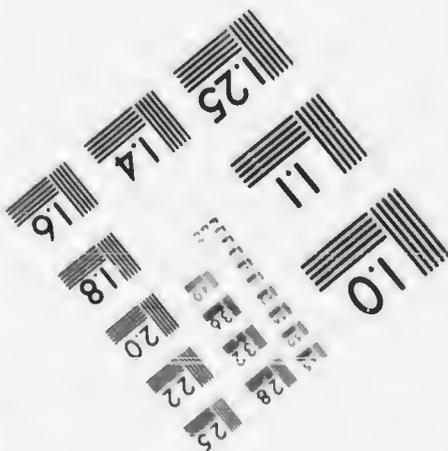
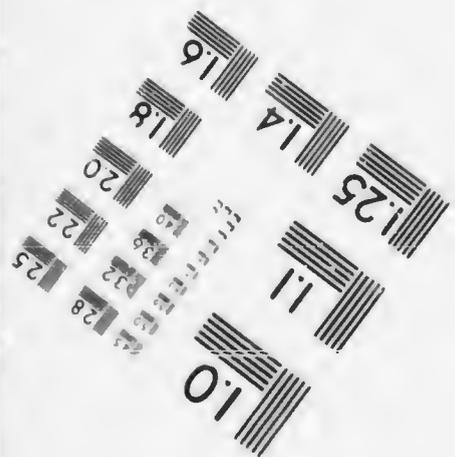
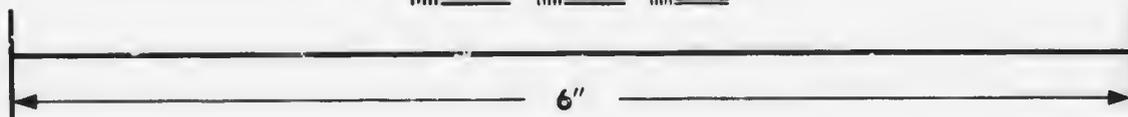
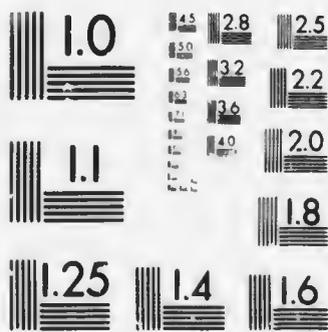


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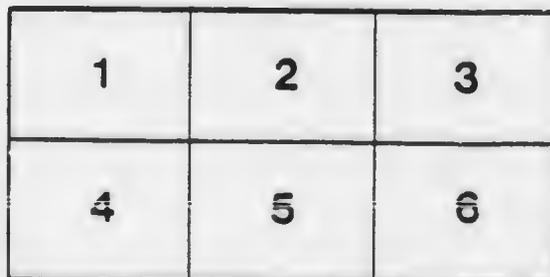
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Hutton, James.

A

LETTER



TO A

FRIEND;

BX  
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IN WHICH

SOME ACCOUNT IS GIVEN

OF THE

BRETHREN'S SOCIETY

FOR THE

FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

AMONG

THE HEATHEN.

LONDON:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR  
MDCCLXIX.





