Coke, Thomas. *An Address to the Pious and Benevolent, Proposing an Annual Subscription for the Support of Missionaries in the Highlands and Adjacent Islands of Scotland, the Isles of Jersey, and Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the Provinces of Novi Scotia and Quebec*. London, 1786.

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AN ADDRESS
TO THE
PIOUS AND BENEVOLENT,
PROPOSING AN
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
FOR THE
SUPPORT OF MISSIONARIES
IN
The Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland,
The Isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland,
The West Indies, and the Provinces of Nova Scotia
and Quebec.

BY THOMAS COKE, LL.D.

LONDON:
PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCCCLXXXVI.
Bristol, March 12, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I greatly approve of your Proposal for raising a Subscription in order to send Missionaries to the Highlands of Scotland, the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, the Leeward Islands, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. It is not easy to conceive the extreme want there is, in all those places, of men that will not count their lives dear unto themselves, so they may testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother,

John Wesley.

To Dr. Coke.
AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PIOUS and BENEVOLENT,

&c. &c. &c.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

SOME time past I took the liberty of address-
ing you, in behalf of a mission intended to be
established in the British dominions in Asia; and
many of you very generously entered into that im-
portant plan. We have not indeed lost sight of it
at present; on the contrary, we have lately re-
cived a letter of encouragement from a principal gentle-
man in the province of Bengal. But the provi-
dence of God has lately opened to us so many doors
nearer home, that Mr. Wesley thinks it impudent
to hazard at present the lives of any of our preach-
ers, by sending them to so great a distance, and
amidst so many uncertainties and difficulties; when
so large a field of action is afforded us in coun-
tries to which we have so much easier admittance,
and where the success, through the blessing of God,
is more or less certain.

We cannot but be sensible of the fallen state of
Christendom, and the extensive room for labour
which faithful ministers may find in every country
therein. But some of the nations which are called
Christian, are deeper sunk in ignorance and im-
piety
piety than others; and even of the most enlightened, various parts are still buried in the grossest darkens.

No kingdom under heaven, I believe, has been more blest with the light of the gospel than North Britain. Numerous have been the men of most eminent piety and abilities, whom God in his providence and grace has been pleased to raise among that people. And yet, in the Highlands and adjacent Islands, many scores, perhaps I may say hundreds of thousands, are little better than the rudest barbarians *. The state of this unhappy people has been fully laid before the Public by a very laudable society in Edinburgh, which was formed for the very purpose of spreading religion in those benighted parts. But the members of this benevolent institution have candidly acknowledged their great insufficiency for this important undertaking, for want both of money and men. And indeed the grand design of that society, which is almost entirely directed to the establishment of schools, will by no means interfere with the present plan. We may, by the grace of God, supply their defects; and while they are leading the rising generation to the light and truth, we may, under the divine blessing, be arreting those of maturity age in their present career of sin and folly. The Lord seems to be pointing out our way in the present instance, for he has lately raised up a zealous young man, well versed in the Espe (the language spoken by the people of whom we are now treating), to whom Mr. Wifey has given an unlimited commission to visit the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scott-

land. We have also one or two more in our view, who are masters of the Espe language, who, we have reason to believe, would accept of a similar commission. But the charges would be considerable, and our present regular expenses in Scotland, beyond what the poverty of our Scotch societies can afford, are full as great as our contingent fund will bear. This is therefore the first object of the present institution. — To establish and support an Espe Mission in the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland.

The Isles of Jersey and Guernsey make the second object of our institution. The Lord has been pleased, by our much respected brother Mr. Brackenbury, to begin a very promising work in those islands. Several societies have been formed: and the Lord has also raised up a very sensible and zealous young man, whole native language is the French, and who is likely to be highly useful to the cause of God. He is now stationed in Guernsey, where some assistance has been already given him to supply his necessary wants, and probably more will be yet required. In Jersey Mr. Brackenbury bears the whole burden of the expense at present, but we cannot expect this to be always the case. No doubt but the larger societies will soon be enabled to support their own expenses: but still, as the work increases, the infant societies will stand in need of assistance. This is therefore the second view of the present institution. — To nurse and carry on the work which is now breaking forth among the French Protestants in our islands of Jersey and Guernsey.

The third object we have in view, is our West India islands, where a field is opened to us among the negroes beyond any thing that could have been expected. Eleven hundred blacks have been already united in society in the island of Antigua through
through the successful labours of Mr. Baxter; and the greatest part of them, we have reason to believe, are converted to God. But we have only that single minister in those islands, Mr. Lamburt, whom we sent from the States, being obliged to return on account of his ill state of health. Nor can our brethren in the States afford us any assistance in the West India islands, the call for preachers being so great on the continent. In the island of St. Christopher's we have received considerable encouragement. And the planters in general are constrained to acknowledge, that the negroes who are united to us and to the Moravians, are the most laborious and faithful servants they have; which favourable sentiment, through the blessing of God, has laid open the whole country to our labours among the blacks; and we seem to want nothing but preachers, under the divine influence, to gather in many thousands of them. And these islands seem to have a peculiar claim on the inhabitants of Britain. Our country is enriched by the labours of the poor slaves who cultivate the soil, and surely the least compensation we can make them, is to endeavour to enrich them in return with the riches of grace. But the grand consideration to the children of God, is the value of the souls of these negroes, a set of people utterly despised by all the world, except the Methodists and Moravians. And yet I have no doubt but a most glorious gospel-harvest would soon be displayed to our view among that miserable people, if they were sufficiently supplied with gospel-ministers. This is therefore the third object of our institution—to establish and support missions in our West India islands.

The provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec and the island of Newfoundland, make the fourth and last object of the present plan. We have lately sent a Missionary to Harbour Grace in Newfoundlan,
A PARTICULAR account of the millions, with any letters or extracts of letters from the missionaries or others, that are worthy of publication, shall be printed as soon as possible after every one of our annual conferences, and a copy presented to every subscriber: in which also the receipts and expenditures of the preceding year, with an alphabetical list of the names of the subscribers (except where it is otherwise desired), shall be laid before the Public. The assistants of our circuits respectively will be so kind as to bring the money subscribed to the ensuing conference, and so from year to year.

The preaching of the gospel is an object of the greatest importance; and the present state of mankind must cause very frequent and painful sensations to the truly pious—that the kingdom of Jesus Christ should be circumscribed by such narrow bounds, and Satan rule so great a part of the world: but “how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? “And how shall they hear without a preacher?” “And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.” And as the Lord is pleased in general to carry on his blessed work by second causes, let the sacred ardor of divine love kindle in your souls, my beloved brethren, a holy zeal of being honoured instruments in promoting of it, according to your several stations. Numerous and wonderful are the promises in sacred writ which assure us that “the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in.” That “all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.” That “righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters the sea.” That “the Heav-
causes. Let us therefore endeavour to draw forth these resources, and spread them out to the uttermost. Then shall the little leaven imperceptibly win its widening way, till it has leavened the whole lump of mankind. And while we are industriously watering the whole world around us, our own souls shall be watered again; the Methodist Connection shall become a seminary to fill the vineyard of Christ with devoted labourers, and be made the most valuable, the most extensive blessing, not only to the present age, but to the generations that are yet to come.

I am,

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

With great respect,

Your humble and most affectionate

Brother and Servant,

THOMAS COKE.

London,
March 31, 1786.