

in the Book of Common Prayer, except it be, by that of the same three estates of the realm ? Indeed, the very authority we wish for our conventions, composed entirely of churchmen, and the acquisition of which is objected to by some, because lay delegates are to be admitted thereto, is considered as well vested in a body of men, many of whom are papists, dissenters, unitarians and unbelievers, and who, altho' they number about a thousand in all, have amongst them less than thirty Bishops.

It may again be objected that the admission of the laity into the councils of the church is contrary to the practice of the apostolic and primitive church. To this I reply, that is not quite so clear as may be imagined. If we look at Acts 1 : 15, 16, 23 and 26 ; at 15 : 22, 23 and 25, we will find that the councils were not confined to the apostles. Ecclesiastical historians tell us, that the exclusion of the laity, and, soon after, of the inferior clergy from the councils thence composed of the Bishops, was the beginning of that spirit which afterwards placed all the other Bishops under the feet of him of Rome.

Another objection may possibly be urged : such admission is unnecessary ; many other denominations do very well without it, and so may we. To this I answer, that where the laity are not admitted to the councils of the church, such measures are taken to gain their influence as *we can never take*. For this purpose the Romanists use the carnal weapons of a dark and gloomy superstition, and the Methodists, the careful distribution of certain spiritual offices amongst her laity. And surely it is less objectionable to admit a layman to the councils of the church, where many matters of a purely secular nature must necessarily be discussed, than to the spiritual offices of preaching and exhorting.

It is said by some, that the Elders in the Presbyterian church, who have seats and voices in their councils, do not belong to the laity. I, however, cannot consider them in any other light. I know that the form by which they are set apart for their office is never considered by their church as placing them in the ranks of the ministry, that they are esteemed by her as still belonging to, and representing in her councils, the laity. As such, they have been found useful in all ages of their church ; as such, they are found useful in this country. Indeed, among the Methodists the want of the laity in their councils has ever been a cause of complaint, and has occasioned the most extensive separations from that body of christians.

But still it may be objected that our people are too poor to follow the example set them by their fellow churchmen in the United States. In reply, I would ask the objecter to reflect, that nearly all the wealthy in Upper Canada, that almost all the wealthy emigrants that make this country their home, and that the majority of the wealthy in Lower Canada, are members of the church. Let him