

## DOWN FROM THE AMAZON VALLEY

By Y. P. Ribeiro

I desire to render this testimony to our Saviour and Lord among the numerous readers of The Sunday School Times.

In January of 1904 at the age of eighteen, I was converted to God. A Baptist colporteur was the instrument used of God. As I walked on the beach one morning, he met me and handed me a tract—"Charles, or True Repentance." This tract led me to buy a Bible and in a few more days I was baptized.

It is of the Bible especially that I want to speak. The desire to drink of the things of God led me to learn English—seeing the poorness of our Portuguese Gospel literature. Today, after twenty years, I have read His blessed Word from cover to cover exactly seventy-five times. My daily rate of reading now is six portions of the "Once a Year" plan; that is, six times the whole Bible in the year. I read the Portuguese and English Bibles alternately; the same portion I read today in the Portuguese I read tomorrow in the English Bible.

For more than ten years I have been reading the Book of Psalms once a month, dividing it into thirty equal portions. My poor mind is too meager to help me recount the uplifting and consolation my soul has derived out of this really wonderful collection of divine poetry.

Besides this, I think I was led of God to attach especial attention to the book of Proverbs. For several years I have been reading daily one of its thirty-one chapters. I read the same chapter three times over, with the result that I can almost recite the entire book from the heart, in the Portuguese translation. Proverbs has been a fountain of untold blessings to my soul. It is the Wisdom of God (Christ) as applying to earthly affairs, and I am yet to find the trial, condition, or experience common to men not dealt with in this book. It has furnished me with many precious gems in dealing with sinners, backsliders, and saints; see the following verses for a sample: 1:10-16; 5:21; 10:15; 13-15; 14-12; 15:16-17; 16:2; 4-7; 18:10; 20:6; 24:10; 26:12; 28:13.

My habit of reading God's Book is so inveterate that more readily I would go without my morning meal than the Scriptural ration from the Word. Accordingly I have read it when travelling in canoe, in the open, and in the scorching tropical sun; with arms and legs within a sack on account of the mosquitoes; suffering from toothache or headache, or hearing the child crying from his bed of pain.

Two solemn lines of truth have struck me much in the reading of the Bible: (1) that man is perverse; (2) that God is good.

The unfathomable humility and yieldingness of the Lord Jesus in emptying himself of his glory in order to introduce into the Father's house sinners so perverse and obdurate, by the sacrifice of himself, is the most potent attraction to my soul and the wonder of my spiritual delight.

Besides the book I owe much to other books. Foremost among these in helping one to grasp the salient divisions of the

Word I place J. N. D.'s five volumes of "Synopsis." I divided the set so as to get through it in one year (eight pages a day), and after doing so four or five times, still use it much for consultation. Dr. Scofield's books have also a great blessing to me; and quite lately I have much enjoyed The Sunday School Times' standing for the Truth and its sound and illuminating exegesis. In the month and year of the War (August, 1914), having got married the year before, we began our permanent laboring for the Lord, just looking up to him to provide for our necessities; and being engaged in this ever since, we hope by God's grace to keep on until the arising of the Day-Star (2 Pet. 1:19).

"I change not," says Jehovah in Malachi 3:6. "The Scripture cannot be broken," is the verdict of Jehovah incarnate. We have proved the truth of this by an experience of twenty years. Here, at last, we can anchor out souls fast on the Rock of Ages.

Parintius, Brazil.

## SO NEAR HOME AND LOST.

An incident in the life of Dr. Wm. M. Taylor, a well known minister of the Gospel, set me to thinking of some folk in the days gone by, who missed Heaven, not because there had been no opportunities, but "they would not." But first, let me give you the incident. The Royal Charter had been around the world, and was at last homeward bound. She had reached Queenstown and then sailed for Liverpool. The message was telegraphed to Liverpool that she was almost home. Dr. Taylor was then pastor in that city, and the wife of the first mate was a member of his church. The Royal Charter never came to Liverpool. Men waited all night on the dock straining their eyes to get a sight of the vessel. The Lord Mayor was there, bands of music were there, and thousands of people were there to give her a welcome. But the Royal Charter never came in. She went down in the night with almost all on board. They came to Dr. Taylor and asked him, "Will you go and tell the wife of the first mate?" So he started off to tell her. As he laid his hand on the door bell, the door flew open wide, and a little girl sprang out, saying—"O Dr. Taylor, my papa is coming today!" The preacher said he felt like an executioner as he walked into the house. He found the table laid for breakfast and the wife of the mate said to him, as she stepped forward, "O, Dr. Taylor, this is indeed a privilege, and if you wait a little while you may sit at the table with us, for the Royal Charter comes in this morning, and my husband is coming home!" Dr. Taylor looked at her a moment, while he steadied himself holding on to a nearby chair, and then said, "Poor woman, your husband will never come home! The Royal Charter went down last night, and your husband is lost!" She threw up her hands, staggered for a moment, and then fell, and as she fell she cried, "O my God, so near home and lost!"

As I read of the incident my mind at once went back over my ministry, and I thought of men whom God had called, men who received their last call, when

the end was near at hand. In fact, I have often thought when I have been in meetings where the Holy Spirit was working so mightily, that He was giving some one his call.

I was in a meeting some time ago when I was impressed to hold on: the burden was on me. God was dealing with some soul, and it perhaps was the last time. I minded God, but no one came, and I had to dismiss the meeting. I went down to my study, and was putting on my coat when a man came to the door, and said, "Elder, if you had held on two minutes longer I would have come." The poor fellow died sometime after that, died without God, and I have thought that he was almost home, and went down in the night.

You remember that after Judas left the company of the disciples, and went out to bargain the betrayal of the Lord, there are three words—ominous words—recorded by the Holy Spirit. "It was night." Oh, the blackness of the night into which the soul goes when it betrays the Christ who died that men might be saved!

I recall another instance that took place in meeting where the Spirit, as He always is, was faithful. A young man under deep conviction, appealed to a sinner friend standing by his side, to go forward with him to the altar; but after a little thought, the answer was "No." A few weeks after that, at an early hour in the morning, I was about to sit down to breakfast when a lady came to the door and asked me to go and see her brother who was dying. I went with her, and, arriving at the house, was ushered into a room where a man lay dying. It was necessary to arouse him from a stupor before they could get his attention. They called him by name and said, "Here is the preacher. Do you know him?" The answer was incoherent. He soon went out into eternity. He was the young man who had asked his friend to go to the altar with him, only a few weeks before—so near home and lost!

A man for love of the pleasures of the world gave up his hope in Christ, loved this present world like Demas of old, reveled in its pleasures for six months, and then disease came, and death was at hand. And as he looked death in the face, he cried in agony of soul, "Oh, to think of it, so near home and lost! Within six months of home and lost!"

I was in a meeting in Maryland just this winter. The last night came, and as I preached that last sermon I felt a peculiar awe resting upon me as though I was preaching the funeral sermon of a lost soul. I even went so far to tell the congregation that I felt there was some one there who was in their last revival service. Brother T—, one of our preachers, went out in the congregation doing personal work, and among others he approached a man who was under conviction, but who said, "Not tonight, not tonight!" In a few days that man went away in his auto to do some business, came home, went to the feed house to prepare the feed for the stock, and when they went to hunt him up he had gone—no loved ones near, no friend at hand—he went out of this life to face Eternity with all its realities.

Oh, how men fight God these days! One

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