

## **T. J. Varkey Asan - Hymn writer & Evangelist**

**(1857-1931)**

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Varkey, son of Yohannan, was born in 1857, in Thekkeparampil house, Anjilithanam, a village near Mallappally. His maternal grandfather, Varkey Upadeshi, was a very popular evangelist and Varkey grew up under his strict Christian discipline. After his basic education, Varkey became a teacher at the age of 17 and people affectionately called him as Varkey Asan (teacher) In addition to Malayalam, he learned Sanskrit and Tamil.

Varkey Asan was born to a Jacobite family. Due to his earnest desire for the Gospel, he resigned from his teacher's job and became an evangelist of the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association. He worked in Northern Travancore, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Ceylon as an evangelist. He was a great singer and Hymn writer. His language and style of writing were very simple, enough to be comprehended by the illiterate people of his day.

For many years he gave leadership to the Maramon Convention Choir. In financial matters he was an exemplary evangelist. He was happy with the meager salary that he received from the Evangelistic Association. He was never after money or financial gains. He even donated the money he received from his family, for the Gospel work. He had complete confidence in his Heavenly father.

At the age of 70, he became a diabetic patient and on 27 September, 1931, he walked to glory to be with the Lord. Hymn Nos. 26, 38, 55, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 72, 164, 166, 167, 169, 184, 198, 369 and 373, in the 'Kristheeya Keerththanangal' are written by him.

