

exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

“Lord King’s account of the primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our Travelling Preachers; but I have still refused, not only for peace sake, but *because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.*

“But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are Bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish Ministers. So that, for some hundred miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord’s Supper. Here therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man’s right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

“I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendants over our brethren in North America, as also Richard Whateat and Thomas Vasey to act as Elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord’s Supper. And I have prepared a Liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England. (I think the best-constituted national Church in the world.) which I advise all the Travelling Preachers to use on the Lord’s day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the Elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord’s day.

“If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than I have taken.

“It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English Bishops to ordain part of our Preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail: 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay: 3. If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us? 4. As our American Brethren are now totally dis-entangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so sweetly made them free.

“JOHN WESLEY.”

*To be concluded in our next*

