

principles of the church into which they have been baptized. If any one is gifted with the faculty of music, how better engaged could he or she be than in devoting that talent to God's service, and promoting the efficiency of the church choir! What cause more noble is there than in advocating that of missions, and collecting subscriptions for the fund of the particular diocese in which they live, and by means of which they enjoy all the privileges of church ministrations! And is there not some Dorcas Society or other institution in the parish for providing for the poor to which help could be given? Or cannot assistance be given in decorating the church at proper seasons, or in soothing the pillow of the sick? These and many other modes of serving the church are open to all. By their means a living reality, an earnest devotedness to Her interest can be exhibited, and instead of a cold, indifferent feeling, we should see a spirit of warmth and enthusiasm amid our congregations, the hands of the clergy would be strengthened by the ministrations of a faithful Laity, and the true churchman and churchwoman would not ask the question, "How can I serve the church?" but as days succeed to days their hearts would inquire, "How can I serve Her more?"

2. *External influence* will do a great part in promoting the church's good. Into how many phases of society are we thrown! Among how many different temperaments of professing Christians do we often find ourselves, each with its own peculiar theory of religion, each believing in its own dogma, and all impressed with the soundness and correctness of their own creed. It is then that churchmen have work to do; not by violently assailing their opponents, not by losing their temper over a disputed point, but by calmly and bravely holding up the doctrines of the church taught by Her as Bible truths, remembering that "charity suffereth long and is kind;" and yet not abandoning their principles which as members of the church on earth they have sworn to defend. Add to all this, example of life, precept, and, above all, daily prayer, and every churchman and churchwoman will soon discover that he or she has work to do, which, however unobtrusively performed, however hidden from the knowledge of those about them, will undoubtedly gain its reward at the hands of Him who both giveth the power to will, and the will to do all things to His honour and glory. G. H. D.

#### MARITIME UNION.

The question of a union of the Maritime Provinces of the Dominion is one which appears to be causing considerable agitation in the parts that are chiefly concerned with it. A strong current in favour of united action in connection with a united and enlarged organization appears to have set in all the world over; and however much some local interests may seem to be endangered thereby, we doubt not that, in many instances at least, the advantages very far surpass the evils. By the consolidation of a number of smaller institutions into one of more extended dimensions, the narrow and contracted

sentiments and feelings engendered by petty institutions, may give way to more enlarged principles of action, leading to the consideration of more extensive interests than can possibly find scope for employment in a limited sphere. This view of the case applies more emphatically to political institutions than to anything else, and the confederation of the Provinces of Canada into the Dominion has realized the truth of the principle we have laid down, although, it is said, not to the extent that was anticipated. Perhaps in this case some of the Provinces have been disappointed, because a minor and purely local interest may have been sacrificed to a greater and more extended one; and this result might, to a certain extent, have been expected.

In reference to a Maritime Union, it is felt by many in those Provinces that an identity of interest would be more extensively produced and acknowledged by such a union, and that questions of a very important nature, in reference to which the Provinces take different views, would find a more satisfactory solution, while greater breadth of view would prevail in their legislation. Greater ability would be brought to bear upon public questions, and men would be better trained in dealing with subjects which concern the welfare and prosperity of even their own immediate sections of country. A local contemporary has presented the subject of a union of the Maritime Provinces as one for which three very strong arguments may be advanced: First, "the excess of the legislative and governing element which prevails in the Lower Provinces, more particularly as compared with the extensive and populous Province of Ontario; secondly, the heavy expense which such extensive "machinery of government" entails, altogether disproportioned to the geographical extent of country, its population and financial resources; and thirdly, the urgent necessity there exists for largely curtailing this expenditure," in order that it "may be kept within the income, and a serious augmentation of municipal taxation may be prevented." We sometimes imagine that we ourselves are too much governed, and we can easily imagine that the feeling of aversion to excessive government would be very strong in those who are favoured with more of it than we are. We take great interest in the welfare of the Maritime Provinces, and if a union for legislative purposes will benefit them, we sincerely hope that it will speedily take place.

#### Contributions.

##### THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH—WHICH IS IT?

To Rev. T. Witherow, Prof. Church History, Londonerry:

##### LETTER XI.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your "fifth principle," which next comes for consideration, you define as "THE PRIVILEGE OF APPEAL TO THE ASSEMBLY OF ELDERS, AND THE RIGHT OF GOVERNMENT EXERCISED BY THEM IN THEIR CORPORATE CHARACTER." To maintain this as a principle of the Apostolic Church you refer us to the fifteenth chapter of Acts, which, of course, is too long to be inserted whole. I shall therefore be compelled to give a synopsis of it as

you have done. The question having arisen in the Church of Antioch as to whether the Gentile Christians ought to be circumcised, and having created no small discussion in that church, it was determined that Sts. Paul and Barnabas—who maintained that it was not necessary for them to be circumcised—and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. When they arrived in Jerusalem and had declared to the church, the apostles, and elders, all things God had done with them, some of the Pharisees who had become Christians said that these Gentile converts ought to be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses. The apostles and elders met together, therefore, to consider this matter. After some disputation St. Peter as a member of the council arose and presented the question in its true aspect. He showed that God Himself, who knoweth the hearts of all men, by pouring the Holy Spirit upon the first Gentile converts being uncircumcised, even as He had at the first upon themselves who were circumcised, putting no difference between them, thus bore witness that this rite was no longer necessary even for Jews—expressing his belief that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ "we," the Jews, shall be saved "even as they," the believing Gentiles, are saved without it. Then Sts. Paul and Barnabas—not as members of the council or claiming a seat in it, although as apostles they could do so, but—as witnesses bore testimony to "the miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." They having ceased, St. James, whom all antiquity agrees in declaring to have been the first bishop (*i. e.*, apostolic bishop) of Jerusalem and as such to have presided at this council, arose and, after a short preface, decided the matter in the following words: "Wherefore my sentence is that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. But that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. The decision thus given pleased the council and the whole church, and they therefore sent chosen men, also called "chief men," viz.: Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas to Antioch, with Sts. Paul and Barnabas, to bear these decrees to that church. These decrees committed to writing commence thus, according to the authorized translation: "The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting, &c." However, the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Alexandrine—the three oldest MSS. extant—agree in omitting "*kai*," and, before "brethren," so as to read, "The apostles and elders: brethren;" or, as we would express it, "your brethren, the apostles and elders, send greeting, &c." However we are agreed upon the matter that the brethren or laity of the church at Jerusalem, if they are included in the above address it was done to imply that the decrees were acceptable to the whole church. It is therefore unnecessary to say more on that matter. The decrees themselves were simply a reiteration of St. James' decision. Suffice it to say that they were considered *final* in that controversy.

While this council may show us in some essential particulars the order of proceeding in a General Council, as, for instance, Sts. Paul and Barnabas, although possessing a right to a seat and voice in it, yet, as being interested parties and representing the Gentiles who were most deeply interested in the question, did not claim either, but only appeared as *witnesses*, testifying to matters of fact, viz.: the miracles and wonders wrought among the Gentiles; and while it may also form a precedent for holding General Councils when similar necessity should occur in after ages; yet that this council should be used by you to uphold a meeting of a presbytery and the powers that presbytery may exercise, is, to my mind, stretching the case beyond its just limits. This I think you will confess when you examine the matter more closely.

In the first place let us see what a presbytery is—in what it consists. The authorized standards of the Presbyterians both in Europe and America recognize four classes of assemblies in their form of government, viz.: Sessions, presbyteries, synods and general assemblies. A session