panoplist*, and *Missionary Magazine* (1812-1817) reported missionary events related to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, but the magazine also describes Ann and Adoniram’s Baptist conversion. The *Panoplist and Missionary Herald* (1818-1820) continued to report on the Judsons, but these articles were not very substantial. For dates and details of publication regarding the *Panoplist* periodicals, see “The Panoplist,” Congregational Library and Archives, 2013, <http://www.congregationallibrary.org/periodicals/panoplist>.

<sup>7</sup> Joan Brumberg, *Mission for Life*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> See Primary Source Bibliography. These biographies and published writings include numerous excerpts from published and private collections of Judson letters, journals, tracts, and essays.

Judson narrative.<sup>9</sup> Unpublished letters and journals are scarce outside of these collections because Ann and Adoniram destroyed all personal letters during the British-Burmese war, and after Ann's death, Adoniram destroyed most of his private writings as an exercise of self-denial. Other primary documents were lost to fire, shipwreck and decay.<sup>10</sup>

Stacy Warburton's *Eastward* (published 1937) was the first modern scholarly biography, followed by Courtney Anderson's *To the Golden Shore* (published 1955). These biographies and feminist historian Joan Brumberg's cultural biography, *Mission for Life* (1980), are the three most significant biographies from the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Historians Dana Robert and Ruth Tucker have contributed invaluable analysis to the social history of women in the modern missionary movement.<sup>12</sup> Rosalie Hunt's 2005 *Bless God and Take Courage* was the result of six years of research in the U.S. and Burma/Myanmar, and this biography represents the most comprehensive engagement of sources on the Judsons to date. The 2013 bicentennial celebrations of the Judsons' arrival in Burma have seen global revitalization in Judson scholarship, marked by the publication of at least two collections of scholarly essays analyzing cultural themes, missiological distinctives and theological context for history of the Judson

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<sup>9</sup> "Search results for 'su: Adoniram Judson 1788-1850' limited to Libraries Worldwide, WorldCat.org, accessed November 1, 2014, <http://worldcat.org/search?q=su%3A+Adoniram+Judson+1788-1850&qt=facetNavigation&se=%24d&sd=desc&dblist=638>.

WorldCat database indicates that by the Judson centennial in 1913, the Judsons' stories had been repackaged in more than two dozen additional biographies. Joan Brumberg evaluates the influence of these biographies in *Mission for Life*, 1-19.

<sup>10</sup> The surviving private collections of Judson letters and journals remain in the care of the American Baptist Historical Society. Rosalie Hall Hunt has the most exhaustive footnotes bibliography regarding these primary sources. See Rosalie H. Hunt, *Bless God and Take Courage: the Judson History and Legacy*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 354-390.

<sup>12</sup> Most notably: Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission*; Ruth A. Tucker, *Guardians of the Great Commission*; Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: a Biographical History of Christian Missions*; and Ruth A. Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*.

mission.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the American Baptist Historical Society's "Judson200" digital exhibit has begun an effort to "encourage greater understanding in North America of the unique American Baptist heritage of the Burmese immigrant congregations from Myanmar."<sup>14</sup>

As the Judson200 project demonstrates, Judson scholarship has seen exciting recent developments, namely, an increasingly global vision of Baptist history. However, much work remains to be done to investigate the ecumenical influences on the Judson mission. Feminist historian Joan Brumberg summarized this problem in *Mission for Life*:

The longstanding veneration of the Judsons by Baptist Americans should not be taken to mean that the Judsons are purely denominational figures. The fact that their names are virtually unknown to those outside the denomination reflects the biases of much of our traditional historical writing which has been consistently preoccupied in the antebellum period with the story of the liberal Congregationalist and Unitarian churches.<sup>15</sup>

In an effort to rescue the Judson story from the dustbin of esoteric denominational discussion, Brumberg uses the term "evangelical" as the primary description of Judson's faith commitments.<sup>16</sup> While this choice greatly benefits Brumberg's cultural biography by distinguishing the Judsons from the broader American social context, "evangelical" still obscures the historical origins and intensity of such convictions.

Scholar David Bebbington provides the most helpful summary definition of "evangelicalism," and this definition lays a good foundational vocabulary for analyzing the menagerie of Christian influences in the Judson mission. Bebbington identifies four marks of evangelicalism. Bebbington's Quadrilateral includes: (1) Conversionism (a stress on the New

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<sup>13</sup> Jason Duesing, ed., *Adoniram Judson: A Bicentennial Appreciation of the Pioneer American Missionary*. Allen Yeh and Chris Chun, eds., *Expect Great Things, Attempt Great Things*.

<sup>14</sup> "About," accessed December 5, 2014, <http://judson200.org/index.php/about>. The website launched in fall of 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Joan Brumberg, *Mission for Life*, xvi.

<sup>16</sup> Joan Brumberg, *Mission for Life*, x-xii. Brumberg defines "evangelicalism," emphasizing its cross-denominational unifying power.

Birth), (2) Crucicentrism (a focus on Christ's redeeming work as the heart of essential Christianity), (3) Biblicism (a reliance on the Bible as ultimate religious authority), and (4) Activism (an energetic, individualistic approach to religious duties and social involvement).<sup>17</sup> This paper limits its scope to an analysis of Adoniram Judson—I could not hope to do justice for Ann, Sarah, and Emily in this limited space. There is much more to be written about all three of these incredible women.

With the wealth of evangelical expression in the extant primary source material, there is no debate over the fact that Adoniram believed and embodied all four evangelical distinctives. The point that many scholars have generally overlooked is that Judson's evangelical commitments had ecumenical origins. Although popular historical memory has associated Judson's evangelicalism as a byproduct of Baptist affiliation this is an incomplete picture. The influence of his Edwardsian Congregationalist background, the missiological example from German Pietists, and Catholic mysticism had an indispensable role in laying the structural foundation of Judson's evangelical missiological commitments.

### **Edwardsian beginnings: the conversion of Adoniram and Ann Judson**

Adoniram Judson was not a Baptist—that is, not before 1813. The early formation of Adoniram and Ann's Christian identity took place in the context of the New Divinity that was

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<sup>17</sup> Mark Knoll, *The New Shape of World Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press), 2009, 46. Knoll summarizes David Bebbington's four marks of evangelicalism. Bebbington's definition has tremendous practical value for much of the material written on Protestant mission history, as it is a convenient simplification of shared missiological identity. The original definition can be found in David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-17.



reshaping Massachusetts's Congregationalist churches.<sup>18</sup> The term "New Divinity" refers to a theological school of the Reformed tradition that lasted from 1760-1860. Church historian Robert Caldwell summarizes the New Divinity, stating that members of the movement "self consciously incarnated the theological, revivalistic, and ecclesiological legacy of Jonathan Edwards."<sup>19</sup> This Edwardsian incarnation had two significant results for the Judsons: first, application of Edwards's distinction between natural ability and moral inability to choose Christ, and second, a belief that True Religion (i.e. the purest Christianity) was marked by the Christian's sincere and sustained affection for God.<sup>20</sup> Through the influence of pastors and Edwardsian literature, these two trademarks became the paradigm shaping values of the Judsons' conversionism.

Early influences in the lives of Adoniram and Ann give the first evidence for the Edwardsian origins of conversionism. Adoniram Judson Jr. was raised in the Congregationalist church. His father, Rev. Adoniram Judson Sr. (1750-1826) and uncle, Rev. Ephraim Judson (1737-1813), studied with the Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790) and pastored Congregationalist churches.<sup>21,22</sup> From Edwards, to Bellamy, to Judson Sr., there was a direct historical connection

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<sup>18</sup> Adoniram's journals and letters from this time have been lost or destroyed. Ann provides much more information on her conversion experiences. The close partnership between Ann and Adoniram suggests that they shared many of the same views on conversion, so I have included Ann's thoughts and reflections alongside discussion of Adoniram.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Caldwell, "New England's New Divinity and the Age of Judson's Preparation," in Duesing, *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, 31. Borrowing from Caldwell's approach to this vocabulary, the terms "New Divinity" and "Edwardsian" will be used synonymously in this essay.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Caldwell, "New England's New Divinity," in Duesing, *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Caldwell, "New England's New Divinity," in Duesing, *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, 38-39.

