

commodious and substantial church, Presbyterian element enough in the community to form a good and self-supporting congregation, and room only for the labors of one faithful and devoted pastor. Instead of this, there are two or four pastors, devoted to utter discouragement and slow starvation; two or four churches overwhelmed with debt; and two or four congregations of each a handful of people, who, by the force of circumstances, are learning a gospel of bigotry, envy, and jealousy. Besides these, there are two or four Boards of Domestic Missions watching anxiously from a distance, overburdened with cares, and calling earnestly upon their several denominations for help to sustain the church of Christ in that place, which cannot sustain itself because it is infinitesimally subdivided.

"Nor is this the case only in country villages and small towns. In our large cities also you will find, for instance, an Old School Presbyterian Church on one block, and a Scotch Church on the next, and a Reformed Dutch church on the third, all struggling for existence, all heavily in debt, and all groaning on the verge of extinction, or retaining the breath of life by factitious and questionable expedients. And yet they all are built in honor of, and for the service of the same Saviour, teach the same doctrines, are pledged to the same form of sound words, and maintain the same identical order in God's house. One church, one pastor, and one congregation is all that there is room for on the ground where they are all attempting to stand. And this, while the voice of the Master is still ringing through the courts of Zion to say, 'Go ye into all the world,' and while the church is still complaining for want of men and means! All this time the destitute and the perishing from every side are calling aloud to the church with an exceeding great and bitter cry, 'Come over and help us; but the only answer seems to be, 'Wait until we have crowded our brethren out of this place, and perhaps they will then come to you.' Are these several denominations primarily churches of Christ, or primarily rivals of each other? They evidently are both; but which is their first and highest vocation? Is there no field for them except the field which somebody else is likely to occupy? Is this the harmony and unity of the body of Christ? Brethren, can we see these things, and then dare to lift our hands to our Master, while we continue with divided counsels?"

The writer then proposes a plan for a Federation of the Presbyterian Churches, as follows:—

"In regard to the details of government, customs, usages, &c., we would leave everything just as it is. Each denomination should maintain, as it now does, its ecclesi-

astical assemblies and church courts; should retain its supreme authority over its existing colleges and theological seminaries, and should hold possession of its endowments and all vested funds, with unrestricted right to apply them according to their original design. Each denomination should continue to regulate its own order of worship without interference, and have the right to decide finally upon all applications for individual and ministerial communion. Each denomination should retain its distinctive name and title at its own pleasure, and so much of its own constitution as relates to its internal affairs, and does not conflict with the terms of union.

"We would erect a Synodical Assembly, composed of an equal number of delegates from each of the constituent denominations, which should have a supreme federal authority in all matters which should be submitted to it according to the Constitution of the Union. The Boards or Committees of Domestic and Foreign Missions, of Education, of Publication, of Church Building, &c., (composed also of members from each of the constituent denominations,) should be directly responsible to this Synodical Assembly, and subject to its authority.—These Boards, directed by just and equitable constitutions, would be able to prevent all clashing of denominational interests, and direct the whole force of the United Presbyterian Church where it may be most effectual in the service of our Master, Jesus."

This plan may be found impracticable; but the Lord will in due time lead to the proper and practicable plan if His people earnestly seek direction from Him. For our own part, we regard the Union movements which now so largely engage the attention of the Presbyterian Churches throughout the wide world as a sure sign that Christ has a great work for us to do. As the Captain of our Salvation He is rallying His forces, closing the breaches and breaks in our ranks and preparing us for the mighty conflict against the powers of evil and darkness.

THE WORK OF GOD IN RUSSIA.

There is no nation in Europe of which we know less than we do of Russia. Cold, mighty, tyrannical, despotic, our notions of its people and its institutions are anything but pleasant. As the south wind loosens the fetters of winter, so has the power of truth and of God's Spirit been lately breaking up the long dreary winter of Russian