

Thomas Coke and the West Indies

by W. Thomas Smith*

MAY 3, 1964, marked the 150th anniversary of Thomas Coke's death. Methodists are now showing an increased, and long overdue, interest in the little Doctor—their first missionary bishop. One of the most fascinating, and least known, areas of Coke's work is the West Indies.

Following the West Indies voyages of Coke is much akin to a college freshman's attempt to memorize the journeys of St. Paul. The travels of the two evangelists were similar in many ways. Both were covering new territory, establishing a new church. In his *Journals*, Coke records four West Indies visits. His huge *History of the West Indies*, dedicated to "Subscribers towards the West India Missions," was published in sections: Volume I, 1808; Volume II, 1810; Volume III, 1811. Coke took this chain of little islands, ". . . apparently scooped out by the hand of Providence," with its thousands of Negro slaves and impoverished white inhabitants completely to his heart. Diverse in history and culture: Dutch language, British influence, Spanish names, French traditions, the islands became the setting for some of Coke's outstanding missionary planning and work.

Organized Methodism first appeared in the West Indies—indeed, in the Western Hemisphere—on the little island of Antigua in 1760, some six years prior to the formation of the New York Society by Philip Embury or the Maryland preaching of Robert Strawbridge. Methodist work actually dates from the activity of Nathaniel Gilbert (a descendant of the noted English navigator, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, half brother of Sir Walter Raleigh). Gilbert inherited a rich estate in Antigua and took up residence there. Due to his native ability, college education and legal training, he was elected Speaker of Antigua's Legislative Assembly. His brother, Francis of Kendal, England, who had been converted in a Methodist meeting, sent Nathaniel a number of Wesley's writings including "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." This pamphlet altered Nathaniel Gilbert's previously unfavorable opinion of Wesley and sparked his desire to return to England to meet Wesley. Gilbert's return in 1757 was also prompted by a period of poor health. During these two years in England, Gilbert, his wife, and his Negro slaves

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were converted under Wesley's preaching and became Methodists.

Tuesday, January 17, 1758, John Wesley made this *Journal* entry, "I preached at Wandsworth. A gentleman, come from America, has again opened a door in this desolate place. In the morning I preached at Mr. Gilbert's house. Two negro servants of his and a mulatto appear to be much awakened. Shall not His saving health be made known to all nations?"

A later entry in Wesley's *Journal*, Wednesday, November 29, 1758, "I rode to Wandsworth, and baptized two negroes belonging to Mr. Gilbert, a gentleman lately come from Antigua. One of these is deeply convinced of sin, the other rejoices in God her Saviour, and is the first African Christian I have known. But shall not our Lord, in due time, have these heathens also 'for his inheritance'?"

"It was sometime in the year 1760 that Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq. . . . found himself a resident of Antigua"¹ and immediately collected a few persons in his own house for prayer and exhortation. At length he began to preach publicly. In spite of criticism he persisted until he had formed a flourishing Methodist Society of nearly two hundred people. His untimely death in 1774 left the flock without a shepherd.

Repeated appeals had been made to Wesley to send preachers to the West Indies. As early as 1773, Francis Gilbert wrote, "Almost the whole island seems to be stirred up to seek the Lord. Here is work enough for three preachers."

Ministers were not sent. As the American Revolution loomed on the horizon, almost all Anglican clergymen in the Colonies abandoned their congregations and returned to England. Asbury remained in America but at one time even he considered leaving, not for England but for the West Indies. In 1775, the Methodists on Antigua requested him to come and Wesley consented. On Wednesday, February 22, 1775, Asbury wrote in his *Journal*, ". . . I feel inclined to go, and take one of the young men with me. But there is one obstacle in my way—the administration of the ordinances: It is possible to get the ordination of a presbytery; but this would be incompatible with Methodism: which would be an effectual bar in my way."²

¹ Coke, *A History of the West Indies*, Vol. II (Liverpool: Nuttall, Fisher, and Dixon, 1810), p. 427.