<sup>22</sup> Bellamy was personally mentored by Jonathan Edwards. Edwards also endorsed Bellamy's writings as accurately representing the ideals of True Religion. Edwards's endorsement can be found in the introductory remarks of Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated*.

for Adoniram to hear New Divinity theology. Rev. Judson Sr. was highly selective in his search for a church, accepting an invitation from a congregation only when he believed that its people would accept New Divinity principles—his uncompromising commitment to the school of his training reflects a character of nonconformity similar to that which saw Edwards removed by his own congregation at Northampton. As a New Divinity minister, Judson Sr. rejected the politically expedient “Half-Way Covenant” that allowed non-professing church attendees to enjoy membership status and participate in communion.<sup>23</sup> Judson Sr. did not compromise on this issue, insisting that the preservation of True Religion required church members to profess a legitimate conversion experience. Judson was finally ordained on January 23, 1787 to the pastorate of the First Church of Malden, Massachusetts, where the majority membership had made the divisive decision to invite this “minister of Hopkintonian principles.”<sup>24</sup> The issue split the church. The congregation dismissed Judson Sr. in April 1791, just four years after his ordination.<sup>25</sup>

Over the next decade, Judson Sr. pastored seven years in the Congregational Church at Wenham, Mass. (December 1792-October 1799).<sup>26</sup> Upon selecting Rev. Judson, the Wenham church rejected the popular Half-Way Covenant that had spread through the majority of New

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<sup>23</sup> For details on the development of the Congregationalist Half-Way thesis under Solomon Stoddard and the Edwardsian response, see Chapter 3 in Mark Knoll, *America's God: from Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore: the life of Adoniram Judson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), 5. Anderson notes that the First Church of Malden had a significant minority who rejected New Divinity theology. Jonathan Edwards had mentored Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), and Hopkins *System of Doctrines* became the foundational systematic theology text of the New Divinity. Thus, in this use, “Hopkintonian principles” was a general epithet for Edwardsian doctrines.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, *To the Golden Shore*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Anderson, *To the Golden Shore*, 16-24. Though the church adopted New Divinity principles at the time of Rev. Judson's arrival in 1792, by 1799, financial crisis in the he small town of five-hundred precluded the possibility of a livable salary for the now bedridden pastor, and Judson invited dismissal in order to gain some respite and begin the search for other opportunities.

England's churches during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>27</sup> After a two-year interim recovering from a severe illness, Judson assumed the pastorate of the Congregational Church of Plymouth, Mass. in May of 1802.<sup>28</sup> Judson Sr. next faced the question of sending his eldest son to college, and in 1804, Adoniram Judson Jr. began studies at Providence College (renamed Brown University) at the age of 16.<sup>29</sup>

The above sketch of the ministry of Rev. Adoniram Judson Sr. demonstrates that Adoniram Judson Jr. grew up the son of a thoroughly Edwardsian minister. By the time of his enrollment at Brown University, the yet unconverted Adoniram Judson would have become familiar with the Edwardsian imperative to pursue individual spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer as a means of experiencing God. He would have known the penalty of sin and the singular hope of Christ's sacrificial death. He also knew that affection for God in these disciplines was a moral impossibility. Adoniram inherited the New Divinity theology that conversion was impossible without the intervention of the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

Biographers' portraits of Adoniram's early life have collected anecdotes supporting the idea that Adoniram participated in Christian devotional activities. Once while Judson Sr. was away on a preaching tour, his wife Abigail taught three-year-old Adoniram how to read. When his father returned, Adoniram demonstrated this new skill by reading a chapter of the Bible.<sup>31</sup>

While the Bible was likely the standard first text for many American children at this time,

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<sup>27</sup>Mark Knoll "The Collapse of the Puritan Canopy," in *America's God: from Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, 31-50.

<sup>28</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Autobiographical Record of Dates and Events," in Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph and Co., 1883), 561.

<sup>29</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Record of Dates and Events," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 561.

<sup>30</sup> The theological term for this intervention is "regeneration." This was the process in which the third person of the Godhead (the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit) defeated the human heart's moral inability to desire God.

<sup>31</sup> Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 2.

Adoniram's reading at an early age exemplifies his precocious nature. Additionally, Abigail Judson, Adoniram's younger sister (named after her mother), recalled that her older brother frequently recruited the neighborhood kids to play church and hear his fiery improvised sermons.<sup>32</sup> From childhood, Adoniram lived and breathed an atmosphere in which the reading, preaching and teaching of the Bible was at the center of religious life.

Unlike her husband, Ann Hasseltine did not grow up under the influence of a minister father, but her family attended church every Sunday. A familiar face at balls and parties, she was deeply engaged in a carefree socialite lifestyle of her friends and family, but in her teen years Ann began to experience a desire to know God. Ann was the first convert in her immediate family, but her father and sister soon followed her in the pursuit of religious life. Reflecting on her progress to conversion, Ann discusses the influences of the Holy Spirit:

During the first sixteen years of my life, I very seldom felt any serious impressions, which I think, were produced by the Holy Spirit. I was early taught by my mother (though she was then ignorant of the nature of true religion) the importance of abstaining from those vices, vices, to which children are liable [...] She also taught me, that if I were a good child, I should, at death, escape that dreadful hell.<sup>33</sup>

Despite living what she described as a "pharisaical" attempt to earn the favor of God,<sup>34</sup> Ann's Christian experience began to take a new shape when she happened upon a copy of Hannah More's *Strictures on Female Education*.<sup>35</sup> More's statement "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth," came as a stinging rebuke to Ann, who carried a reputation for giddy behavior and general carelessness. Hasseltine began to read John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in an effort to understand the true meaning of Christianity.

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<sup>32</sup> Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Ann Hasseltine Judson, in James D. Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson, Late Missionary to Burma*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, (Boston: Lincoln and Emands, 1831), 5.

<sup>34</sup> James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ann Hasseltine Judson, in James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 14.

This period of investigation during her early teenage years concluded upon considering her pastor's warning she must have a genuine interest in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>36</sup> The pastor encouraged Ann not to conceal the growing tension between her desires for the carefree partying life and desire for knowing God. She later confided her aunt, who gave the final push toward faith. Ann reflects: "She told me, that if I trifled with impressions which were evidently made by the Holy Spirit, I should be left to hardness of heart [...] Her words penetrated my heart, and I felt resolved to give up everything and seek to be reconciled to God."<sup>37</sup>

Ann's vocabulary of "hardness of heart," "true religion," "impressions" and "regeneration" mirrored the language of New Divinity leaders, and this was hardly coincidental, since Ann had become engrossed in reading Edwardsian theology. For example, the belief that experiential regeneration was prerequisite to legitimate conversion finds a close parallel in personal narrative of Jonathan Edwards.<sup>38</sup> This is also articulated in Bellamy's theology.<sup>39</sup>

Shortly after the decision to seek reconciliation with God, Ann had begun to read the works of New Divinity theologians. These included Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated*, the works of Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and Philipp Doddridge, among others.<sup>40,41</sup> The

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<sup>36</sup> James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Ann Hasseltine Judson, in James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Edwards, "Personal Narrative," in *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, ed. John Smith, Harry Stout, and Kenneth Minkema (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 281-296. Edwards writes, "There was an extraordinary influence of God's spirit in it [the contemplation of the doctrine of God's sovereignty]: but only that now I saw further [...] and it put an end to all those cavils and objections, that I had till then abode with me, all the preceding part of my life. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind."