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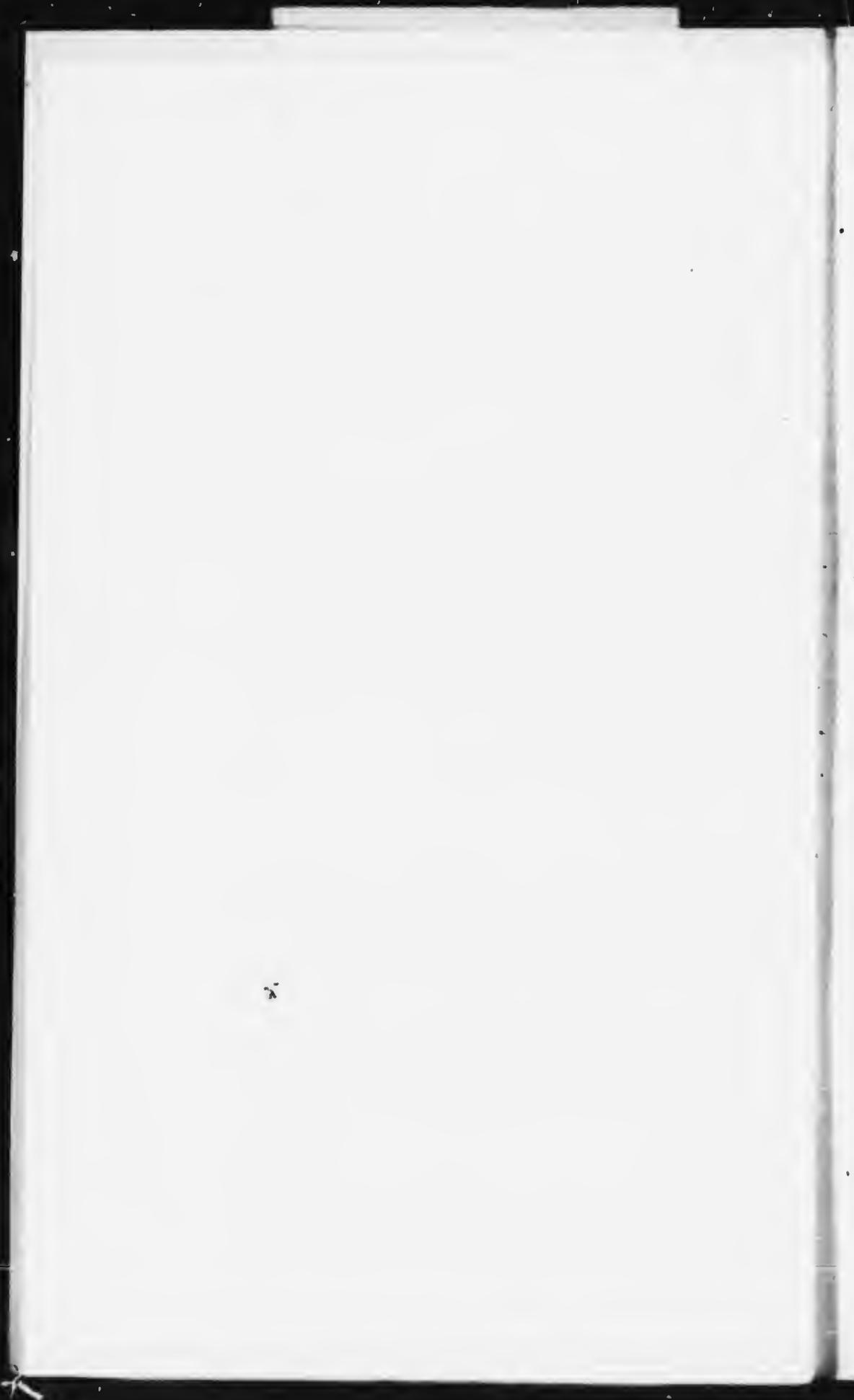
A  
L E T T E R  
T O A  
F R I E N D, &c.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

**S**OME of the Brethren had a meeting to-day, when we revived our Society for the "Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen in the British dominions," and settled it on a more enlarged plan; but as you may be glad to know something of the original design of this Society, I will endeavour to give you as exact an account as I am able; of the occasion which gave rise to the design of beginning such a Society almost twenty-seven years ago, and what our Society then was.

**T**HE Society is even now but small, and was begun by a few persons of the middle rank, or rather something above the lower sort of people, but they were filled with a zeal, perhaps seldom to be found but among persons of that rank; they were a good natured willing people, quite in earnest in the matter, and I can assure you, it was one of the greatest pleasures of my life, to see those few so hearty and alive in the thing.

**T**HE Brethren's Church having had invitations to preach the gospel to the Heathen in some parts of the British America, some members of that church came



to London in their way thither, and being unacquainted with the language, had, at their first setting out, many and troublesome difficulties, and were liable to uncommonly disagreeable circumstances, for want of being properly understood and known, and for want of some friendly care and recommendation to the captains of the ships they went with, and to some friends in the countries they went to; neither were they abounding in this world's goods, but had a truly antient apostolical trust in God, that he would know how to bring them to the places they were going to; and as they had little experience in the price of freight, and the charges of long voyages, they were not always sufficiently provided, a priori, with the money necessary to such purposes.

SOME persons in London, with whom they had providentially become acquainted, took their circumstances into consideration, and wished to know how to act in the best manner to assist those whom they saw were venturing their lives and health in order to bring the Heathen to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for the salvation of their immortal souls.