² It should be said that unlike Rankin and other Methodist preachers from England, Asbury, who favored the Colonies in the Revolution, never really considered leaving the Colonies because of the war. (See Asbury's *Journal*, August 7, 1775.) Asbury's momentary plan in 1775 to go to the West Indies was

prompted more by his unpleasant relationship with Thomas Rankin than by a real desire to serve in the West Indies or by a conviction that those islands afforded him a greater opportunity for service. (See all references to Rankin in Asbury's *Journal* for the years 1773-1778, and Asbury's letters to Jasper Winscom and Joseph Benson in Elmer T. Clark, *Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Vol. III, pp. 60-64 and 543-554.)

John Baxter arrived in 1778. A shipwright who had been a leader in Wesley's Society at Chatham, England, Baxter was sent to English Harbour, Antigua, for work in the Royal Navy Yard. Baxter began preaching, taking up the work started by Gilbert. A year later the Society numbered six hundred. During the latter part of 1783, "a venerable old man of Waterford," with his wife, married son and wife, and two unmarried sons, sailed for Virginia but were driven by violent storms to the West Indies. They landed in the harbor of St. John's. The sons of the elderly gentleman found employment through Baxter's effort and joined him in zealous Methodist work. They were assisted in this by Nathaniel Gilbert's widow. The Methodist Societies prospered and reached a membership of 2,000. In 1783 the Methodists completed a large house of worship built by their own self-sacrificing labor.

Wesley finally sent missionaries to Antigua in 1786. At the British Conference held in Bristol, July, 1786, he ordained William Warrener for Antigua and William Hammet and John Clarke for Newfoundland. These men sailed with Thomas Coke from Gravesend, England, September 25, 1786, for Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was Coke's second trip to America. (He had previously come in 1784 as executor of Wesley's design for American Methodism. The highlight of the first American visit was the famous Christmas Conference which resulted in the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church.)

During the perilous three-month voyage, Coke's vessel encountered heavy seas, contrary winds, shortage of food and water, a surly captain and crew. A passenger rushed to Coke crying, "Pray for us, Doctor, pray for us, for we are just gone!"³ Coke's *Journal* contains the following statement, "The sailors were just like the messengers of *Job*, coming one after another with dismal tidings. . . ."⁴

As a last resort the captain let the ship drift with the wind, and it finally limped into the West Indies port of St. John's, Antigua, Christmas Day, 1786.

The First Visit—Dec. 25, 1786-Feb. 10, 1787

Dec. 25. This day we landed in *Antigua*, and in going up the town of *St. John's* we met Brother *Baxter* in his band, going to perform divine service. After a little refreshment I went to our Chapel, and read prayers, preached and administered the sacrament⁵

Coke preached to ". . . one of the cleanest audiences I ever saw." As the days passed, he noted, "I have preached in this town twice a day. . . ." The party was ". . . invited to dine with Prince *William Henry* (later King *William IV*) . . . a gentleman . . . intimated that if five hundred a year would detain me in this island I should not

³ *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America* (London: G. Paramore, 1793), p. 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵ *Extracts*, p. 56.

leave it. God be praised, five hundred thousand a year would be a feather when opposed to my usefulness in the Church of Christ!"⁶ An "Infant-Conference" was held and it was decided that Warrener should remain on Antigua as a missionary. Invitations had come to visit St. Vincent's, St. Christopher's, and St. Eustatius. Once in the West Indies, Coke wanted to visit as many islands as possible and meet the leading officials. At the outset he demonstrated marked executive ability and concern.

Coke, Baxter, Hammet and Clarke sailed on January 5 for Dominica where a man named Burn entertained them. After sailing past the French islands of Martinique and St. Lucia, the party landed at St. Vincent's and was received by "... Mr. *Claxton* He has much the spirit of a Methodist: his wife also fears God." "We set off for the plantation of Mr. *Clapham*, . . .," Coke wrote. "I preached in his large parlour; and on informing him that Brother *Clarke* was to remain in the island, he gave him a pressing, general invitation. . . ."

There were other preaching invitations as well as meetings with officials; "... we dined, by invitation, at *Mr. Otley's*,⁷ a Member of the Council, and one of the principal men . . . in the island." Coke also observed:

The Island of *St. Vincent's* is romantic beyond anything I ever saw before. The hanging rocks, sugar-canec, cotton and coffee plantations, etc. make such a beautifully-variegated scene, that I was delighted with it; . . .