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Bellamy, *True Religion Delineated and Distinguished from all Counterfeits*, second edition, (Edinburgh, 1788), 174. Digitized on googlebooks.com. "Therefore, that there is an absolute necessity of such influences of the Spirit of God, in order to a saving conversion, is evident to a demonstration, from the very reason and nature of things. God him self must *take away the heart of stone*, and *give an heart of flesh*, and *write his law on our hearts*, *raise us from the dead*, *create us anew*, *open our eyes*, &c. &c. according to the language of scripture."

<sup>40</sup> Ann Hasseltine Judson, in James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 11.

combined influence of these writings, academic instruction at Bradford Academy, and the New Divinity pastor at Bradford church brought Ann to have a new view of the character of God and experience a conversion that included a revival of religious affections. Ann summarized this experience, stating, “My chief happiness now consisted in contemplating the moral perfections of the glorious God. I longed to have all intelligent creatures love him.”<sup>42</sup>

Adoniram’s conversion had a different timeframe, but, like Ann, he wrestled with the Edwardsian categories of moral inability to desire God and recognized the necessity of a Holy Spirit wrought conversion. Judson graduated Brown University with the distinction of Valedictorian, but remained a Deist until he began studying at Andover Seminary.<sup>43</sup> Though it is difficult to track the assigned reading list for Andover students during his time, and few journals or letters survive from this time, Adoniram probably contacted Edwardsian writings and thinkers during this period, since the school was a center for New Divinity theologians.<sup>44</sup> Whatever the case may be, his description of personal conversion process borrows the Edwardsian vocabulary of regeneration: “1808, Nov., began to entertain a hope of having received the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>45</sup> The “entertaining a hope of having *received*” language is crucial to this sentence because it acknowledges an external enabling power. God himself was the

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<sup>41</sup> James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 15. Arabella Stuart’s *The Three Mrs. Judsons*, written in 1856, includes this information from Knowles, but proceeds to paraphrase Knowles in the entire two pages in following. Knowles provides the earliest detailed record.

<sup>42</sup> Ann Hasseltine Judson, in James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> On this early period, see Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram*, 6-15.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Caldwell, “New England’s New Divinity and the Age of Judson’s Preparation,” in *Adoniram Judson: a bicentennial appreciation of the pioneer American missionary*, ed. Jason Duesing (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2012), 41. Caldwell notes that Judson studied under a Hopkinsinian professor.

<sup>45</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Record of Dates and Events,” in Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 562.

determining influence in this conversion. The receiving *preceded* repentance. Judson committed his life to God in December of that year.<sup>46</sup>

This commitment held fast, and Judson became increasingly enamored with the Bible and the person of Jesus Christ. His son, Adoniram Brown Judson, would later recount:

He found the Bible wiser than any of the books he had hitherto encountered. It revealed his waywardness and sinfulness and at the same time the mercy and lovingkindness of God. He gave his heart to the savior and perceived that the ambition to please God was more delightful than all other forms of ambition which beset him.<sup>47</sup>

Eight years after his conversion, Judson wrote from Burma to the president of the mission board:

“We may reasonably conclude that, when God has a people whom he is about to call, he will direct his servants in such a course. I have no doubt that God is preparing the way for the conversion of Burmah to his Son.<sup>48</sup> As a reflection of his own experience, Judson wrote to the mission board with anticipated that God would also be the determining influence for the conversion of the Burmese.

The legitimacy of Ann’s conversion experience is affirmed by the accounts of friends who witnessed a change in Ann’s conversation and behavior. In a *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, biographer George Knowles wrote, “‘Redeeming love,’ says an intimate friend, ‘was now her theme. One might spend days with her without hearing any other subject reverted to. The throne of grace, too, was her early and late resort.’”<sup>49</sup> Knowles’ inclusion of this source demonstrates that Ann’s affection for God and the focus on the sacrifice of Christ were not exaggerated in Ann’s self-reflection. Ann’s habits of spiritual discipline were significantly

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<sup>46</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Record of Dates and Events,” in Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 562.

<sup>47</sup> Adoniram B. Judson, *How Judson became a Baptist Missionary*, in Jason Duesing, “Ambition Overthrown,” in *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, 64-65.

<sup>48</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Letter to Dr. Rev. Baldwin, Rangoon, August 1817,” Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, vol. 1, 191-192.

<sup>49</sup> James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 22.

changed: “I [the same friend] have known her to spend cold winter evenings in a chamber without fire, and return to the family with a solemnity spread over her countenance, which told of Him with whom she had been communing.”<sup>50</sup> Again, this account shows that Ann experienced an emotional conversion. On September 14, 1806, Ann Hasseltine publicly professed her new identity as a “disciple of Christ” and “covenanted with him, at his sacred table.”<sup>51</sup> This marked the beginning of Ann’s membership in the Congregational Church in Bradford.

Both Adoniram and Ann Judson believed that they had experienced regeneration from the Holy Spirit that overwhelmed a moral inability to love God. After this experience, they lived out the Edwardsian imperative to pursue religious affections. This was a conversionism modeled the theology of the New Divinity that later shaped the evangelistic efforts in Burma.

### **From Congregationalist to Baptist**

Above any single denominational, theological or personal affiliation, Adoniram Judson was committed to the Bible as the preeminent and eternal authority of God, and under this conviction, he was guided away from Congregationalism. The Judsons’ conversion to Baptist views has been the most discussed moment in the Judson scholarship, and scholars agree that it was commitment to the truth of the Bible that motivated this change.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 22.

<sup>51</sup> Ann Hasseltine Judson, James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 25.

<sup>52</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, “‘We are confirmed Baptists’: the Judsons and their Meeting with the Serampore Trio,” in *Expect Great Things, Attempt Great Things: William Carey and Adoniram Judson, Missionary Pioneers*, eds. Allen Yeh and Chris Chun (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock), 103-112. See also Keith E. Eitel, “The Enduring Legacy of Adoniram Judson’s Missiological Precepts and Practices,” in Duesing, *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, 133-134. T



Adoniram began to study scripture passages relating to baptism while sailing the four-month journey to India on board the *Caravan*. He and Ann looked forward to meeting the British Baptist missionaries at Serampore; Adoniram wanted to be prepared to defend the Congregationalist practice of infant baptism.<sup>53</sup> Ann joined in this effort, reading Pedobaptist commentaries on the subject, but she and Adoniram became convinced against their former views.<sup>54</sup> Ann Judson did not evaluate the decision to change views based on whether or not the change of sentiments was politically expedient. She spoke for herself and Adoniram to say that they had considered the cost and felt compelled to follow their conviction:

We knew it would wound and grieve our dear Christian friends in America—that we should lose their approbation and esteem. We thought it probable the commissioners would refuse to support us [...] we knew we must be separated from our missionary associates, and go alone to some heathen land.<sup>55</sup>

The Judsons validated their shared bibliocentric commitments by holding to the persuasion of Baptist doctrine in the face of potential reprisals. Upon arrival in Serampore, India, both Ann and Adoniram were baptized by William Ward, one of the Serampore Four (the Serampore Four included William Carey, Hannah and Joshua Marshman, and William Ward). To the Judsons' relief, Luther Rice soon followed his colleagues in baptism. The three resigned their commission for the ABCFM, and the Baptist churches of Massachusetts formed the American Baptist Union in support of the missionaries in the East. Thus, in Adoniram's conversion and practice of faith, evangelical Biblicism gave the freedom for him to operate with both Edwardsian and Baptist persuasions—so long as he felt he stood on the authority of the

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<sup>53</sup> Ann Judson, "Isle of France, Port Louis, February 14, 1813," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Ann Judson, "Isle of France, Port Louis, February 14, 1813," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 40.

