





4193.9.28

COLPORTAGE IN VIRGINIA.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

MR. J. CROSS, *Superintendent.*

1852.



COLPORTAGE IN VIRGINIA.

ANNUAL REPORT OF MR. J. CROSS, SUPERINTENDENT.

IN the commencement of this, my Seventh Annual Report, I would cheerfully and gratefully record the mercies of our common Lord, in sustaining the good cause in which we are engaged, and which we believe to be his own. An unusual increase of laborers, and consequent increase of business, has left me but little time for personal effort for the salvation of souls. On two or three occasions I spent a few days in continuous meetings, and at the request of pastors, exhorted occasionally, and distributed books and tracts. About thirty professed conversion at the different meetings. I have travelled during the year over 3,000 miles, and circulated tracts in Sunday-schools, churches, hotels, boats, and cars.

DONATIONS.

There are evidently more friends to the cause now in Virginia than at any former period, and the number is certainly on the increase. Notwithstanding commercial embarrassment, which has been seriously felt by all classes of our citizens, we have this year collected in donations, \$6,346 04, which is \$1,594 36 more than has been collected in any previous year. Collections by Rev. J. T. Hargrave, \$553 79; by A. H. Price, \$1,227 80; by Rev. W. Osborne, \$91 74; by C. R. Ross, \$355 48; and the remainder, except some small sums, by your superintendent.

STATISTICAL RESULTS OF COLPORTAGE.

We have to record twenty-three years and three months' labor performed. Books sold amount to \$8,387 01, or 33,548 volumes. Granted to the poor, \$1,964 30, or 11,785 volumes. Meetings addressed, 1,531, mostly by ministerial colporteurs. We have found 2,321 families destitute of all religious books except the Bible, and 1,063 even without that; of whom 530 were supplied by the aid of the Virginia Bible Society or its auxiliaries: 25,314 families, in all, have been visited, with most of whom religious conversation and prayer have been held. The number of those families who, by their own confession, never attended any place of worship, amounts to 1,562, and the number who hold the Romish

faith amount to 271. Sunday-schools aided by grants of books 41, many of which have been established through the instrumentality of colporteurs. Our sales this year have not increased in proportion to the increase of labor. Many of our men have confined their visits *entirely to the poor*. Sales on an average amount to 40 cents per family. In some counties not one half were able to buy a book worth ten cents. Nearly all the distributions have been from the standard works, Baxter, Alleine, Bunyan, Doddridge, James, Flavel, and the Sabbath and Temperance Manuals. These have been distributed especially to the poor. The severity of the winter curtailed both labor and sales. Several colporteurs have been sick, and one has gone to his rest.

FACTS FROM PASTORS.

I beg leave to state some facts furnished by ministers not connected with the cause, except as voluntary distributors.

Rev. N. C—— writes, "I was sent for to visit a gentleman who was in great distress of mind, and who had been for some time in bad health. Having visited the Warm Springs, he there heard a sermon on the rich man and Lazarus. Under this sermon he was awakened, and determined to go to his room and on his knees to beg for mercy. On his way he met with some friends; his mind was led off, and he succeeded in banishing religion from his thoughts. He had done so before, under similar circumstances; but this seemed to be the final decision. God, he believed, regarded it as such, and had left him to despair. He had no hope of being restored to health, no hope in Christ, and was fully aware of the doom of the sinner. In this distressing state of mind I found him. I spent many hours in vain endeavors to convince him of the willingness of Christ to save just such a sinner as he, but all seemed in vain. In the next room I had observed several books, and went in to see if something could not be found to suit his case. I found 'The Anxious Inquirer,' by James; turned down a leaf at the second chapter, requesting particular attention to it. He read the chapter marked, and then the whole book. On my return, he said that book had been the means of saving him from despair. After he had made a public profession of religion, he sent the book to his brother, a physician. It was the means of leading *him* to the Saviour, and he and his daughter united with the church at the same time. These gentlemen were both men of wealth and intelligence. The one has gone to his rest in heaven; the other still lives, and contributes liberally to the various benevolent objects of the day.

