

THE following appeared in the New Brunswick "Church Witness," as addressed to Churchmen there at this time when it is proposed to establish a Synod in that diocese. Its utility may be felt here, although we are not now commencing the movement:—

### SYNODS AND THEIR UTILITY:

The following answers to questions which may be asked may assist some persons who have heard of a Synod, but neither know what it is, nor have formed any clear opinion as to its utility:

1. *What is a Synod?* It is an assembly either of bishops, or of bishops and other clergy, or of bishops, clergy and laymen, called to consider matters which relate to the welfare of the Church.

2. *Have we any precedent or direction in Holy Scripture for forming a Synod?* We find a precedent in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15. A great question arose at that time, about which the Church was much divided. It was whether all the rites of Mosaic law were to be imposed on Gentile Christians. The Apostles and Elders first came together to consider the matter. There was much discussion. But in a council, at which it is nearly certain the laity were present; though what part they took in it is not told us, a decree was proposed by St. James the Bishop of Jerusalem, and accepted by the whole Church, which settled the question.

3. *Were there any other Synods held in primitive times?* A great many; both Synods of the particular diocese, and of the province, or patriarchate, of which each diocese formed a part. To a council thus assembled we owe the earliest creed, called the Nicene, in our Prayer-books. This grand council was called by the Emperor Constantine, and his decrees related chiefly to the great fundamental article of faith, the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ. On that and many other occasions only the bishops and clergy gave what is called a definite sentence.

4. *Has our Mother Church in England any Synod?* Yes; it is called Convocation. It meets every year, by the Queen's license, and it consists of two houses, the upper house consisting of bishops, the lower of the representatives of the clergy. It is also divided into two branches, the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury and the Convocation of the Province of York.

5. *What part did Convocation take in the Preparation and Revision of our Prayer-book?* A very important part. The whole book was submitted to them for approval at its last revision in 1662; after they had approved it, it was then submitted to Parliament, and finally it received the consent of the Sovereign, and thus became part of the statute law of England. All Churchmen in the mother country are, or profess to be, bound by it, though the laity do not subscribe to it as the clergy who are teachers are called upon to do.

6. *Are we bound by the Prayer-book in the same manner, and to the same extent, as our brethren at home are bound?* Morally we are, because we all profess to be members of the Church of England; but whether legally, admits of grave question. The highest law court in England has lately decided that "the United Church of England and Ireland is not a part of the Constitution in any colonial settlement, nor can its authorities or those who have office in it claim to be recognized by the law of the colony, otherwise than as the members of a voluntary association."

The decision seems to render our position as Churchmen less definite, and more uncertain than most of us have supposed it to be. The English law scarcely recognizes us as members of the Church established in England. *Morally*, the bishops,