The men sailed, stopped at Dominica and "waited on the Governor," then on to St. Christopher's where a Mr. Cable, a Mrs. Seaton and a Mr. Bertie, welcomed them. On Friday, the 19th, Coke sailed to nearby Nevis but returned shortly, since "every door seemed shut against our ministry." It was decided that Hammet was to be stationed at St. Christopher's.

Coke sailed on Wednesday, January 24, to the Dutch Island of St. Eustatius where he met two Negroes. "If you will come with us, we will show you your home." Here he found Harry.

The Lord raised up lately a Negro-slave . . . *Harry* (who was brought here from the Continent . . . formerly a member of our Society) . . . *Harry* did so grieve in spirit at the wickedness of the people around him, that at last the fire broke forth, and he bore a public testimony for Jesus . . . the Governor . . . forbade him to preach . . . under severe penalties⁸

Coke called on the "Captain of the island, who now represents the Governor . . ." and was forced to wait while it was determined

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁷ Coke never used first names in his *Journal*, but always the title Mr. or Mrs.,

hence their use in this paper.

⁸ *Extracts*, p. 64.

whether his Methodist faith "should be tolerated or not." The Captain inquired: "Why do you call yourselves Methodists?" and "How are your ministers supported?" Before leaving, Coke organized six classes ". . . Three . . . to the care of *Harry*." Within less than two months Coke had been introduced to a large new mission field—the West Indies. His work was to bear much fruit in the following years. On Saturday, February 10, 1787, he sailed from St. Eustatius for Charleston, South Carolina. As he departed the Negroes

. . . heaped upon me such a quantity of seed cakes, sweet biscuits, oranges, bottles of jelly . . . that we consumed not above one-half of them on our voyage⁹

The Second Visit—Dec. 4, 1788-Feb. 1789

On the 27th (or 28th) of October, 1788, Thomas Coke sailed for Bridgetown in Barbados with three missionaries assigned to the West Indies: Matthew Lumb, Benjamin Pearce, and Robert Gamble. The party arrived December 4. Coke sent Lumb and Gamble to St. Vincent, while he and Pearce remained to work among a recently discovered group of Irish soldiers.

In two hours he [Pearce] brought back with him one of the soldiers; and soon afterwards we were joined by a serjeant [*sic*] who on seeing Mr. *Pearce*, and recollecting him, seized him in his arms in the most kind and affectionate [*sic*] manner.

Coke found a merchant by the name of Button who had heard the Doctor preach in Baltimore, who provided a large room for church services and also conducted Coke and Pearce through the island. They were received graciously by the governor. Coke preached twice to congregations of three hundred. Coke carried a letter of recommendation to Henry Trotman, Esq. from a friend in London, and Trotman offered his home as a place where Pearce might hold services.

Coke sailed a few days later for St. Vincent's, where he met Baxter and they set out for the Caribb country. On the second day they were joined by Gamble and Clarke. Coke uses several pages of his *Journal* to describe his visit among the Caribbs. A remnant of former savages, they were now quite friendly.

The roads, or rather narrow paths over the mountains . . . are the worst and the most tremendous I ever rode In one place we could not even lead our horses, till a company of *Caribbs* . . . lent us their cutlasses, with which we at last cut open a way¹⁰

Once the party had arrived, Coke was charmed by the greetings.

⁹ *Extracts*, p. 66.

¹⁰ *Extracts*, pp. 79-80.

As we passed by their villages, they stood at their doors in ranks, crying out, "*Bou jou, Bou jou:*" (a corruption of *Bon Jour*, a good day:) others cried out, "*How dee, How dee:*" and many of them on being asked, delivered their cutlasses into our hands, which is the highest proof of confidence they can give¹¹

Baxter agreed to spend two years on this island working with the Caribbs. Said Coke:

I feel myself much attached to these poor Savages. The sweet simplicity and cheerfulness they manifested . . . , soon wore off every unfavourable impression my mind had imbibed from the accounts I had received of their cruelties They are a handsomer people than the Negroes but have undoubtedly a warlike appearance¹²

Tuesday, December 16, Coke sailed for Dominica, taking with him Lumb, as well as the Baxters who wished to visit friends on Antigua before they settled among the Caribbs.

The party arrived at Roseau in Dominica and from there sailed to Antigua. Coke says, "Surely this island is the favourite of heaven." The Society of 2,800 members was very active.