"I was afterwards sent for to visit Mrs. G——, who was in bad health, and in a very distressed state of mind. After having said every

thing that I thought adapted to her case, I left James' *Anxious Inquirer*, requesting her husband to read it to her. The result was, that both were led to Christ. Both these persons are since dead, and both gave good evidence that they died in the Lord.

"A few days ago an old man came to converse on the subject of religion. I asked him what it was that first led him to serious reflection. He reminded me that a year or two ago I had sent him a book. Previous to this, he had not thought seriously about his soul, and seldom attended church. He read the book, then commenced reading the Bible and attending church. On the last Sabbath, he and fourteen others united with the people of God. Since the beginning of the year 1850, 43 persons have joined the church, and I have reason to believe that the circulation of books and tracts has been prominent among the means which God has blessed."

Rev. H. J. R.— writes me, "Since I have been engaged in distributing the publications of the American Tract Society, enough has appeared to convince me of their value as a means of bringing souls to Christ, and establishing Christians in the faith. I sold a lady the volume, '*Religion and Eternal Life.*' It was the means of her conversion. She is now a consistent member of my church. I sold '*Pike's Persuatives*' to a young man: he became awakened under the reading of it, gave his heart to God, united with the church, and is a useful member. I closed a meeting recently in one of my congregations, during which quite a number gave themselves to God. At the close, however, there was a young man who had not found the Saviour, though he had been an earnest inquirer for some time. James' *Anxious Inquirer* was recommended to him. He read the book, found his case described exactly, believed in Jesus to the saving of his soul, and now goes on his way rejoicing. I persuaded a young lady to buy the '*Guide to Young Disciples.*' A short time since, she told me that she had been peculiarly exposed to temptation, but that book had met her case, and taught her the best means of avoiding it. Many more instances of a similar character I could relate, which have come under my own observation, of the great value of those books, which have been instrumental in the conversion of many now in heaven, and of others who, I trust, are on the way."

Rev. J. P. L.— writes, "I have placed more or less of the books you sent me in every family in my charge. The people love them; they are exerting a silent, but potent influence. Last November we enjoyed a precious revival, and 44 were gathered into the church. I am deeply impressed with the value of those publications, and have, at my own expense, given to those who were unable or unwilling to purchase at least

one fourth of all the books sent me by the Society. This, to a *poor* minister, is a heavy tax; but I know of no way in which charity can be better bestowed, and were my ability equal to my wishes, I would give thousands to scatter these leaves from the tree of life among the destitute."

Rev. W. S. M'C— writes, "I expect to see great results from the influence of your Society's publications. While travelling, last year, through Virginia and Tennessee, I rarely stopped at a house where I did not find a book or tract left by the colporteur. Those beautiful books, like rills of living water, are gliding silently down the mountain sides and through the valleys, blessing and fertilizing human hearts, as the stream fertilizes the arid soil. They have found their way into the most obscure communities, and into the meanest hovels, where books are things almost to be wondered at, so uncommon is their appearance."

These testimonials are from men holding no commission under your board, and some of them not even distributors of our books. Many more might be added, did the limits of a report permit.

EXTRACTS FROM COLPORTEUR REPORTS.

The following extracts are from the reports of colporteurs—men who know whereof they affirm. They are carefully instructed to make no exaggerated statements; and to prevent the least appearance of this, many striking and interesting facts are omitted.

Mr. B— states, "I sold the 'Pilgrim's Progress' to a very intemperate man. So impressed was he with some parts of it that he could not sleep. Those impressions finally resulted in his conversion. He is now a sober man, a diligent student of the Bible, and a consistent member of the church. A like blessing has attended the perusal of many of the books of the Society. About 400 have been added to the churches on my field of labor during the past year, chiefly by a blessing on pastoral labor."

Mr. R— writes, "Some months since, I passed the night with a kind Christian gentleman, who had never commenced family worship. I conversed with him on its importance, and asked him to read the piece in the Messenger, entitled, 'Forty Years' Experience in Family Worship.' I have been with him since, and am happy to know that family worship is now regularly kept up.