<sup>55</sup> Ann Judson, "Isle of France, Port Louis, February 14, 1813," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 40.

Bible, Judson felt secure in his belief. Biblicism allowed Adoniram to remain unapologetic about his change of sentiments regarding Baptism and comfortable with assimilating other ecumenical influences, but Biblicism is most notably expressed in the Judson mission commitment to Bible translation.

### **The Pietist Impulse as Bible Translation: From Ziegenbalg to Carey and Judson**

In the short period between Ann's admittance to the Congregational church and departure to India in 1812, both Ann and Adoniram weighed the possibility of pioneer missions in the East. The Second Great Awakenings and the Edwardsian voices in New England's churches, colleges, and seminaries stirred this early missionary activity. Adoniram participated in the development of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) while at Andover Seminary, partnering with Samuel Mills and the members of the William's College "Haystack Prayer Movement."<sup>56</sup> However, Judson had been hearing from others outside of the New Divinity as well. In addition to New England's Edwardsian literature and pastoral legacy, the tremendous volume of cross-Atlantic correspondences between British missionary societies and Congregationalist periodicals created an climate for Adoniram to read reports and histories of

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<sup>56</sup> Jason Duesing provides a helpful summary of the Haystack Prayer Movement and those involved formation of the ABCFM: Jason Duesing "Ambition Overthrown," in *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, ed. Jason Duesing, 69-75. Regarding the origins of the ABCFM, David Kling corroborates, arguing that the ABCFM was essentially a product of the New Divinity. David W. Kling, "The New Divinity and the Origins of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," *Church History* 72, no. 4 (December 1, 2003): 791-819. *ATLASerials, Religion Collection*, EBSCOhost.

missionaries from around the world. These writings most importantly provided stories of Pietist missionaries that directed the inspiration for Adoniram's labor in Burma.<sup>57</sup>

First, Adoniram was inspired to join missions by reading secondhand accounts of the efforts of early German Pietist missionaries. In September, 1809, 10 months after his solemn commitment to God, Adoniram read the missionary Claudius Buchanan's *Star in the East* sermon: Adoniram claims that this was the influence that prompted him to "consider the subject of missions."<sup>58</sup> Adoniram also commented later in life, claiming, "It [the sermon] produced a powerful effect on my mind. For some days I was unable to attend to the studies of my class, and spent my time in wondering at my past stupidity, depicting the most romantic scenes in missionary life."<sup>59</sup> Rev. Claudius Buchanan, an Anglican priest, prominent British missiologist, and close friend of William Carey, had delivered the *Star in the East* sermon earlier that year in Bristol as a defense of and invitation to participation in the expansion of the gospel in the East.<sup>60</sup> The sermon reflects three characteristic qualities of the Protestant missionary efforts of the time: (1) openness to ecumenical dialogue and coordination in cross-cultural missions, (2) emphasis on the translation of the Bible as the means of ensuring the longevity and expansion of the native church, and (3) an strong and historically informed self-consciousness that saw the modern missions movement as the expansion and refinement of earlier Protestant and Catholic missionary efforts. Adoniram exhibited all three of these attributes, but the second quality—the

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<sup>57</sup> German Lutheran Pietist missionary efforts began with the Halle University missionaries (e.g. Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg), and Count Nikolaus Ludwig Von Zizendorf and the Moravian Church.

<sup>58</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Record of Dates and Events," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 562.

<sup>59</sup> Adoniram Judson, in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 16-17.

<sup>60</sup> "Buchanan, Claudius." in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of South Asian Christianity*, edited by Athyal, Jesudas M., Joshua Kalapati, and Jessica Richard.: Oxford University Press, 2011. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198073857.001.0001/acref-9780198073857-e-0164>.

centrality of pioneer Bible translation—was largely an inheritance passed down by the linguistic legacy of the German Lutheran Pietist missionaries.

The first German Pietist missionary efforts pre-date Adoniram Judson by one hundred years. On July 9, 1706, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plütschau arrived in Tranquebar, India under the commission of King Frederick IV of Denmark, launching a Lutheran missionary effort that established a church of some 350 members by the time of Ziegenbalg's death.<sup>61</sup> Ziegenbalg thoroughly studied Tamil language and culture. He produced a Tamil grammar, accumulated a library of over 300 books of Hindu, Muslim, and Jain origin, and read all the major works of Tamil literature.<sup>62</sup> Adoniram later adopted this model of comprehensive literary engagement. Ziegenbalg also completed Tamil translation of a German hymnbook, Luther's *Small Catechism*, and the New Testament (published 1712).<sup>63</sup> Seven months after Ziegenbalg's passing, Benjamin Schultze arrived in Tranquebar to continue the Bible translation work: he finished the Tamil translation of the Old Testament in 1726.<sup>64</sup> In addition to founding the Traquebar mission, Ziegenbalg inspired the creation of the College of Missions in Copenhagen, an institute that became a training school for many Moravian missionaries.<sup>65</sup>

Later Protestant missionaries and missionary magazines told and retold the stories of these Pietist missionaries, and elements of the Pietist impulse in Christian missions eventually

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<sup>61</sup> Douglas H. Shantz, *An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 240-252. Ziegenbalg died in February, 1719 at thirty-six years old.

<sup>62</sup> Douglas Shantz, *Introduction to German Pietism*, 246. Shantz remembers Ziegenbalg the linguist, noting that, in the process of translating the Bible, he read over 112 Tamil works on the humanities and science, translated three collections of Tamil proverbs, and compiled a *Catalogue of Tamil Books*, reviewing the literature he had read.

<sup>63</sup> Douglas Shantz, *Introduction to German Pietism*, 245-246.

<sup>64</sup> Douglas Shantz, *Introduction to German Pietism*, 252.

<sup>65</sup> Paul E. Pierson, "Pietism," *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Scott A. Moreau. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 756-758.

helped shape the mission strategies of William Carey and Adoniram Judson.<sup>66</sup> For example, the widely circulated Congregationalist periodical *The Panoplist* (founded in 1805 by Rev. Jedidiah Morse to combat the growing popularity of Unitarianism) frequently included a segment on “Religious Intelligence.” This segment was a primary means of disseminating information about the activities of various missionary societies throughout the world.<sup>67</sup> These periodicals also published obituaries, memoirs and condensed histories of past missionaries, including favorable accounts of German Pietists. For example, “Evangelical Exertions in Asia,” the front page article of the September, 1812 issue of *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine* begins as follows:

*Containing a condensed history of modern Translations of the Scriptures into the Languages of Eastern Asia.* The Tamul Bible, the first edition of the Scriptures that was published in the East, was completed at Tranquebar in 1719, by Ziegenbalg, the first Danish Missionary, after the labor of fourteen years; and has since passed through “a succession of improved editions.”<sup>68</sup>

His appearance in *The Panoplist* in 1812 shows that Ziegenbalg had become part of a standard Congregationalist recitation of Protestant missions history. Though Adoniram would have left by the time of the issue, he would have likely had first contact with the Pietist thread as it was woven through missions history articles in the *Panoplist* and other Congregationalist periodicals.

Although William Carey is often held hostage in Baptist denominations as the lonely father of the modern missionary movement and a mentor figure to Adoniram Judson, he also respected and emulated the example of Lutheran Pietist forbears. In his *Enquiry into the*

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<sup>66</sup> For an more general overview of the Pietist missionary movements, see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity (Volume III): Three Centuries of Advance A.D. 1500-A.D. 1800*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), 46-51.