Coke next sailed past Montserrat to St. Christopher's, landing at the capital of Basse-Terre. On the previous voyage Hammet had been left on the island, and Coke spoke of the good work done by him.

Coke's next visit was to St. Eustatius, where he learned that by edict poor Harry had been flogged, put in prison, then banished for preaching.

. . . if any white person should be found praying with his brethren—for the first offense he should be fined fifty pieces of eight; for the second, one hundred pieces; for the third he should be whipped, his goods be confiscated, and he should then be banished the Island. . . . if a coloured man should be found praying—for the first offense he should receive thirty-nine lashes; and for the second, if free he should be whipped and banished; but if a slave, be whipped every time.¹³

In spite of this brutal law, Coke baptized one hundred and forty members of the Society.

January 1, 1789 Coke attempted to return to St. Christopher's but drunken sailors made the voyage impossible. Next day word was sent from the governor that Coke was to do no more public or private preaching in St. Eustatius. At last he "returned to St. Kitt's, blessing God for a British constitution"

From St. Christopher's (or St. Kitt's) Coke went to Nevis for two promising visits. A class of twenty-one members was formed and left in the care of Thomas Owens.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹² *Extracts*, p. 82.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

Coke next went to the Dutch island of Saba where he learned that the missionary who had been left at St. Eustatius, Mr. Brazier, had been forced to leave, and had come to Saba. At the request of the governor, council and general population, Coke stationed Brazier at Saba to serve the Society which for seventeen years had been without a minister. (Later, the governor of St. Eustatius, the chief Dutch official in the area, forced Brazier to leave.)

Coke then sailed to Tortola, where, "It seems to be the general cry of the Negroes throughout the island, 'Let us have, if possible, a Methodist Minister.'"

At Santa Cruz, a Danish island, the Governor General received Coke "with great courtesy." Coke planned eventually to station Hammet in Jamaica, where he would also be able to serve Tortola and Santa Cruz. Coke returned to Tortola, then on to Jamaica.

January 19th, Coke landed at Port Royal and was invited to preach in the home of a Mr. Treble. "I have never visited any place . . . where I received so many civilities as I did in Jamaica" Coke went from Port Royal to Kingston where he had hoped to linger long enough to establish a Society, but he had to hurry back to Port Royal to sail for Charleston.

Coke does not record the date of sailing, but he arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, February 24, 1789.

The Third Visit—Nov. 22, 1790-Jan. 25, 1791

Coke sailed from Falmouth, England, October 16, 1790, for the West Indies bringing with him two missionaries, James Lyons, Sr., and Thomas Worrell. The party landed at Barbados on November 22nd.

Coke preached in Bridgetown, where Pearce had now been stationed for two years. In spite of great persecution, advancement was made. "The preaching-house will hold about seven hundred people. . . ."

A very extraordinary name has been fixed on the Methodists in this Island—"Hallelujah." Even the little negroes in the streets call them by the name of *Hallelujah* as they pass along.

The governor received Coke kindly. Leaving Lyons on Barbados, with directions to meet him at St. Christopher's, Coke and Worrell sailed for Kingston on St. Vincent's.

The party then set out for the Caribb country. The previous mission had been unsuccessful; the Baxters were leaving. "When Mrs. Baxter took her leave . . . , she wept bitterly" Baxter was Coke's chief missionary. His death, November 9, 1805 was a serious loss and the 1806 Conference observed he was "a holy, zealous and useful man of God."¹⁴

¹⁴ *History of the West Indies*, II, p. 459.

Coke and Baxter sailed for Grenada where they were welcomed at an Anglican service by Mr. Dent, the rector. "He is the only Clergyman in these Islands that has shown any regard for the Methodsts." General Matthews begged Coke to send missionaries. Coke and Baxter both preached at well-attended services and then went inland for several days of additional preaching.

Coke, Baxter, Lumb and Worrell next sailed by St. Vincent's and on to Antigua. While on the island Baxter held one service, at the close of which he was brutally beaten by three Negroes.

December 8th as Coke sailed for St. Christopher's he passed Montserrat and mentioned that he hoped to establish a mission there. He arrived at St. Christopher's and then with Baxter, set out for St. Eustatius. They found a new governor had just arrived from Holland. He proved to be no better than the former one. While there, a man named Ryley, awakened by Harry some four years earlier, came to Coke with news, "upwards of two hundred met regularly in Class under their respective Leaders. . . ." Coke inquired about Harry but learned that no one knew of his fate.