"Rev. J. M'M— told me that the reading of the memoirs of Sumnerfield had done him more good than any book he had ever read. Rev. A. P. L— said to me a short time since, 'I regard James' Anxious Inquirer as my assistant preacher. At one time, during a season of awakening, and having but one copy, I loaned it to five persons, I believe to their great profit. All have since professed conversion.' The same

gentleman assured me that he knew of twenty conversions from the reading of the same book, copies of which he had circulated. A man who resides in a mountainous part of my field, told me of three persons of his acquaintance who were led to the Saviour by reading 'Baxter's Call,' which had been placed in his hands by a colporteur."

Mr. S—— writes, "The Spirit of the Lord has been truly poured out upon this region during the past year. Over 300 profess to have passed from death unto life. I have organized five Sunday-schools and three Bible-classes. In conversation with one of the ministers respecting the means which had been instrumental in those revivals, he expressed his opinion that a rich blessing had attended the circulation of the Society's books and tracts. An elder in another church made a similar remark. A delightful state of feeling existed in the congregation. Sinners were inquiring anxiously the way to Zion, and Christians were praying and laboring. Said he, 'Your books have aided in this work; they have been well read among our people, and are producing their legitimate fruits.'"

Mr. R—— writes, "I have spent eight months in C—— county; visited 562 families, found 64 without any religious books, and 34 without the Bible. I have been greatly encouraged in my labors by hearing the expression of Christians as to the profit they have derived from the reading of your books, and my poor heart has caught the fire. I feel as if I never could give up so glorious a work—one that is stirring Christians up to a more faithful discharge of duty.

"I sold a copy of the 'Rise and Progress' to a lady. On my next visit she said, with a beaming countenance, 'What a book is that! How full of glorious truths! My dear husband and I have read it together, and talked about it until we got so happy that we both came near shouting. I would not part with it for ten dollars. You ought to press every family you visit to buy it.' Such opinions of the books are very common.

"A physician, not a professor of religion, said, 'I have watched your labors with some interest, and often, in my professional duties, have followed you from house to house, and have seen plainly the good influence the Society's work has upon the people. I consider that it is a great work.'

"A pious man remarked to me, that from what had come under his notice, and what he had learned from others, the tract efforts were doing an immense amount of good, and he believed they would prove the fore-runners of a glorious revival of religion in the county. I try to visit all the families as I go, but find most comfort among the poor. Often do I see the tears of gratitude and joy start to the eye on the gift of a book. Truly, 'it is more blessed to give, than to receive.'"

Mr. M. W—— writes, "I have labored the past year in G——, P——, and M—— counties. In all these there have been extensive revivals of religion. It is generally believed that the books your Society has circulated have been the means, under God, of bringing many souls to Jesus. I sold Baxter and Alleine, three years ago, to a very aged Universalist. I saw him again a few days since; he said he had read all the books he could find on the subject of the sinner's return to God, and he considered Baxter's Call the best. He hopes now that he can see how God can be just, and the justifier of all that believe in his Son.

"A gentleman, a member of the Methodist church, told me a few days ago, that he had not till lately seen the good the books were doing. He believed the Tract Society was exerting a great influence on the country and on the world. He gave me a dollar to pay for six copies of the 'Messenger,' and said he was going to try and get all his neighbors to take it.

"I was much struck with the conduct of a little boy 11 years old, who came to my house lately. On being asked his errand, he said he wanted some books. 'But,' said he, with a sad face, 'sir, I have no money to buy books with; I've got some nice 'coon-skins.' I could not withstand the little fellow's pleading look, and gave him some small books. He went off quite happy with his new treasure."

Mr. P—— writes, "I have been kindly received and aided, by both ministers and people, on my field. Some have bought freely the smaller publications to circulate among the poor in their neighborhoods, not being willing to wait till my regular visits there should begin. In general, your books are received with joy, by both young and old. I have often found them ten or fifteen miles from where they were sold. An old woman came and asked for the 'Dream-book,' like the one I sold to her neighbor. 'A dream that some man dreamed, and wrote about it in a book; there were many pictures in it, and a story of a wonderful fight.' The only copy on hand of Bunyan's wonderful work was produced and sold. May it do the old lady much good. I could relate many facts showing the importance of our work among the destitute, but forbear. No one knows or can imagine the state of things that exists on this field, unless he could travel with us from house to house, and see what our eyes see, and hear what our ears hear—so much wealth united with entire mental poverty, such a demand for light, and yet so much darkness. This is a dark picture, but it does not come up to the reality."

