

PART IV.  
PIONEERS AMONG THE  
TELUGU TROPHIES

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PASTOR DAS ANTHRAVADY.

*By Rev. John Craig.*



D. Anthravady.

Das Anthravady was born in 1822 and spent his childhood at Masulipatam. When he was ten years old his

father was employed as clerk in charge of the Officers' Mess of a Madras regiment that was then in Burma. Later it was sent to Bengal, and while there his father went to Masulipatam on leave and had Anthravady's marriage celebrated. The young man saw many of the great cities of India while marching with the regiment from one station to another. They passed through Benares, Allahabad and Cawnpore. Although they were not caste Hindus he and his father bathed in the sacred rivers. After some years his father died, and Anthravady returned to Masulipatam. Just here it may be mentioned that some of his relatives lived at Dondapadu, a few miles from Gunnanapudi.

While with his father Anthravady had learned how to look after the Officers' Mess in a regiment. In 1848 he applied for and obtained this post in the 41st Madras Native Infantry, which was stationed at Berhampore. One day he found a Telugu tract in a shop, and this reminded him of Mr. Purushottam's tract on Caste which he had read some years previously. Later he found in the same shop other tracts and a Telugu Bible, which he read constantly. Wishing to learn how to pray he applied to the Baptist missionary for a prayer-book and the missionary sent him a Bible. Reading the Bible without the help of any teacher led to his conversion. A Christian officer having heard of this change in Anthravady called to see him, and the new believer showed him his head from which the sacred tuft of hair had been removed. Anthravady had to go to Vizagapatam on business, so this officer gave him a letter to Rev. J. Hay, who knew Telugu well, and he was received and baptized there. It seems strange that he did not apply to the Baptist missionary at Berhampore, where

he was living, but it may have been because the Baptist missionaries worked in Oriya and not in Telugu. After this the regiment was stationed in various places, and Mr. Anthravady was glad to receive instruction from missionaries and others whom he met.

In 1857 the regiment was transferred to Rangoon, and here he became acquainted with Major-General Bell, an earnest Christian, who helped him much by reading and explaining the Scriptures. Among other things he taught him about believers' baptism, but the most important result of this officer's instruction was the stimulus Mr. Anthravady received to work and bear witness for Christ in the regiment. He commenced to hold a Bible class for young people every night from 9 till 11. After a time three men were baptized and on other occasions twenty-two more. The Baptist missionaries examined and baptized them. Finally in March, 1860, Mr. Anthravady after much prayerful thought and study decided that he himself should be immersed according to the Master's command. In writing in 1870 about the beginning of his work he said, "After resolving to seek the conversion of my own relatives, the thought occurred to me that I might lead others to Christ. Then I commenced preaching to the drummers and sepoys in the regiment, and God has used me in the salvation of one hundred and twenty persons." The regiment was at Arcot from 1861 to '64, and at Madras from 1864 to '68. They used to have some missionary in sympathy with them come and baptize new converts and administer the Lord's Supper. But they found this inconvenient and decided to ordain Mr. Anthravady.

In 1868 the regiment was removed to Cuttack, and the church of thirty-two members enjoyed fellowship

with the English Baptist Mission. After Mr. Purushottam's arrival in December, 1870, he and Mr. Anthravady became warm friends. In 1872 Mr. Anthravady published a poetical work by Mr. Purushottam, called "The Gospel Trumpet". One thousand copies were printed and distributed in the Telugu country. In 1871 Mr. Chowdhari Appalanarasiah was baptized and went to Akulatampara, which was his native place, and preached the Gospel. As the result of his work Mr. Bhagavan Behara and Purushottam's brother's son believed and wished to be baptized. However, their relatives prevented them, and in 1873 they went to Cuttack and were baptized there in July.

On one occasion complaint was made to the Commanding Officer by the mother of a man who had been baptized, and Mr. Anthravady was summoned and told that he must choose between preaching and managing the Officers' Mess. He was given three days to decide; he and Mr. Purushottam were much in prayer together. When asked by the officer what decision he had come to, he replied, "As I told you before, Sir." When the officer told him to go elsewhere, he said, "All right, Sir, I shall take leave, good-bye." After he had gone a short distance the officer called him back and said, "Great is your faith as well as your zeal; do your duties as before".

In March, 1876, the regiment was transferred to Vizianagram, where it remained about two years, during which time the interests of our Mission were largely identified with those of the church in the regiment. Nine believers were baptized. Parlakimedi was occupied as a station by Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong in June, 1876, and two months later Messrs. Appalanarasiah and Bhagavan

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Behara of Akulatampara were taken as mission helpers. In June, 1877, Messrs. Purushottam and Anthravady visited Parlakimedi and Akulatampara, and the church at this village was formally placed under the care of the Canadian Baptist Mission. Early in 1878 the regiment was transferred to Toungoo in Burma, and Mr. Anthravady suffered from poor health there, and went to Madras on sick leave, about the middle of 1880. However, by the next March his health was much better, so he agreed to join the regiment for a time, and went with it to Quilon in Travancore. In December he became ill and died on the 9th. He had served the officers for thirty-three years, so they buried him with full military honors, the service being conducted by the Commanding Officer.