

“HOME MISSIONS AT THE SOUTH.”

By Dr. Henry Morehouse

Dr. Winkler's article, elsewhere in this number, on "Home Missions at the South," contains some statements very complimentary, to the American Baptist Home Mission Society. But our good brother is still disturbed, as he was at the Southern Convention, at the aggressiveness of the Society! "The Northern Baptists are invading the territory of the Southern Baptist Convention!" "The facts prove beyond question that the Southern Baptist Convention is being supplanted in its own domain!" "This intrusion is excused by Dr. Morehouse!" At any rate the Society are on the ground and they intend to stay!"

Now, isn't this an alarming state of things? Invasion! Intrusion! Supplanting! There to stay! What answer have we to make? To the last charge we plead guilty; *we are there to STAY*. The Southwestern District established last year is one of the settled things. Dr. Marston, whose services have been so satisfactory, has been appointed for the coming year. *We are there to stay*. The appointment of Dr. Gregory to the oversight of the Society's educational work in the South means, as respects that field, we are there to *stay*, until the Society's services shall no longer be needed in the uplifting of the needy millions for whom the work has been conducted the last twenty years. The Society will undoubtedly stay in this field at least for the next generation. Yes, the charge is true. What then? Simply this: Let us gracefully accept the inevitable and dwell together as brethren.

But what of this "invasion," "intrusion," "supplanting?" Our distinguished brother says this is "excused" by the Secretary of the Society. The word is not a fortunate one. We have offered no "excuse"—have none to offer. We have given *reasons* for the establishment of the Southwestern District. Reasons are one thing, excuses are another. In addition to what has been said, we have merely this to add, viz.: That aside from aid extended from the Church Edifice fund, the Society has expended in that district, mainly for missionary work, \$180,000. If any other general Missionary Society of American Baptists has done more for that region, and is therefore more entitled to the returns from that field for missionary work in adjacent regions beyond, let them show the figures.

As to "invasion," "intrusion," etc., we might truly say we are there by *invitation* of Conventions which have merely exercised their Convention State rights, as it has pleased them. We have not heard a lisp from the brethren with whom we are cooperating, that they regard us as invaders, but rather as fellow helpers to the truth. "Intrusion?" We remember that this word was used by some about seventeen years ago, after the Society entered upon its work for the Freedmen; but thousands of our beloved brethren at the South and tens of thousands of the colored people today bless the Society for its loving intrusion, and would shudder at the thought of having its grand work undone, or of its withdrawal now from that work. "Blessings on the American Baptist Home Mission Society," say brethren in the South, who by word and deed are cooperating with us in various departments of Christian service, and who have no sympathy, as they assure us, with this cry of "invasion." But, more than this.

The Society is there and anywhere else on this continent by *right* of its original

and unchanged Constitution, which names NORTH AMERICA as its field of operations; is there by the right which is derived from the law of love that requires the strong to respond to the calls of the needy, instead of treating them as Samaritans with whom we can have no dealings, and leaving them to perish; is there by the right and in keeping with the spirit of the new era of our nation when the old things have passed away, and all things have become new, when sectional lines and sectional feelings are being obliterated, and the spirit of fraternity is binding in its blessed bonds the Baptist brotherhood as well as the citizens of this land.

Ours is not the “Northern Society,” it is the AMERICAN Society; its work prosecuted in every State and Territory, its receipts coming from all parts of the country: its aim being not to make conquests of domain for the sake of the Society, but to make gracious conquests for Christ. And to this work—in the closing words of the Annual Report—we summon and welcome with us all who with us believe that what should be done we must attempt to do.