Mr. S—— writes, "I placed Dr. Plumer's 'Bible True' in the hands of a sick man, who was known to be an infidel. He read it carefully, and the blessing of God attended the reading of it. He was thereby

brought to sincere repentance, became, in all human judgment, a child of God, under the ministrations of this silent teacher, and has since died in the triumphs of faith."

Rev. Mr. O—— writes, "I visited a family consisting of a widow and six children, four of whom could read. I spread out my books on the table; all gathered round with the greatest interest. The mother observed with tears in her eyes, that she would like to get a book apiece for those who could read, but she had no money. She had hard work to get them bread and clothes. I told them to select some books. The little girl selected 'Grace Harriett;' the three boys took 'Child at Home,' 'Little Henry,' and 'Tales about the Heathen.' 'Now,' said the mother, 'how will you be able to pay for those pretty books?' One boy said he had three cents, another said he had two, and the third none. The little girl had none, but she would knit a pair of socks to pay for hers. The boys said, 'We will catch old hares to pay for all the books. Chesterfield old hares sell better in the Richmond market than Hanover old hares, because they are larger and fatter.' I told them to receive the books as a grant from the American Tract Society. I give the above merely to afford you an idea of the interest manifested by the youth and children in the books; they are more than pleased, they are delighted with them. I could furnish facts of a similar character sufficient to fill a volume. I am personally acquainted with some who have been brought to Christ through the instrumentality of Baxter's Call, Pilgrim's Progress, and the Dairyman's Daughter, and with others who are impressed and deeply serious. There is a manifest improvement in the moral character of the people as well as in their secular pursuits."

Mr. A. J. W—— writes, "There is a manifest improvement in the moral condition of the people in my field of labor, which is both a large and a destitute one. There is a growing regard to the education of the young, and more regard on the part of both old and young for God and his law. New schools and meeting-houses are being built, and new schools and churches are appearing in waste places. During no year since I have been laboring, have I seen such evidences of the fact that God is signally blessing the dissemination of the Society's publications. In the past year I have aided five Sunday-schools, two of which I succeeded in starting anew, they having ceased for the want of a library; three more are to be commenced this spring.

"The Tract Primer is eagerly sought and highly prized. The Child's Paper, so far, is hailed with delight. The books are not only among the people and read, but they are doing good. I am quite safe in stating that there have been 200 hopeful conversions on my field during the year.

Your publications, directly or indirectly, have been blessed of God in promoting this work.

"I received a line the other day from an old friend, requesting me to visit his remote settlement where, some 15 months since, I had distributed books and tracts, and stating that the aspect of things was quite changed there. Scarcely one could be found in the entire settlement who had not embraced religion. 'Even the children,' he says, 'can talk of nothing but religion. The books you circulated here were the means of this revival.' The settlement referred to was one of the most wicked and hardened places that I was ever in.

"A few weeks ago I was hailed by a man on the road: said he, 'I want Baxter's Call and Beecher's *Thunderbolt*.' I replied, 'I have Baxter, but not the other.' 'Oh,' said he, 'I want both. There's J. T—— has quit swearing and hunting on Sundays, and there's G. P—— has quit drinking liquor; and they say it's all through the reading of those two books; and I want to get them, and read them too, and then lay them by for my children.' The matter was explained. Beecher 'On Intemperance' proved to be the book wanted; he got both, and I went on my way."

Rev. Mr. P—— writes, "Many of the families visited the past year have but few opportunities of going to church. I often heard the remark among them, that unless they could get religious books to read, their opportunity for religious instruction was small. Such instances are not rare in these mountains. Those are the places for the colporteur to seek out and explore. What better expedient can be adopted in a country like this, where there are no bookstores and few means of grace? I have met with several families who were destitute of the Bible, but not without the conviction of the necessity of religious instruction. A colporteur of another institution has been on the same field with me. We have had no difficulty; each finds he has enough to do, and both together cannot supply the destitution as fully as it ought to be done. This is a great field of usefulness for a colporteur."

