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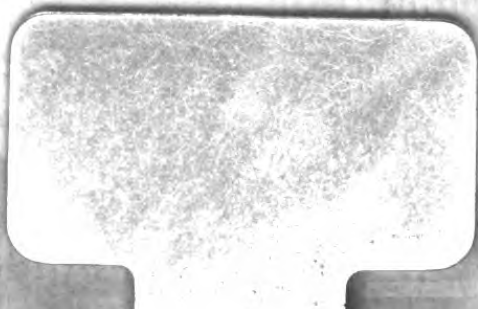
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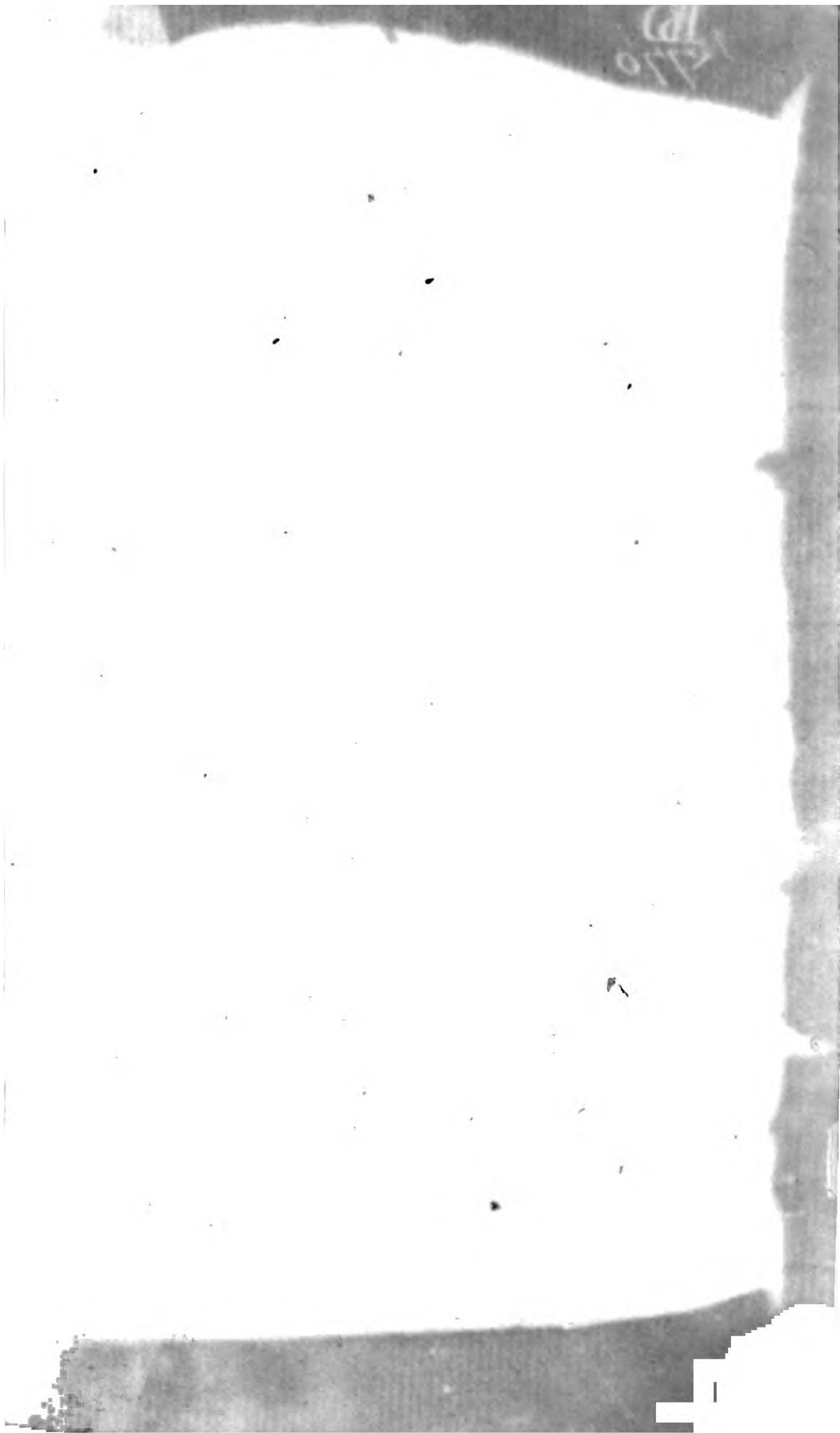