From St. Eustatius, Coke sailed for Nevis and was welcomed by Mr. Ward, the Judge of the Admiralty. Coke and Baxter preached. They returned to St. Christopher's on December 15 for a two-day conference, "conducted and concluded in great peace."

December 18th Coke sailed for St. Vincent's where he spent Christmas. He then sailed for Jamaica. At Montego Bay, as he preached to a large congregation, some boisterous young men applauded, crying, "encore, encore."

January 10, 1791, Coke and Worrell set out overland for Kingston. Coke purchased "two poor, weak horses" for the 126-mile trip.

Our Chapel in *Kingston* is situated on a very beautiful spot . . . It is eighty feet in length, and forty in breadth, and will contain about one thousand five hundred people. It has galleries on three sides, and is built exactly on the plan of our Chapel at *Halifax* in *Yorkshire*,¹⁵

Alas, they found poor Hammet ill and in the midst of difficulty. "Everything that was bad, was said of Mr. *Hammet*. . . ." Rioters had threatened the man's life. "I determined to take him with me through North America; after which he might, if restored, return to Jamaica. . . ." Coke then left Worrell in Kingston, and went to Port Royal, taking Hammet with him. Tuesday evening, January 25, 1791, Coke and Hammet boarded the *Success* and on the 27th sailed for Charleston.

The third tour of the West Indies had been long and very difficult, yet Coke was able to see some fruit of his two earlier trips.

¹⁵ *Extracts*, p. 135.

The Fourth Visit—Dec. 31, 1792-April 14, 1793

In previous voyages to the West Indies, Thomas Coke had come directly from England. On this trip, he went first to the United States and from New York sailed on the *Friendship* December 12, 1792. After an exceedingly difficult voyage, he arrived at St. Eustatius on December 31, accompanied by William Black, the Presiding Elder of Nova Scotia. Immediately Coke called on Governor Renolds to discuss the persecution of the Methodists.

He received us with his usual acrimony, and seemed, and spoke, as if he was determined to pull down the work of God. The Island belongs to the *West-India* Company of *Holland*. . . . The Governor sent from *Holland* who was mentioned in my last *West-India* Journal, was a rough, rude man . . . however the little society had peace. . . . But as soon as this man was re-elected . . . the flames of persecution were kindled afresh. The poor slaves . . . were cart whipped, and many of them imprisoned¹⁶

From St. Eustatius, Coke sailed to St. Christopher's, then returned to St. Vincent's stopping en route at Nevis and Dominica. At St. Vincent's he found Lumb in jail. "And all this was done, because Mr. Lumb had preached the Gospel to the Negroes in our own Chapel, built with our own Money, on our own ground." Heavy persecution was in progress, but Coke says, "No island, for the time, afforded a more pleasing prospect for the prosperity of religion, than that of St. Vincent's."

Coke and Abraham Bishop, a missionary who had been in Nova Scotia, sailed for Grenada. Mr. Dent again invited Coke to preach in his church. Coke mentioned that in Grenada, Negroes were better treated than in any other West Indies island.

From Grenada, Coke sailed to Nevis for twenty-four hours. From there he went to St. Christopher's, where ". . . religion flourishes like an olive tree in the house of God." He left for Tortola, where an active Society had been established with one thousand, four hundred "awakened Negroes."

Three days later, Coke and four missionaries set out for Antigua. They arrived February 8, 1793, and called a conference on the 9th at which Coke stationed the preachers as follows:

1. *Antigua*, John Baxter, Wm. Warrener
 2. *Barbadoes*, Daniel Graham, Benj. Pearce, Supernumerary
 3. *Grenada*, Abraham Bishop
 4. *St. Christopher's*, W. Black (in his absence John Harper,) Rob Pattison, Jos. Telford
 5. *Nevis*, John Kingston
- N.B. The unmarried Preachers of *St. Christopher's* and *Nevis* are to change every half year
6. *Tortola*, Thos. Owens, John McVean:
 7. *Jamaica*, William Fish.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

The number in the Society in the West Indies, including "Whites, Coloured People, Blacks," was 6,570.¹⁸