<sup>67</sup> James D. Hart, and Phillip W. Leininger. "Morse, Jedidiah," in *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*. : Oxford University Press, 1995.

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195065480.001.0001/acref-9780195065480-e-3258>. Jedidiah was the father of Samuel F.B. Morse.

<sup>68</sup> *Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine. For the year ending June 1, 1813. Volume V. New Series* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1813), 153.

*Obligation of Christians to use Means*, Carey summarized the history of the expansion of Christianity. Following a short paragraph on the Puritan missionaries John Eliot and David Brainerd, Carey devoted equal space to mention Ziegenbalg being “useful to the natives, so that many heathen’s were turned to the Lord.”<sup>69</sup> Additionally, Carey concluded his narrative of missions history with high marks for the Moravians, German Pietist missionaries led by Count Zinzendorf:

None of the moderns have equaled the Moravian Brethren in this good work; they have sent missions to Greenland, Labrador, and several of the West-Indian islands, which have been blessed for good. They have likewise send to Abyssinia, in Africa, but what success they have I cannot tell.<sup>70</sup>

Like the Moravians, who practiced self-supported missions,<sup>71</sup> Carey funded activities in India by managing an Indigo factory for six years in Modhnoboti.<sup>72</sup> However, this effort did not last, and this approach did not ultimately define Carey’s ministry strategy. Historian Richard Pierard comments, “Where Carey departed from the Moravian emphasis and adhered to the Halle Pietist model was in his emphasis on education, awareness of indigenous culture, and vernacular Bible translation.”<sup>73</sup> While Carey esteemed and attempted to mimic the missionary lifestyle of

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<sup>69</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens. In which the Religions State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are Considered*, (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), 36.

<sup>70</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry*, 37. Timothy Tennent offers constructive analysis on this point of William Carey as a missiologist. Timothy C. Tennent, “William Carey as a Missiologist: an Assessment,” in *Expect Great Things, Attempt Great Things: William Carey and Adoniram Judson, Missionary Pioneers*, ed. Allen Yeh and Chris Chun (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 15-26.

<sup>71</sup> See Ruth Tucker’s narrative of the Moravian practices in Ruth A. Tucker, “The Moravian Advance: Dawn of Protestant Missions,” in *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: a Biographical History of Christian Missions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2004, 97-112.

<sup>72</sup> Chakravarthy R. Zadda, “Shoemaker and Missionary, William Carey: A Dalit Christian Perspective,” in *Expect Great Things, Attempt Great Things*, eds. Allen Yeh and Chris Chun, 34.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Pierard, “German Pietism as a Major Factor in Modern Protestant Missions,” in *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity*, eds. Christian Collins Winn, Christopher Gehrz, G. William

the Moravians, he found a practicable model in the work of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg—Carey became a Bible translator.

Like Wycliffe, Ziegenbalg and Schultz before him, Carey became a dedicated linguist in the process of translating the Bible; in total, he either translated or supervised translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into 34 Asian dialects and languages.<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately, he failed to create translations that communicated effectively in the spoken language of the people.<sup>75</sup> But, in spite of his failure to create long-lasting readable translations, the emphasis on Bible translation has become the legacy of Carey's ministry.

Ziegenbalg was a trailblazer of modern missions movement for both Carey and Adoniram, and though Adoniram read about and worked with William Carey, the inspiration to spend thirty years on the Burmese Bible did not come from William Carey but from Ziegenbalg. Claudius Buchanan's *Star in the East*, the sermon that first corralled Adoniram's ambition towards missionary service, held out Schwartz and Ziegenbalg as exemplars of missionary activity:

During the whole of the last century, Providence favoured them with a succession of holy and learned men, educated at the Universities of Germany: among whom was the venerable Swartz, called the Apostle of the East; and others [e.g. Ziegenbalg] not much inferior to him; men whose names are scarcely known in this country, but who are as famous among the Hindoos, as Wickliffe and Luther are amongst us. The ministry of these good men was blessed in many provinces in the South of India, and the bounds of their churches are extending unto this day. The language of the country is called the Tamul; and the first translation of the Bible in that language, was made, as we said,

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Carlson, and Eric Holst, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 293. Pierard's additionally notes that Carey failed in his attempt to follow the Moravian framework of regulated communal living.

<sup>74</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, "Just Before Judson: the Significance of William Carey's Life, Thought, and Ministry," in Duesing, *A Bicentennial Appreciation*, 25.

<sup>75</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, "Just Before Judson," 25. Carey's translation to Sanskrit had the most longevity: it lasted 33 years before being replaced by a new translation. This pales in comparison to Judson's Burmese Bible, which has remained in use to the present day. Haykin concludes that Carey "failed to make the Scriptures communicate in the living language of the people of India."

about a hundred years ago. Like Wicliffe's Bible with us, it became the father of many versions, and, after a succession of improved editions, it is now considered by the Brahmins themselves (like Luther's Bible in German) as the classical standard of the Tamul tongue.<sup>76</sup>

Looking into the context of this excerpt reveals that Buchanan was referring to Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg. The year of commemoration coincides with the exact date that Ziegenbalg and Plütschau arrived in Tranquebar:

In the month of July, 1806, a Jubilee was observed by these Hindoo churches, in commemoration of the arrival of the two first Protestant Missionaries on the 9th of July, 1706[...] These were the effects of sending the Bible to the East, Men were "brought to a knowledge of the truth;" and at the end of a hundred years, the natives kept the Jubilee of the Bible.<sup>77</sup>

Two significant observations must be made on this sermon. First, Buchanan promotes Ziegenbalg as a Wycliffe and Luther to the Hindus—such a comparison would certainly not be lost on Adoniram as he considered the call to the East. Second, the legacy of the Pietists' effort was remarkable: one hundred years later, Indian Christians were still celebrating and reading Ziegenbalg's Tamil Bible. Here Buchanan presents a modern day Luther, and a Wycliffe, whose work withstood the test of time. In Buchanan's account, Ziegenbalg is the model of missionary translation work.

Bible translation was at the core of the first Burmese Baptist mission. In various letters, Adoniram expounded on his process, remarking:

My ideas of translating are very different from those of some missionaries, better men than myself, but mistaken, I think, in this particular. I consider it the work of a man's

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<sup>76</sup> Claudius Buchanan, *A Star in the East; A Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of St. James, Bristol, on Sunday, Feb. 26, 1809, For the Benefit of the "Society for Missions to Africa and the East*, 8<sup>th</sup> American ed. (New York: Williams & Whiting, 1809), 13.

<sup>77</sup> Claudius Buchanan, *A Star in the East*, 13-14. Though he never names either of these missionaries, Adoniram is likely to have read William Carey's *Enquiry* and become familiar with the biographical history presented there.



whole life to procure a *really good* translation of even the New Testament in an untried language.<sup>78</sup>

Such drive and focus to produce a lasting original translation could not have come about from Carey's influence alone because Judson pursued a more solid translation project than Carey. Adoniram wanted a Burmese Bible that would last, and this required a rigorous and slow process translating from the Greek and Hebrew. His intentionality in this process has a clear historical precedent in Ziegenbalg. In all of the influences noted in Adoniram's surviving letters and works, Ziegenbalg is the only pioneer translator with a methodology, commitment, and legacy comparable to Judson.<sup>79</sup>

When discussing the methodology of producing a "*really good*" translation, Adoniram essentially described the same process that Ziegenbalg applied a century before. In a letter addressed to Rev. Dr. Sharp, June 28, 1833, he asserted that the work begins with the reading of many books, in order that, "like as the spider spins her web from her own bowels, he [the translator] may be able to extract the translation from his own brain."<sup>80</sup> Inhabiting this linguist-arachnid alter ego, Judson lived and breathed Burmese. The surviving letters are largely silent as to how many or which books Judson read, but the idea nevertheless bears strong resemblance to Ziegenbalg. Furthermore, Judson comments on a small number of successful pioneering translations: "There have been but few original translations. That by Ziegenbalg and his associates, in Tamil, has served for all the dialects in the south of India. That by Carey and his

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<sup>78</sup> Adoniram Judson, in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 405-406. Emphasis in original.