Rev. Mr. H—— writes, "I have found families destitute of all religious books, and without the precious Bible; and joyfully have they received it, thanking me again and again for calling to converse and pray with them, and shedding tears of joy and gratitude for this *one* religious privilege. The ignorance and destitution is appalling in our state, but the tide of benevolence is increasing. True, many are ignorant because they make no effort to acquire knowledge. Many are not able to purchase books, or to send their children to school. Many have no access to bookstores; many would attend church, but they are too

old, feeble, or have no way of getting there. But this glorious enterprise is opening channels through which the waters of life are flowing to these destitute; and blessed be God, they are making them to live, for they are the waters of salvation."

Rev. Mr. B— writes, "I have toiled on through the year without much aid from professing Christians, endeavoring to adapt my efforts to the ever varied cases of families and individuals. In the low state of religion, destitution of religious books, unwillingness to purchase or read them, and the consequent ignorance and prejudice, neglect of family worship, of parental duties, of Sabbath-schools and prayer-meetings, is common. I have met the novel-reader, moralist, backslider, the infidel, Universalist, the swearer, gambler, and drunkard. My visits have been chiefly confined to the middle classes and the poor; they have generally but scanty means of grace. Their children are growing up immoral and without restraint. Those parents need knowledge to aid them, they need suitable books. In such places there is little or no preaching. A visit from a minister or pious Christian is rare. Last year I visited a neighborhood consisting of 40 souls, and not a professor of religion among them; poor, ignorant, vicious, cast off from society; many of them had never seen a preacher—so they are described in my last annual report. Now this degraded community attend church, and their children the Sunday-school. I visited a man who lives within three miles of a church, where there is preaching twice a month, who never was in the church, and who had never read the Bible. I pray God the books he bought, and the tracts presented, and the words I spoke, may be blessed to his soul.

"Religious reading is increasing; your books are read and read, and then loaned. Children pay great attention, I find, to the 'Tracts for Children.' When they read one they want another, and then a book. Some who had previously but little taste for reading, have become deeply interested. I know a little girl of five years old who can repeat the Tract Primer from beginning to end, and her brothers, who cannot read, can do the same. What an influence for good is here set in motion!"

Mr. B— writes, "I have found great destitution of the Bible on my field of labor. In 31 days I found 41 families destitute of the word of God. Travelling down a rough creek five miles, I found nine families who were entirely destitute. Passing on thence, I aided in organizing a Sabbath-school, the first ever known in those parts; a brother was recommending to me a teacher for the school, and expressed a wish that I could hear him pray, when the person mentioned rode up with a spinning-wheel on his shoulder; as it was the Sabbath, I was shocked to think of such a specimen of piety. I furnished a man about 50 years

of age with the first Bible he ever owned. Besides the large number which I have reported as entirely destitute of religious books, there are many whom I could not include, because they happened to have one or two small books lying about in the smoke and dust, as though they had not been moved for months. The nearest bookstore is fifty miles from me.

"Ignorance prevails to an alarming extent; many whole families cannot read a word. But I take pleasure in stating, that on some parts of my field there is a manifest improvement in the education of the young. Schools are more numerous and better attended, and I am sure the rising generation will be much better educated than the present. Sabbath-schools are multiplying, and we expect soon to have one organized in a place which was one of the lowest abodes of ignorance and vice, and where, until lately, such a thing was never thought of. I have aided six Sunday-schools, giving in one case half, and in the others two-fifths of the amount of their libraries. There is a great deal of destitution. I preached in one case to a congregation in which I could find only three persons who could read.

