

many families desirous of an enlightened Gospel ministry. During Dr. Coke's visit to America in 1785, he was introduced to several of those who were about to emigrate to Nova Scotia, and he then made a public collection for them at Baltimore: the American friends contributed £50 currency, or about £30 sterling, besides £60 currency for Missionary purposes. On the Doctor's return to England, in September, he warmly interested himself in making collections, and preparations for a Mission to Halifax, in Nova Scotia, and other places, to meet the wishes of these loyal Refugees. After the Conference of 1786 he sailed from Gravesend, in company with Messrs. Hammet and Clarke, designed for Halifax, and Mr. Warrener, who was appointed by Mr. Wesley to Antigua. It was their intention first to take Messrs. Hammet and Clarke to their station, and afterwards for the Doctor to proceed to the Baltimore Conference, and Mr. Warrener to Antigua; but adverse winds drove the vessel to Antigua, where the whole party landed, and were most cordially received by Mr. Baxter, and other friends. The circumstances of this commencement of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies are thus detailed by Mr. Warrener, the first Missionary appointed to those islands, in a speech delivered by him, at Leeds, in 1812. "Nearly fifty years ago, Nathaniel Gilbert, Esquire, Speaker of the House of Assembly, in Antigua, and the possessor of two sugar plantations, came to England, and attended the ministry of our venerable founder, the Rev. John Wesley. The first time of hearing him preach was, I think, on Kennington Common, when the word came with power, and was made the savor of life to him. No sooner was Mr. Gilbert made happy in the Lord, than he began to feel most tenderly for the unhappy state of his poor negroes in the West Indies. On his return to Antigua, he relinquished his situation as Speaker in the House of Assembly, and immediately fitted up a large room, above the place where his plantation-stores were kept: he placed a pulpit in it, and seats for the negroes. Many slaves came by stealth, and some more openly, from estates in the vicinity, for the purpose of hearing the Gospel, and the word of the Lord delivered by Mr. Gilbert, was blessed to great numbers. His brother, Mr. Francis Gilbert was soon made partaker of the grace of God. He too began to preach; and was a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. The two brothers rented a house in Saint John's, and there freely and faithfully published the glad tidings of salvation to blacks, mulattoes, and whites. The Lord owned his servants, and blessed their labours. Nathaniel was, in a little time, taken to his reward. Francis then became a stated Preacher in the island. He was not, however, long permitted to exercise his talents in the ministry, after the death of his brother, for the Lord soon removed him also to glory."

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