<sup>79</sup> Like Ziegenbalg, Judson wrote a grammar of the Burmese language. Also, scholars of Burma Studies note that Judson was responsible for writing the first Burmese-English dictionary. Andrew Selth, "Modern Burma Studies: A Survey of the Field," *Modern Asian Studies*, 44 (2010): 405. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27764660>.

<sup>80</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Letter to Rev. Dr. Sharp," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 407.

associates, in Sanscrit and Bengalee, has been the basis of all the other translations which they have conducted.”<sup>81</sup>

Judson evaluated Carey and Ziegenbalg as one who knew the history of the region and its linguistic nuances. He himself had been translating with Ann in Burma for many years, and, as previously shown, he knew about Carey and Ziegenbalg and the details their respective translation efforts. He knew that Ziegenbalg’s work was significant, specifically, for dialects in India’s Southern regions.<sup>82</sup> Judson wrote this from the Karen mission station in Moulmein, India in 1833, and the dating confirms Adoniram’s credibility—by this time he had translated and revised his own Burmese New Testament and had translated one-third of the Old Testament.<sup>83,84</sup> He had been deeply immersed in the translation process for twenty years—he would have become very familiar with the scope of other’s work—and he anticipated the impact of his own work for future projects. His was a studied and informed perspective.

Adoniram, Ann, Sarah, and Emily Judson all whole-heartedly embraced the Pietist example of Bible translation as the center of missionary activity. First, Ann had both hands in translation work. Between 1819 and her death in 1826, she wrote “Tract No. 2,” a Burmese

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<sup>81</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Letter to Rev. Dr. Sharp,” in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 407.

<sup>82</sup> Judson may not have been aware of the long-term problems with William Carey’s poor translation. He seems to simply hold Carey in high esteem for his being a pioneer of the original. Ziegenbalg, on the other hand, had a long established legacy and would have carried a stronger impression.

<sup>83</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Letter to Rev. Dr. Sharp,” in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 406-407.

<sup>84</sup> Maung Shwe Wa, “Book 1: Introducing the Tree of Life on the Banks of the Irrawaddy,” *Burma Baptist Chronicle*, (Rangoon: University Press, 1963), 125. In this sesquicentennial commemoration, Maung Shwe Wa includes a helpful table of the “Highlights of Bible translation to the mid-century.” Judson printed the Gospel of Matthew printed in 1817, completed the New testament in 1823, finished revisions of the N.T. in 1829, printed 3,000 copies of the N.T. in 1832, completed the Old Testament in 1834, printed 10,000 revised copies of the N.T. in 1837, printed 2,000 copies of a three-volume O.T. in 1838, and printed 5,000 copies of a complete Bible in 1840.

Catechism and the second tract written by the Judsons, translated the Gospel of Matthew into Siamese (Thai), and translated the Old Testament books of Daniel and Jonah into Burmese.<sup>85,86</sup>

She also penned the earliest history of the Burmese Baptist mission: *A Particular Relation of the American Baptist Mission to the Burman Empire* was written in English and published in 1823.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, Sarah Boardman Judson and Emily Chubbuck Judson were heavily involved in various aspects of linguistic work. After the death of her husband George in 1831, Sarah Boardman singlehandedly continued the Baptist ministry to the Karen people for three years, until she married Adoniram Judson in 1834. In their eleven-year marriage, Sarah had eight more children in addition to her son George (from her previous marriage): seven of these children survived infancy, but only five lived to adulthood.<sup>88</sup> This means that, in defiance to the difficult climate and the constant threat of disease, Sarah was pregnant for six years of her marriage to Adoniram. This did not stop her from leaving an indelible mark on the translation projects at Moulmein. Sarah's monumental literary contributions are recorded and praised by Adoniram in her obituary:

Her translation of the Pilgrim's Progress, Part 1st, into Burmese, is one of the best pieces of composition which we have yet published. Her translation of Mr. Boardman's ' Dying Father's Advice,' has become one of our standard tracts; and her hymns in Burmese, about twenty in number, are probably the best in our Chapel Hymn Book — a work which she was appointed by the Mission to edit. Beside these works, she published four volumes of Scripture Questions, which are in constant use in our Sabbath Schools.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Record of Dates and Events," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 564.

<sup>86</sup> Dana L. Robert, "Judson, Ann("Nancy") (Hasseltine)," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald Anderson (New York: Simon & Shuster MacMillan, 1998), 346.

<sup>87</sup> Dana L. Robert "Judson, Ann," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 346.

<sup>88</sup> Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Mission for Life*, (New York: The Free Press), 1980, timeline on inside front cover.

<sup>89</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Obituary," in Emily C. Judson, *Memoir of Sarah B. Judson, Member of the American Mission to Burmah*, (New York: L. Colby and Co.), 1848, 225. "Fanny Forester" was the pseudonym used by Emily Chubbuck Judson, the third wife of Adoniram Judson. A published obituary can be found in the *Baptist Memorial and Monthly Chronicle*, Mar. 1846, pp.

In addition to work in Burmese translation, Sarah pioneered efforts translating scripture and evangelistic tracts into the Peguan language. Sarah revised and translated at least five tracts from Burmese into Peguan, and, most significantly, translated the New Testament to Peguan before delegating the completion of the translation to the hands of another trusted missionary.<sup>90</sup>

Regarding this work, Emily Judson remarks:

Mrs. Judson's labours in the Peguan, were somewhat singular; indeed, I believe scarce preceded. Missionaries sometimes abandon one language and devote themselves to the acquisition of another, in which they hope to effect more good. But I know of only one other instance (Ann H. Judson, in the Siamese) of stepping from the path which has grown familiar to the foot, toiling for years merely to supply an exigency, and then, resigning the labour and its fruits to another, as willingly as though it had never cost an effort.<sup>91</sup>

Following in the footsteps of Ann and Sarah, Emily Judson was married to Adoniram Judson in 1846 after Sarah's death. Like the previous two Mrs. Judsons, Emily remained involved in literary work, helping Adoniram compile his Burmese dictionary, planning the completion of Sarah's work on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and writing her *Memoir of Sarah B. Judson*.<sup>92</sup> After her husband's death, Emily Judson assisted Francis Wayland, then president of Brown University, in compiling the first official biography of Adoniram Judson. *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson* has become a central source for every significant work on the Judsons since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>93</sup>

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79-83. See William Brackney, "Boardman, Sarah Hall," in *American National Biography Volume 3*, eds. John Garraty and Mark Carnes, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 83.

<sup>90</sup>Emily C. Judson, *Memoir of Sarah B. Judson*, 182-183.

<sup>91</sup>Emily C. Judson, *Memoir of Sarah B. Judson*, 183.

<sup>92</sup>Jeane M. Malloy, "Judson, Emily Chubbuck," in *American National Biography Volume 12*, eds. John Garraty and Mark Carnes, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 311.