I must tell you, my dear friend, that the very sight of these truly apostolical men, and their zeal for the conversion of the Heathen, not in a presumptuous or vain spirit, or pharisaical affectation, but full of a humane, chearful, humble behaviour, was so edifying to us, that it made us, who were intimate with them and witnesses to their conduct here, wish most zealously to take that share in their undertaking, which  
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we thought might be possible for us here to execute, and properly to FURTHER them on their way, and thence we took the name of the "Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel." I remember the ideas we then had, and the spirit of our first meetings.

WE believed, that our Saviour had died for the whole world, and would have all men to be saved by the knowledge of the truth, which he had ordered to be preached to all nations: We saw these men willing to carry the gospel to the Heathen in person at all hazards, and we saw that they did it out of love for Jesus Christ, and a desire to fulfil his will, and a tender concern for the salvation of the Heathen, and that they had embraced the providential call they had to this blessed business.

WE recollected that there was one Lord, one Saviour for us and them, and that, though we for our persons thought we had not or perhaps never might have the same call with them, to go and preach to the Heathen in person, yet being redeemed by the same precious blood of Christ, and having believed the gospel, as well as these willing missionaries, we had in general the very same inducement, which they had, to be helpful in our respective stations and callings to the furthering of that work, which we supposed very reasonably would be agreeable to the universal Lover, Saviour and Friend of mankind, who had laid down his life for his enemies, who only need be known to be beloved and obeyed, and in whose name alone there is compleat salvation.

AND



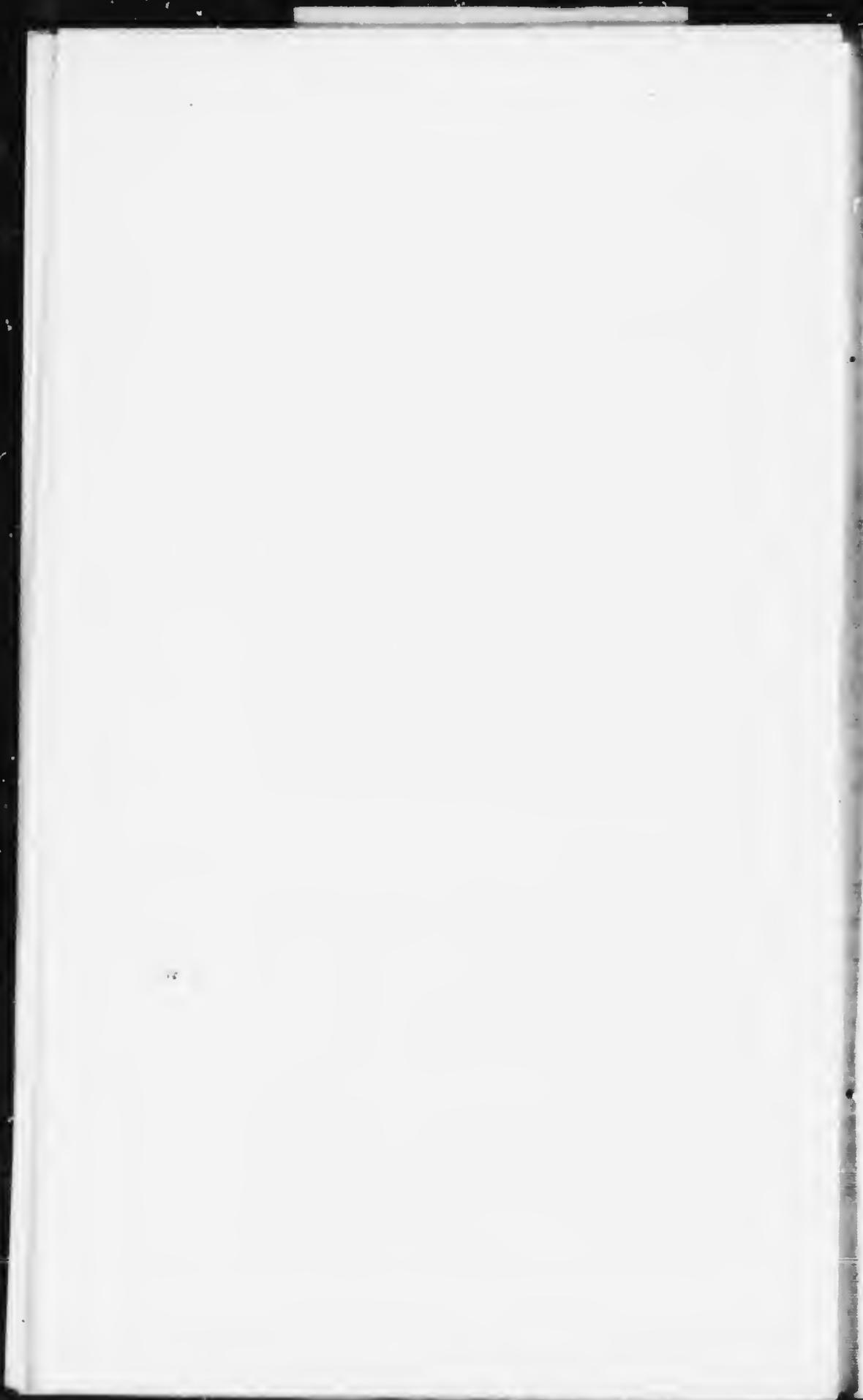
AND although the being a member of this Society does not imply a call to go in person among the Heathen, but only shews our free, willing and disinterested desire to serve the missions; yet we must own, that at times we have felt in our meetings such a strong impulse to take personal share in their missions, that we all fain would have gone ourselves on that important errand. Indeed some of us have been blest with such a call now and then; but the remainder have had the comfort to be faithful partakers and promoters of this great work of God, by catching at every opportunity to serve it at home by giving all the assistance in our power.