The Blacks, who nearly make up the whole of this number, have been brought out of heathenish darkness They have left, . . . all their outward sins, even Polygamy itself;¹⁹

In his *History of Missions*, published in 1820, William Brown noted:

In comparing the numbers in the Methodist societies in successive years, nothing is more striking than the frequent and even sudden variations which have taken place in the amount of their numbers. It must, however, be remarked that the negroes in the Methodist societies are not like the members of other churches; few of them comparatively have been baptized or admitted to the Lord's Supper; they have simply agreed to submit to the discipline of the Methodists and profess a desire to flee from the wrath to come; . . . Besides, the missionaries are in general, not fixed, but ambulatory, in the same manner as their preachers are in this country.²⁰

Coke went next to English Harbour, and then to St. John's, both in Antigua. With Graham, Pearce and his family, Coke then embarked for Barbados, making a visit at St. Vincent's en route. The party reached Bridgetown, Barbados on February 26, 1793.

March 22nd Coke sailed for Kingston, Jamaica, where he remained until April 1, at which time he set out for Montego Bay, with William Fish and Mr. Guiry. April 8th, Coke left Montego Bay for Kingston. At Martha-Brace-Point " (generally . . . called Falmouth) " he was invited to preach in the town Assembly-room. "I was informed that there never had been a sermon preached in the town since it was built."

I preached on the New Birth . . . and I was led to speak in a closer and severer manner, than I am accustomed to do in the opening of new places. For twenty minutes a deep silence reigned throughout the audience²¹

Coke sailed from Kingston for England the morning of April 14, 1793, arriving at Falmouth, June 6th. He sent an urgent memorial to the King in Council and also appealed personally to several government officials in behalf of religious liberty in British governed St. Vincent. In August word came that the oppressive act of the Assembly of St. Vincent was disannulled by the King. Encouraged by this success, Coke sailed to Holland to appeal to the Dutch government for similar religious toleration at St. Eustatius. At first

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

²⁰ *The History of Missions* (Philadel-

phia: M'Carty & Davis, 1820), pp. 141-142.

²¹ *Extracts*, p. 191.

his efforts seemed to be of no avail, but in 1804 the policy was changed and Methodist missionary work in St. Eustatius was again possible.

The Fifth Visit

There is no *Journal* record of a fifth voyage. In a letter to Ezekiel Cooper, dated December 18, 1798, written from City Road, London, Coke said: "Next September (1799) I will embark for New York; if there is peace I will go to the West Indies on the way. . . ."

Coke's date of arrival in the United States is not known. He was present at the General Conference, May 20, 1800, held in Baltimore.

This author feels that while the evidence is small, there is enough to support the belief that Coke made a fifth visit to the West Indies on the way to his eighth trip to the United States. This is the position held by Etheridge, who wrote a lengthy biography of Coke in 1860.

Coke returned to England immediately after the General Conference of 1800. On August 29, 1803, he wrote to Ezekiel Cooper from Lincolnshire saying he intended to sail in October on an American ship for Baltimore or New York or Philadelphia. November of 1803 Coke spent in the United States. There was no time in which Coke could have been in the West Indies unless he made a voyage of which there is no record.

The West Indies phase of his life gives us one of the best pictures of Coke, the missionary bishop.

Since my visit to the islands, I have found a peculiar gift of speaking to the blacks. It seems almost irresistible. Who knows but the Lord is preparing me for a visit in some future time to the Coast of *Africa*? ²²

Coke always demonstrated balanced interest in individual and institutional affairs. He is seen hard at work: preaching, traveling, holding conferences, striving to establish a church in the face of unbelievable opposition. In addition to the difficulties previously described Coke learned that a pulpit Bible was snatched from a chapel and hung from the gallows. He witnessed clergymen burned in effigy. He was personally vilified in the press—said to be a horse thief escaped from England in the disguise of a minister. These circumstances are of little consequence compared to the privations and sufferings of many faithful Negro and white Methodists: home and chapel burnings, imprisonments, stonings, whippings. These did not deter Coke in his witness and mission.

William Brown said of Methodist work in the West Indies that credit is due Dr. Coke, "whose zealous and indefatigable exertions have been the principal means of their original establishment and their subsequent support." ²³

²² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²³ *The History of Missions*, p. 142.