"An old lady said she owed her conversion, under God, to Doddridge's Rise and Progress. A good brother told me he would not be without Baxter and Doddridge for ten dollars. Another said, 'I took Baxter's Call into a destitute region, and could with difficulty keep it.' He said he would have left the book among them, but did not know how he could do without it. Another said, 'Next to the Bible, the Saints' Rest is the best book.' A lawyer who carries Flavel's Fountain of Life with him as his daily companion, said to me, 'You are engaged in a noble work.' A lady said Alleine's Alarm was the means of her conversion. Nearly two years ago, I gave the Sabbath Manual to a man who hunted all day on Sundays: he told me lately that the book had persuaded him to quit that practice, and all his other evil practices but one. I told him I would give him a book that would be likely to induce him to forsake *that*, and gave him Baxter's Call. He said he had not been to meeting for two years: I am anxious to hear the result. I stopped one day at a house; found no one at home; left a Bible—they had none—and some small books and tracts. This man and his wife have since made a profession of religion. Multiplied cases of this kind might be given, showing that the blessing of God is evidently resting on the distribution of your books. There have been some glorious revivals on my field the past year, about 500 have joined the different churches. The cause of temperance has greatly triumphed in some places, in others it is declining."

Mr. A. H. P—— mentions, among other interesting incidents, the conversion of a brother through the instrumentality of James' Anxious Inquirer. Said he, "I became much alarmed in regard to my soul. After several days' distress I made known my feelings to mother. She gave me James' Anxious Inquirer and a Bible, and told me to go to my room. I did so; and had not read half through James' Anxious Inquirer, when all my refuges were swept away. I trusted my soul to Christ, and found peace in believing. I hurried to meet the family to tell them I had found the Saviour. We had a happy time in praising God for this the richest of all his benefits." This is the second brother who, by the blessing of God upon James' Anxious Inquirer, has apprehended Christ by faith. Both these copies of the Anxious Inquirer were circulated by our colporteurs.

Another says, "During the past year I have acted as a colporteur in Rockbridge and Augusta counties, and in the city of Norfolk. I have been in active service seven months, have visited 1,263 families, and distributed, by sales and grants, volumes and tracts to the amount of \$423 72."

Rev. Mr. W—— writes, "The counties of R—— and A—— enjoy great privileges, yet in each there is much destitution and ignorance. On the mountain sides, in the valleys, and alas, too often within a short distance of the sanctuary, are families to be found who habitually neglect the worship of the only true God. The Roman-catholics who labor on the works of internal improvement in these counties, are in a deplorable condition for both worlds. In their wretched shanties I have found poverty, ignorance, and vice all combined, and thus they drag on their lives without one ray of light to guide them to heaven, save from a drunken priest.

"As for the city of ——, I have often wished, since I have been here, that every place enjoyed the same privileges. Besides excellent stated preaching, with lectures and prayer-meetings, there are many gratuitous tract distributors. Yet, there is work left undone, for not more than one-third of the population attend any evangelical church. The *Roman-catholic* population here are in a better condition than in any place where I have heretofore been. All of the 43 families which I have visited have Bibles, chiefly of the Douay translation, and I found that Bunyan had gone into some of their houses and told his wonderful dreams. The number of *Jews* is increasing. Some are very bigoted. I was surprised to find how very ignorant they were, even in regard to the Old Testament, and some are rapidly approaching infidelity.

"One day as I was riding up a valley between two mountains, I saw

some men working on the road. Some books and tracts were sold and granted; among others, a man purchased Alleine's Alarm. Some weeks after, as I was riding down a mountain path, I passed a log-house, at the door of which I saw a young woman. I urged her to prepare to meet her God. On my asking if she had any religious books, she said, 'We have some Alarms in the house.' By this she meant Alleine, and a tract called 'The Lost Soul,' which her father had got from me on the road. I urged her to read the book carefully, gave her a couple of tracts, and rode on. Several weeks after, on calling again, I found nearly the whole of the family at home, and in an interesting state of mind. The daughter with whom I had the former conversation had become a professor of religion. The mother told me that she had read Alleine through once, and that she was going through it a second time. Her son purchased a valuable stock of books. After praying with them, I rode off with a heart full of gratitude.

"At one house, a woman told me that she had long wished for just such books, for she had nothing besides her Bible to read on the Sabbath. She bought Pilgrim's Progress and Alleine.

"A leading Universalist in the valley bought Alleine's Alarm, and his neighbor, with whom he had had controversies on the subject, purchased M. H. Smith's work '*to head him with.*' Not long afterwards, I heard that he had cast aside all his Universalist books and papers, and commenced a life of prayer.