WE were at first but a few, and these met together to consider, how we might contrive to make the little help, each of us could give, become any thing worth naming by being added together, and to make that little go as far as it could. To this purpose we resolved to form ourselves into a Society, towards the designs of which each member might contribute statedly or occasionally, his little mite, each according to his ability, without teasing or pressing one another to enlarge the contribution, as we believed, that our generous Saviour had no pleasure in constrained gifts, and that he likes only such as are given out of a free, willing heart, so we made that a principal point with us; and I can truly say, we wanted then more to restrain our members, as to the largeness of the sum, than to urge them to an increase of their contribution. Such was the spirit of those days.



WE employed ourselves therefore as a Society in receiving and entertaining such missionaries who passed through London in their way to America, providing them proper lodgings, taking care to supply what might be wanting for their freight and provisions, and some necessary refreshments in their voyage, recommending them to the captains, making the bargain for their passage, taking care of their letters, doing their little commissions, and indeed every kind of thing, wherein we could further them, or be of pleasure or service to them; and, can you think, that was not a pleasure to ourselves? My dear Friend, it was a great one, and it was a very great advantage to us to see so many apostolical people, whom the delays of their voyages kept here occasionally, a considerable time amongst us, especially in war time by embargo's, waiting for convoys, &c. They were much to our edification, strengthening and confirming our faith in Jesus Christ, not only by their words, but by their good example.

So we went on for several years; but at last the Brethren's Church, by the missions increasing, was obliged to appoint general deputies of all their churches, who had the care for providing for their Heathen missions in all parts of the world, who receive the contributions of all their churches to this work. But we have now desired, that our Society here be revived, particularly for that branch of the Heathen mission in the British dominions, that we may again take our little share in our several branches of assistance,  
which



which the general Heathen deputies had for several years entirely taken upon themselves, and we are much obliged to them and to all our churches for the plentiful contributions they have given these many years to the Heathen missions in the British dominions, and doubt not of their kind continuance, of which we have the clearest hopes.

As many of the old members therefore as were still in London, met together to-day, to renew and revive our Society, and we had the pleasure to have several of the ancient Brethren of the Brethren's Church with us, with whom we first became acquainted in their passage through London in their way to the Heathen, and who were at the first forming of the Society, almost twenty-seven years ago.

AT this meeting we tried to give our Society a consistence; we revised our rules, chose new members of the Society by ballot\*, appointed by a majority of votes, six persons to be the committee for current affairs of the Society, one of whom Mr. William Jackson, was chosen treasurer of the Society; and Mr. Wollin secretary, who corresponds also with the general deputies of all the Brethren's Churches for the Heathen mission, and two brethren, who are called servants of the Society, whose business is chiefly to execute the resolutions of the committee and Society, in the several branches of activity necessary in buying  
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\* One rejecting ballot is sufficient to hinder any person being chose a member.

