

P. V. Thommy Upadesi (1881-1919)

Published by Thomas John Philip Nalloor

Thommy Upadeshi was born in a very poor family of the Kunnamkulam Mar Thoma Parish in 1881. After his basic education, he became a teacher. But after few years of teaching, he became a full time evangelist in the Mar Thoma church. Rev. C.M. Joseph, Vicar of the Kunnamkulam Parish encouraged him in his Gospel work. Titus II Metropolitan appointed him as evangelist in Trichur and Perumbavoor.

Even though he did not have any formal theological training, he was a walking encyclopedia of Bible. He became an exponent of the Bible by reading it many times. In due course of time, he learned Tamil. He was never rich financially; whatever he got he shared with the poor people for their upliftment.

He was a blessed Hymn writer. In 1905, he published a Hymn Book “Vishudha Geethangal”, comprising of 136 hymns. His language is simple and even illiterate people can enjoy them. The following hymns in our book are written by him: 3 (3), 11(10), 12(11), 30(28), 56(56), 61(61), 67(67), 70(70), 71(71), 73(73), 96(96), 130(111), 135(126), 145(136), 243(221), 247(225), 286(286), 295(281), 345(345), 351(351), 366(242), 368(251).

In 1919, there was an outbreak of cholera in Kunnamkulam and many people died. Thommy Upadesi volunteered to treat the patients and was eventually infected with cholera. He passed away on Wednesday, 10 July, 1919, at the age of 38.

Even though he died at a very young age, his hymns still live in the hearts of Malayali Christians irrespective of their group differences. His hymn (No 67) “Ennodullha nin Sarva nanmakalhhkayi njaan / Enthucheyyendu ninakkeshu para-ippolh”, is a great and popular hymn which can be sung at any occasion be it a marriage, birthday, worship time, send off meeting, house warming or funeral.

Another Hymn” Enthathi-shayame! Daivaththin sneham Ethrra-manoharame! athu..” is loved and even sung by non Christians.