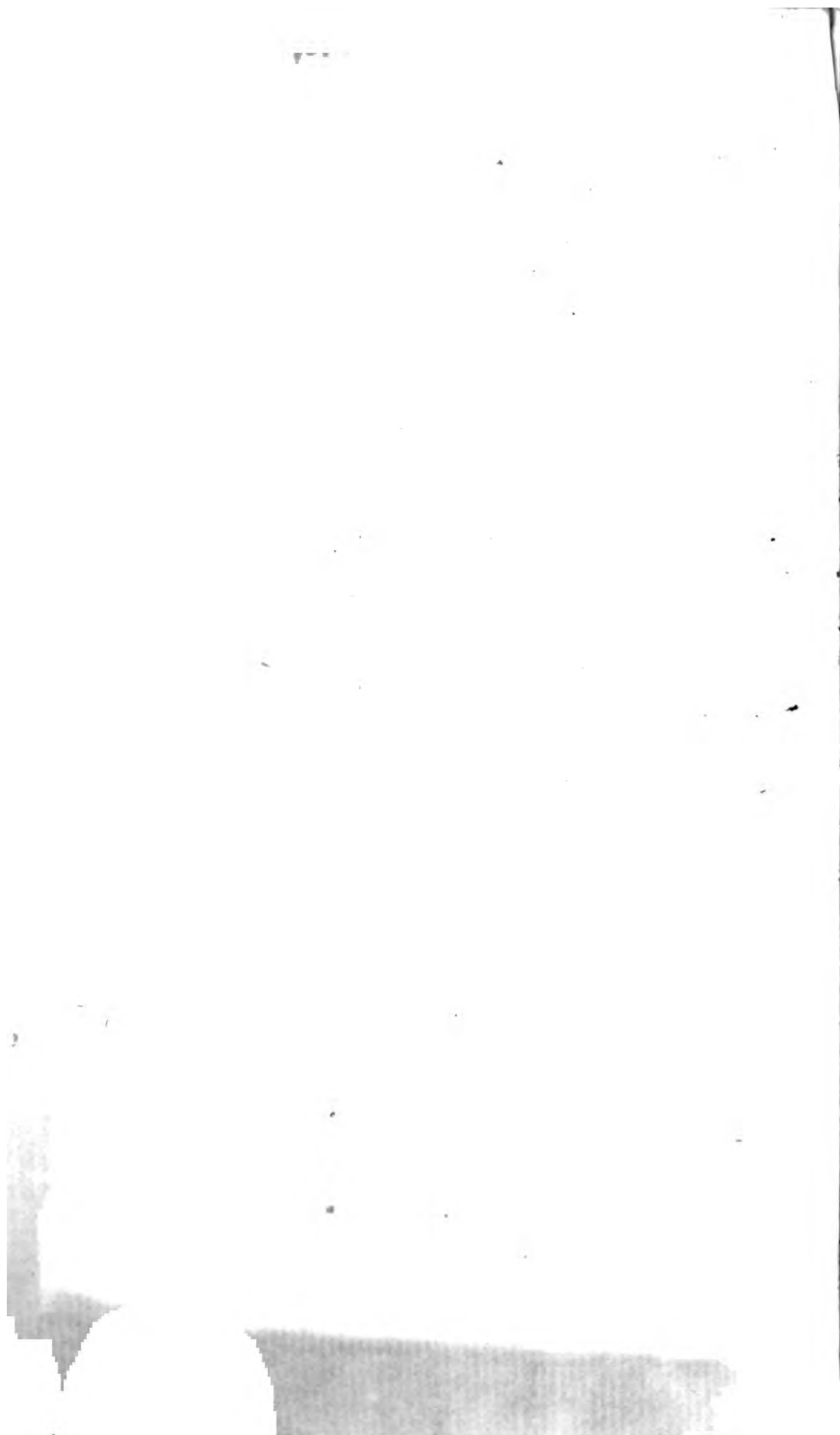
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THE  
LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF THE REVEREND  
MR. JAMES HERVEY.





T H E  
L I F E

OF THE REVEREND

MR. JAMES HERVEY,

RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVELL,  
IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.



TO WHICH IS ADDED, A

C O L L E C T I O N

O F H I S

L E T T E R S,

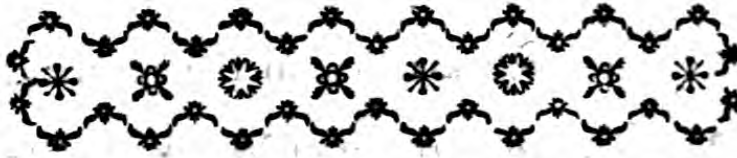
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B E R W I C K :  
P R I N T E D F O R R . T A Y L O R .  
M D C C L X X .

*210. m. 157.*

PROPOSITIVE MATHS




T H E  
L I F E

OF THE REVEREND

MR. JAMES HERVEY.