<sup>93</sup>19<sup>th</sup> Century adaptations of the Judson narrative often paraphrased large sections of Wayland's two volumes biography, and this kind of biography/hagiography usually included an introduction acknowledging the liberties of borrowing from Dr. Wayland's version. More significantly, Francis Wayland and Emily Judson bring together one of very few collections of Adoniram's

More study is needed to determine the voices that inspired the translation commitments of the three Mrs. Judsons, but their legacy confirms that, whatever their discussions with Adoniram on Ziegenbalg, Carey, and others, their respective translation initiatives both improved and expanded their husband's work. Their critical contributions legitimize the Bible translating legacy of the Judson mission and reaffirm the evangelical trademark of Biblicism. Thus, while Adoniram's letters openly note the historical connection between his vision of Bible translation and Ziegenbalg, the three Mrs. Judsons also confirmed and lived out this Pietist inspired strategy.

### **“Guyonism”: the shape of Judson's spiritual life and the unexpected contribution of Catholic Mystical writers**

In addition to assimilating Edwardsian, Baptist and Pietist missiological commitments, Adoniram imbibed certain ideals of Catholic Mystics, namely Madame Guyon, Fenelon, and Thomas 'A Kempis. In particular, Judson embraced the practices of self-denial, secret prayer and doing good—he called these “the threefold chord.”<sup>94</sup> Judson came under this influence at a point no later than the fall of 1829 after a time of persecution and personal tragedy. Edward Judson and Emily Chubbuck Judson have used the term “Guyonism” as a descriptor of Adoniram's

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writings. The fact of Emily Judson's oversight is also supremely valuable, as she provides important first-hand accounts of conversations with her husband on a wide variety of subjects which are not described in Adoniram's own writings.

<sup>94</sup> Adoniram Judson, “The Threefold Chord,” in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 571. More investigation would be needed in order to determine the extent to which this and other writings suggest that Judson embraced mystical expressions of Guyon's Quietism. I argue that Judson *at least* became a mystic in a general sense that he adopted mystical attitudes regarding prayer and self-denial. Judson was a mystic. This is the “Guyonism” as his wife and son experienced. Although he clearly derived these ideals from the writings of the Quietists, the more esoteric doctrines of Quietism are not discussed in the available surviving primary sources, so it is difficult to make the case that Judson became a Quietist. For this reason, I use “Guyonism” with quotes to distinguish Adoniram's more generic mysticism from the particular doctrines of Guyonism.

adaptation of the Catholic mystical vision.<sup>95</sup> Much of the secondary source material refrains from engaging the question of “Guyonism,” and none of the significant early biographers endorsed Adoniram’s appreciation for the mystics.<sup>96</sup> Francis Wayland’s official biography largely dismisses the longevity and force of “Guyonism,” but, given 19<sup>th</sup> Century New England’s strong historical consciousness of the European Reformations and resulting Protestant distaste for Catholic theological frameworks, this would have been the safest interpretation to put in the official narrative. However, Adoniram’s own writings on “Guyonism” and the traumatic events leading up to this interest recommend a different interpretation, namely, that “Guyonism” did not supplant or temporarily replace a Edwardsian Baptist framework, but strengthened and re-structured Adoniram’s earlier commitments to prayer, self-denial and benevolence in a way that extended through the rest of his life.

At the beginning of the era of public ministry in Rangoon, Burma, Adoniram wrote eight rules for life that reflect prior agreement with the essential principles of “Guyonism.” The eight rules included the following: “1. Be diligent in secret prayer, every morning and evening [...] 3. Restrain from natural appetites within the bounds of temperance and purity [...] 5. Undertake nothing from ambitions, or love of fame.”<sup>97</sup> These resolutions highlight the felt necessity of secret prayer and self-denial seven years before Judson began writing home about Madame Guyon or any other Catholic mystic. Additionally, rule number seven reads, “Seek opportunities

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<sup>95</sup> Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 303, 305.

<sup>96</sup> Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, vol. 1, 538-541. Francis Wayland’s biography, arguably the most thorough of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Judson biographies, discusses this influence as being limited to a certain period of time. The fact of an Edwardsian Baptist seriously reading and enjoying the writings of Catholic mystics would have carried a tremendous weight of controversy at that time. Regarding the particularly controversial ideal of self-denial, Wayland argues that this practice did not have a permanent place in Judson’s exercise of spiritual devotions but was rather only a temporary fixture in his activity.

<sup>97</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Rule adopted on Sunday, April 4, 1819,” in Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, Vol. 1., 322.

of making some sacrifice for the good of others.”<sup>98</sup> This had been written seven years before the earliest letters mentioning any engagement with “Guyonism,” so Judson’s adaptation of mystical Catholic influences reflects a refinement of prior theological and missiological convictions. Judson may have even interacted with the social and theological ideas of Catholic mystics during his years at Andover Seminary and in the time since then, but the surviving records indicate that the period of peak interest in mysticism came during a season of intense mourning and spiritual searching after the death of Judson’s wife and baby daughter.

The stress leading up to this season of emotional suffering began in the summer of 1824, the same year that Britain began a military campaign against the Kingdom of Burma. On June 8, 1824, the emperor gave orders to arrest Adoniram.<sup>99</sup> Adoniram and several European men were shackled and imprisoned at Ava to await a death sentence. This was part of a campaign to weed out foreign spies. Ann regularly appealed to the local governor, offering bribes to officials and prison guards to spare her husband and the men imprisoned with him: without her efforts, Adoniram and the others would have been promptly executed or starved to death in prison.<sup>100</sup> In addition to this crushing load, Ann gave birth and cared for a baby daughter, Marie Elizabeth Butterworth.

With no money and few friends, persecution, malnutrition, and disease became constant companions as death loomed on the horizon for the Judson family. Amazingly, all three

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<sup>98</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Rule adopted on Sunday, April 4, 1819,” in Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, vol. 1, 322.

<sup>99</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Record of Dates and Events,” in Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson*, 564.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Ann Judson to Elnathan Judson, in James Knowles, *Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson*, 281- 316. Chapter XVI and XVII of Knowles’ biography include the most detailed primary source of the Ava prison years in the form of a letter from Ann to Elnathan Judson, Adoniram’s brother. This lengthy letter was written over multiple sittings from May 26 to July 27, 1826.

survived, and one of the faithful Burmese converts rescued Adoniram's Burmese New Testament manuscripts from the hands of the prison guards—the translation work continued.

The season of Adoniram's imprisonment made waves through the next decade of the Burmese mission. First, Ann's health had deteriorated beyond hope of recovery. She developed cerebral spinal meningitis and died in Amherst, Burma, on October 24, 1826. Adoniram had traveled to Ava at the time and was not present for Ann's final hours. He felt incredible regret for not being there for her, and this increased the weight of his grief. Little Marie fell sick and died six months later. In the fall of 1827, Adoniram received another blow: his father was dead.

Adoniram had relocated to the city of Moulmein, and there he continued translation and *zayat* ministry among the Karen people, but the anxieties and pains of the past two years eventually overwhelmed Adoniram's ability to function.<sup>101</sup> Translation stopped. Biographer Rosalie Hunt suggests that Adoniram experienced severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—this essentially spun the once resilient man into a season of incredible self-doubt and doubting of his Christian faith commitments.<sup>102</sup> Adoniram renounced all accolades and assets he had acquired through his labors.<sup>103</sup> As part of this self-denial process, Adoniram destroyed all of his personal papers that had been preserved during the two-year imprisonment and requested that his mother and sisters destroy all of his personal letters.<sup>104</sup> On October 24, 1828, the second anniversary of his wife's death, Adoniram moved into a small cottage in the jungle to grieve and seek a renewed

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<sup>101</sup> The *zayat* was a small hut building modeled after the buildings of priests. Inquirers could freely come and ask questions of the missionaries.

<sup>102</sup> Hunt, *Bless God and Take Courage*, 152.

<sup>103</sup> Adoniram Judson, "Autobiographical Record of Events and Dates," in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 565. Adoniram notes that he renounced an honorary doctorate from Brown University and gave away his private property for the use mission board. The sum of this gift amounted to over ten thousand dollars.