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in ship-provisions and refreshments, in speaking with the captains the missionaries go with, making the bargain for their passage, conducting them in proper time on board, doing their business at the Custom-House, &c. and every one of the Society and committee are engaged to be assistant to these two servants, occasionally, in executing the resolutions of the committee and Society.

THE committee meet as often as there is occasion, generally once a week, the whole Society at least once a month.

THE proper constituent members of the Society are all of them actual members of the united Brethren's Church, and every ordained minister of the Brethren's Church, who happens to be present in London, has a right by our rules to a seat and vote in the committee, and we have reason to expect many good services from their presence and encouragement.

BUT by our rules we can admit honorary members and correspondent members, not of our church, who, when in London, can be occasionally present, not only at the public general meeting, when the accounts of the progress of the gospel among the Heathen are read, but also at the meeting of the members of the Society. To these honorary or correspondent members will be communicated, occasionally, the freshest accounts we receive of the work of the Lord among the Heathen, which is the chief joy of the Society, and for the sake of which we are a Society, and we find  
every



every where that the narration of the free-willing sufferings of Christ for the sins of the world, is received by the Heathen with attention, and when indeed believed by them, changes their hearts and whole life, and shews plainly that true faith cannot but produce good works and a proper behaviour, and that these Heathen believers become happy in themselves and very exemplary christians. Of this we have several thousand instances among the divers nations of the Indians in North and South-America, the Greenlanders, and the Negroes in the West-India-Islands, and they not only became happy and good christians for themselves, but consequently good neighbours, good subjects, and useful to Society in general, and the Negroes in particular very faithful to their masters.

No person of the Society is required, be he actual member, honorary member, or correspondent member, to contribute. Some are not able to contribute much, others can contribute more, and when the members of the Society meet at their monthly or occasional meetings, each person may put in a box, placed in the room for that purpose, whatever he shall be disposed to give, quite unobserved. If there shall happen to be a call for any extraordinary expence, the affair will be mentioned, and no one will be hindered from giving openly according to the exigence of the case, but no one is to be constrained to give at all.

At the several meetings of the Society, any matter which occurs will be related, or any thing which requires



quires deliberation will be consulted about, an account will be given of what has been received and laid out, what may be wanted to be done, what missions are going forward, what the success is, or promises to be here or there, the committee report what has passed in their meetings, &c.

EVERY year the whole committee can be continued, or changed at the pleasure of the Society.

AND at the meetings of the Society any of our rules or proceedings can be corrected or altered, if needful, for we know that all human things may be altered for the better.

AT the above-mentioned public meeting, the accounts of the progress of the gospel are read openly at Fetter-Lane Chapel monthly; at which also strangers, who behave orderly, are admitted.

THOUGH we have hitherto published to the world but very little of the detail of our success in the Heathen missions, except, very lately, the Greenland history, [which is indeed well worth the attention of all christians of every denomination, and which we were forced to publish by the reproaches of some pious servants of God, not of our church, who blamed us for concealing so long the marvellous effects of the grace of God upon those barbarians. To him be glory and honour for ever. Amen.]

I say, though we have hitherto published so little to the world in general of the detail of our missions, yet we cannot withhold from our own people the comfortable

MS A

comfortable accounts we receive from thence, and, as we hope, that the prayers of all good and serious people, who may come freely to that monthly public meeting (and we suppose scarce any else will find any pleasure in being there) will be of service to our undertaking, we therefore read these accounts with open doors.

WE have frequently wanted more money than we had any visible prospect of receiving, yet God stirred up the hearts of the Society and its friends and well-wishers, so that we were able to do many things more than our means seemed to promise, and his blessing and gracious countenance was upon us.

MAY he be pleased to bless the renewal of this Society, to take pleasure in us, to give and keep up in us a lively and genuine free spirit, and even such poor beings as we are, shall be useful in our little degree to his kingdom and service.

I forgot to tell you, that our Society meets at No. 10. Nevil's-Court, Fetter-Lane, Fleet-Street.

I am,

My very dear Friend,

LINDSEY-HOUSE,  
Sept. 3, 1768.

Ever Yours, &c.

J. H.



F I N I S