"One day I entered a Roman-catholic shanty by the roadside; there I found an old woman, a young man, and a little boy. The boy purchased with three coppers Watts' Catechism, and walked about exulting over his purchase. The young man said he had long wished to have a Bible, and seemed as if he could not thank me too much when I gave him one. His very eyes spoke gratitude. The old woman insisted on my eating some *aggs* and *praties*, assuring me I was *walcome*, and when I left them it was with '*Gude luke to ye, Captain.*' Many of the Catholic laborers, however, refused to receive Bibles, but almost in every instance accepted tracts. Some purchased Bibles and other good books. Many of them received them as grants, and permitted me to talk and pray with them.

"I went into the *hut* of a notoriously bad character. His dwelling was built of poles and covered with clapboards; it had no doors, but two holes to go in and out of. I preached as well as I could to him, his wife, and two daughters. They seemed to feel, and purchased Pike's Persuasives and Alleine.

"One day I went on board a vessel where I found only one sailor.

I went with him into the cabin, and spoke to him of his home and friends; in this way a chord was touched in his heart. He had not written to his pious mother for six years, and he knew not whether his friends were alive or dead. He showed me a neat Bible that a lady of Portland had given him. I turned to the psalm in regard to those who 'go down into the sea in ships.' 'It is beautiful,' he said, and turned down the leaf. I asked him if he ever prayed. He admitted he did not. After urging this duty upon him, he purchased 'The Young Man from Home,' and I left him alone with his God.

"Pages might be filled with similar instances. During the past year I have sold volumes to Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Romanists, Christians and infidels, bond and free, black and white, the careless, the inquirer, the sailor, the hunter, the liquor-seller, the profligate, and the abandoned outcast. Even at this time I have my mind's eye on three characters, an English family with Baxter's Call, a French Papist with the same in French, and a German Jew with the same work in German."

A young man finding the tract "On Grieving the Spirit," in the pew where he sat, took it home and read it. Next morning he came to the meeting as an inquirer. He said that tract just met his case, and that he feared he had grieved the Spirit. Before the meetings closed, however, he professed to have found Christ precious. Many others also testified to the benefit derived from the reading of your publications in making and deepening serious impressions. An intelligent and highly educated gentleman to whom I gave the Anxious Inquirer, said to me a few days after, "That book has answered a question to which I have been seeking an answer for years. An important question too, namely, What is faith in Jesus Christ?" As far as human judgment can go, he is now a changed man.

In one day I met two persons who gave good evidence of being Christians, through the reading of books left by a colporteur more than a year ago. They had not been in the habit of going to church at all until they got the books. No doubt if I were to go over this country I should find many such.

In conclusion, you will see, that although numerous revivals are reported in connection with our labors, we do not pretend to determine how far the work of colportage has been instrumental, with God's blessing, in promoting them.

We enter upon the coming year with encouraging prospects of usefulness. Having between 40 and 50 colporteurs in commission, most of them men of energy and perseverance, and expecting to employ—as we

always do through the summer—several students from the different institutions, to labor in connection with us, we hope to be able to explore and supply many of the destitute regions of our state, places where the voice of the living preacher is not often heard; and there are many such, which have never yet been visited by a colporteur. May we not hope that the simple facts related in this report will appeal to the hearts of the benevolent?

As I am now located in the city of Richmond, any persons wishing to send donations by mail, will please direct to me here. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

J. CROSS, *Superintendent of*

Colportage in Virginia.

RICHMOND, April 1, 1852.

STATISTICS OF COLPORTAGE IN VIRGINIA FOR SEVEN YEARS.

Years of Colporteur labor performed, 98; families visited, 99,314; number of volumes sold, 179,530, amounting to \$42,382; volumes distributed gratuitously among the poor, 63,195, amounting to \$10,550; meetings held or addressed, 6,922; families destitute of all religious books except the Bible, 13,806; and 7,392 families destitute of the Bible, 5,577 of whom were supplied. The number of families habitually neglecting evangelical preaching, was 8,382.

10 00 67

