

blood at your hands! This pointed appeal had its intended effect, in awakening his attention to the perilousness of their condition. Yet, as if to excuse himself from the performance of an obvious duty, he tremblingly replied, 'I cannot preach, for I have neither a house nor congregation.' 'Preach in your own house first, and to our own company,' was the reply. Feeling the responsibility of his situation, and not being able any longer to resist the importunities of his reprover, he consented to comply with her request; and accordingly preached his first sermon, 'in his own hired house,' to five persons only. This, it is believed, was the first Methodist sermon ever preached in America.

As they continued to assemble together for mutual edification, the numbers gradually increased, and they were much comforted and strengthened by 'exhorting one another daily.' They were too few, however, at first to attract much public attention, and for some time they remained in apparent obscurity. As might be expected, they gradually gained more and more notoriety; for the name of Wesley, as well as of Methodist, was not unknown in this country; and the very reproach which was heaped upon him and his followers gave him and them a celebrity which otherwise they might never have gained. Notwithstanding, therefore, the fewness of their number, and the secluded manner in which they held their meetings, they soon found that they must either procure a larger place, or preclude many from their meetings who were desirous to attend. They accordingly rented a room, in the neighbourhood, of larger dimensions, the expense of which was defrayed by voluntary contributions. Here they assembled for mutual edification, Mr. Embury continuing to lead their devotions, and to expound to them the word of God. An event happened about this time which tended to bring them more into notice, and to attract a greater number of hearers. This was the arrival of Captain Webb, an officer in the British army, at that time stationed in Albany, in the state of New York. He had been brought to the 'knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins,' under the ministry of Mr. Wesley, in Bristol, England, about the year 1765; and though a military character, such was his love for immortal souls, that he was constrained to declare unto them the loving-kindness of God. This he did, first to his fellow soldiers, and afterward to all who were willing to hear him. His first appearance as a stranger among the 'little flock' in New York, in his military costume, gave them no little uneasiness, as they were fearful that he had come to 'spy out their liberties,' or to interrupt them in their meetings; but when they saw him kneel in prayer, and otherwise participate with them in their worship, their fears subsided; and on forming a more intimate acquaintance, they found that Captain Webb had 'partaken of like precious faith' with themselves. He was accordingly invited to preach. The novelty of his appearance as a military officer excited no little surprise. This, together with the energy with which he spoke in the name of the Lord, drew many to the place of worship, and the room where they assembled soon became too small to accommodate all who wished to hear.

They next hired a rigging loft in William-street, and fitted it up for a place of public worship. Here they assembled for a considerable time, and were edified in faith and holiness by the labors of Mr. Embury, who was occasionally assisted by Capt. Webb. In consequence of the accession of numbers to the society, and hearers of the word, the rigging loft also became too small, and hence they began to consult on the propriety of building a larger and more convenient place. But, for the accomplishment of this pious undertaking, many difficulties were to be encountered. These were, however, eventually overcome, and they succeeded in purchasing several lots in John street, on which they erected a house of worship, 60

feet in length and 42 in breadth, calling it, from respect to the venerable founder of Methodism, Wesley Chapel. This was the first meeting house ever erected by a Methodist congregation in America, and was built in the year 1768, and the first sermon was preached in it October 30, of that year, by Mr. Embury.

About the same time that Mr. Embury was laying the foundation for this spiritual edifice in New York, and Capt. Webb was, to use his own language, 'falling the trees on Long Island,' and some other places, Mr. Robert Strawbridge, another local preacher from Ireland, came over and settled in Frederick county, in Maryland; and being a pious and zealous man, he commenced preaching in his own house, and other private houses, the doctrines of Jesus Christ as held and taught by Mr. Wesley. His word was attended 'with the power and demonstration of the Spirit,' and very soon a society was collected of such as 'desired to flee the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.' Mr. Strawbridge succeeded in building a house of worship, near Pipe Creek, in Maryland, called the Log Meeting House, in which he continued for some time to preach to the people, and to watch over the society he had formed.

Thus was a foundation laid by these two men of God, who probably came to America for other purposes than that of preaching the gospel, for a permanent work of God in this country; and it was the Macedonian cry which was sent to England by these people, and more especially those in New York, which moved Mr. Wesley to send them, in answer to their petition, the help they so much needed.

In addition to these two eminent men, who were sent over to this country by Mr. Wesley, Mr. Robert Williams, who had been a local preacher in England, and Mr. John King, from London, came over, not under the direction of Mr. Wesley, but on their own account; the former, however, having a permit from him to preach under the direction of the missionaries. Mr. Williams labored as a local preacher with acceptance among the people, and with considerable success, and so did Mr. King, after being duly examined and licensed by Mr. Pillmore. Both of these brethren so demeaned themselves as ministers of the Gospel, that they were afterward received into the travelling ministry, as may be seen by reference to the Minutes of conference for the year 1773.

From the encouraging representations of the condition and disposition of the people in America, which were transmitted to Mr. Wesley, he was induced to adopt measures to furnish them with additional help in their important work. Accordingly, the next year, 1771, Mr. Francis Asbury and Mr. Richard Wright, having volunteered their services, were sent for the help of their brethren in America. They landed in Philadelphia, October 7, 1771, and were most cordially received by the people. They immediately repaired to the church, and heard a sermon from Mr. Pillmore, whom they found at his station and in his work.

Previously to the arrival of Mr. Asbury the preachers had confined their labors chiefly to the cities. This plan of operations did not suit the enlarged desires of Mr. Asbury. He alludes to this circumstance in the following words: 'At present I am dissatisfied, and judge that we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I shall show them the way. I am come over with an upright intention, and through the grace of God I will make it appear, and am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches. Whomsoever I please or displease, I will be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul.' This determination he steadily and perseveringly kept to the end of his life. And in pursuance of the design he had thus formed, he made an excursion to West Farms and to Westchester, preaching with great