<sup>104</sup> Hunt, *Bless God and Take Courage*, 161.



experience of God through solitude.<sup>105</sup> After one year of this hermitage experience, Adoniram wrote to his sisters Mary and Abigail. He asked if they had heard of any effective means for finding lasting communion with God, lamenting, “God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in him, but I find him not.”<sup>106</sup>

Judging by this material from Judson’s personal letters and the facts of his attempts at self-denial, it is well established that post-traumatic stress shook Adoniram to the very core of his faith experience. In an attempt to negotiate self-loathing over pride and failure to provide for his family, he had begun eliminating all elements of his life that he considered tokens of selfish ambition. Judson’s encounters with Catholic mystics added theological structure to this extreme expression of self-denial. Most importantly, and at a time in which Judson had retreated from missionary labor, “Guyonism” led to a renewed fervor of active evangelical engagement among the Karen and the completion of Judson’s life’s work: a Burmese Bible. In 1829, Judson returned to the mission house at Moulmein and resumed Bible translation. He had regained a sense of emotional and spiritual stability, though now “Guyonism” had led to a form of faith expression that his American Baptist counterparts considered extreme.

By 1829, Adoniram had embraced “Guyonism,” and Adoniram’s appreciation for the Catholic mystics extended throughout his marriage to Sarah Boardman—“Guyonism” was far more than a temporary season. Adoniram so deeply appreciated the Catholic mystics—his letters show favorable regard for all of the following: Madame Guyon, Thomas ‘A Kempis, Fenelon,

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<sup>105</sup> Adoniram Judson, “Maulmain, October 24, 1828,” in Francis Wayland. *Memoir*, vol. 1 482-483. This segment of a letter to Abigail and Mary (Adoniram’s sisters) expresses both Judson’s deep sorrow and eloquent expression of his emotional turmoil: “my tears flow[...] over the forsaken grave of my love and over the loathsome sepulcher of my heart.”

<sup>106</sup> Adoniram Judson, “October 24, 1829,” in Francis Wayland. *Memoir*, vol. 1, 483. At this point, Adoniram had been living in solitude for one year.

Madame Chantel, Madame Bourignon, Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross—that he nicknamed his second born son “Fenelon” after the mystic Francois Fenelon.<sup>107</sup>

Judson was also well aware of the possible fallout of publicly affiliating himself with Catholic mysticism. “Guyonism” was expressed in a “threefold chord” of self-denial, secret prayer, and doing good; Adoniram was well aware that emphasis on self-denial and regulated prayer was not welcome in New England’s Protestant missionary societies.<sup>108</sup> In an 1829 letter to a friend of his late wife Ann, Adoniram begs the reader “not to rest contented with the commonplace religion that is now prevalent,” and recommends her to instead “call your attention to Madame Chantel, Madame Bourignon, and Lady Guion.”<sup>109</sup> He concludes by mentioning a tract that he mailed along with the letter, stating, “The author, it seems, from not affixing his name, desires to remain unknown.”<sup>110</sup> This tract was Adoniram’s “The Threefold Chord.”

This attempt to publish an anonymous tract based on a Catholic mystical spirituality indicates that Judson regarded his “Guyonism” with great seriousness in spite of knowing the risk to his reputation. “Guyonism” was a dominating theme that deeply enriched Adoniram’s Christian experience and service, and he felt the need to share these convictions. In “The Threefold Chord,” Judson acknowledges the unpopularity of his views and defends their

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<sup>107</sup>This was the household name given to Adoniram Brown. It was generally shortened to “Fen,” and the Karens’ mispronunciation, “Pwen,” occurs in several letters. Rosalie Hunt confirms this, citing a 1913 interview of Adoniram Brown Judson reminiscing on growing up in Burma. See Rosalie Hall Hunt, *Bless God and Take Courage*, 284, 285. Adoniram Brown writes that his parents discontinued the use of “Fenelon” because friends at home did not approve of Judson’s “Guyonism.” Likely this was an effort to avoid stirring up tension. Being the son of an internationally known Baptist missionary and bearing the name of a Catholic mystic could have prompted serious questions about the legitimacy of Adoniram’s Baptist denominational affiliation.

<sup>108</sup> “The Threefold Chord” was published anonymously in 1829.

<sup>109</sup> Adoniram Judson, “To Mrs. J.W., a Friend of Mrs. Ann H. Judson, London. Maulmain, December 22, 1829,” in Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, vol. 1, 481-482.

<sup>110</sup> Adoniram Judson, “To Mrs. J.W., a Friend of Mrs. Ann H. Judson, London. Maulmain, December 22, 1829,” in Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, vol. 1, 481-482.

legitimacy. While defending the necessity of practicing self denial in “The Threefold Chord,” he acknowledges that self-denial has been “abused in the Roman Catholic Church” in such a way that, “Protestants have become afraid of it and thrown it away.”<sup>111</sup>

By recognizing both the deficit of self-denial in Protestantism and its excess leading to asceticism in Roman Catholic church history, Judson attempted to sail the middle course and persuade the hesitant reader: he encourages Christian brothers in America to lay hold of all three principles—secret prayer, doing good, *and* self-denial—by faith. These three become indispensable to the practice of true Christianity in daily life:

By practicing self denial, thou weakenest the debasing principle of inordinate self love, and by doing good, thou cherishes and strengthenest the heavenly principle of holy benevolence. Let these exercises, then, quickened and sanctified by secret prayer, be the regular work of each day of thy life.<sup>112</sup>

The above paragraph from “The Threefold Chord” represents a succinct distillation of “Guyonism”’s key principles, and Judson did not fail to apply these principles to daily routine. His children recalled hearing the sound of their father’s feet pacing across the floorboards for hours into the evening—this was his time of contemplative, fervent prayer: borrowing from Catholic devotional models, Adoniram practiced seven daily seasons of “secret prayer”(these designated prayer times occurring approximately every three hours) as well as two or three hours of “contemplative prayer.”<sup>113</sup> Francis Wayland, Judson’s first biographer, passively admitted the legitimacy of self-denial on the grounds that Jesus commanded his disciples to “deny thyself, and take up thy cross,” but Adoniram practiced rigorous self-discipline, resisting every object and activity that might encourage the love of self, to the point of giving away a large sum of his

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<sup>111</sup> Adoniram Judson, “The Threefold Chord,” in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 303, 305.

<sup>112</sup> Adoniram Judson, “The Threefold Chord,” in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 576.

<sup>113</sup> Adoniram Judson, “The Threefold Chord,” in Edward Judson, *Life of Adoniram Judson*, 572.

private savings.<sup>114</sup> This exemplifies the evangelical mark of Activism: Adoniram's mystical engagements produced the visible outcome of good works.

## Conclusion

All throughout his life Adoniram adopted aspects of Edwardsian, Baptist, Pietist, and mystical Christian expressions, and therefore none of these categories by themselves can adequately describe the mosaic of Judson's faith commitments. He was an ecumenical evangelical missionary. Conversionism, biblicism and activism were each uniquely formed by ecumenical influences. Despite the limitations in the sources from Adoniram, it is unquestionable that he remained ecumenically focused throughout his life. There is much more to be investigated regarding other early evangelical American Protestant missionaries, and regarding ecumenicalism, only the Pietists have lately received significant attention. Despite their prominence in the antebellum world, the lives of the Mrs. Judsons also remain largely unexplored in this respect. For now, while the mosaic of ecumenical influence in early American Protestant missions is explored, the term "evangelical" at least maintains its flexibility.

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<sup>114</sup> Francis Wayland, *Memoir*, vol. 1, 541. Wayland does not recommend that others model Judson's application of this principle. He goes on the defensive, attempting to rescue Judson's reputation from the accusations of asceticism.

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