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 R. HERVEY, minister of  
COLLINGTON, three miles  
from NORTHAMPTON, had  
two sons and one daughter; his eldest  
was bred a wine-merchant, and his

daughter was married to the reverend Mr. KNIGHT, rector of WESTON-FAVELL. His youngest son, the reverend Mr. JAMES HERVEY, was born at HARDINGSTONE, a small village, one mile from NORTHAMPTON, on the twenty-sixth of FEBRUARY, 1713-14. His mother taught him to read till he was seven years of age, after which he was removed to the free-school at NORTHAMPTON, of which the reverend Mr. CLARK was master; whose son being dull in learning, Mr. HERVEY was allowed to proceed no farther than he, so that he was seventeen years of age before he was compleated in the LATIN and

GREEK languages. His father then sent him to LINCOLN college, in OXFORD, and put him under the tuition of Dr. HUTCHINS, where he staid seven years. In the nineteenth year of his age, he became acquainted with some persons who distinguished themselves by their serious impressions of religion, and zeal in promoting it; by whose example he became strictly attached to piety and learning. Here he made himself master of KEIL'S ASTRONOMY, Dr. DERHAM'S PHYSICO and ASTRO-THEOLOGY, and NATURE DISPLAY'D. These he read with particular satisfaction, and has frequently acknowledged, that he

was greatly indebted to Mr. SPENCE'S ESSAY ON POPE'S HOMER'S ODYSSEY for his improvement in stile and composition. He had here an exhibition of twenty pounds a-year.

IN 1736 he became curate to his father at WESTON-FAVELL, from whence he removed to BIDDEFORD, where he lived several years, and was so greatly beloved by his people, that when the old rector died, and the new rector had gotten the living, and provided another curate, the people offered to pay him his fallary out of their own pockets, providing they might have their beloved

Mr. HERVEY continued with them. The salary of BIDDEFORD was very small, though the parishoners had raised him sixty pounds a-year. He was much esteemed by Mr. ORCHARD of STOKE-ABBEY in DEVONSHIRE, and was desired by that gentleman to stand god-father to his son, that he might have an eye over his christian education; preferring him to many gentlemen in the county, who would have looked upon themselves as honoured by performing that office. It was here he laid the plan of his MEDITATIONS, and it is possible wrote some of them, as he says it was in a ride to KILHAMPTON in CORNT



WALL, where he went to the church, and there he lays the scene of his MEDITATIONS AMONGST THE TOMBS.

HE staid two years and a half in this country, after which he had an exhibition in LINCOLN college. His father pressed him to get some curacy three or four miles from OXFORD, and hold his exhibition; but this he would by no means comply with, thinking it unjust to detain it from another person, who might more want the benefit of that provision; and could not by any means be prevailed upon to take his degree of A. M. though he was of sufficient stand-

ing, for fear it might be an inducement to him to become a pluralist, being at that time utterly averse to this; though he afterwards changed his mind on this head, as he saw it made him more useful, and furnished him with the means of being more charitable.

IN the year 1750, at his father's death, he succeeded to the livings of WESTON and COLLINGTREE. His health was so impaired at this time by his close attention to his studies, and the duties of his office, that his family and friends thought that a change of air would be of service for the recovering it;

they therefore formed a scheme of conveying him to LONDON, which they affected by getting him into a chaise of a friend, who was going there, under a pretence of riding only a few miles; of which he pleasantly complains, in a letter to a friend, upon his arrival there; which begins thus;

‘ MY DEAR FRIEND,  
‘ IF you chide, I must accuse. Pray  
‘ where was your warrant, where your  
‘ commission, to impress me into this  
‘ journey? However, as a good Christi-  
‘ an, I forgive you and your accomplices.  
‘ ces.’ After commending several cler-

gymen his friends, whom he saw on the road, he concludes thus : ‘ My animal nature is so very feeble, that I find no benefit from the change of air, nor from the enjoyment of the most pleasing society.’

HE continued in LONDON till APRIL or MAY 1752, during which time he was seized with a severe illness, which nearly cost him his life : but he recovered, returned to WESTON, and took possession of it and COLLINGTREE, the two family livings..

IT will doubtless be thought strange,

after what has been said, that our divine should accept of these two livings, and hold them during life. In answer to which, we are assured, that when his father died, he remained determined to have WESTON-FAVELL only, which he frequently declared to his family and friends, and refused to accept of COLLINGTREE, or to qualify himself for the same, insomuch that it was in danger of lapsing to the bishop. But at length, through the earnest and constant intreaties of his family and friends, who, unknown to him, had sent to, and procured from OXFORD the necessary certificates of his being A. B. in order to

his taking his Master's degree at CAMBRIDGE, he was after much importunity prevailed on to comply with their requests, hoping that he might be thereby enabled to do so much more good. And when he waited upon Dr. THOMAS, then Bishop of PETERBOROUGH, for institution to COLLINGTREE, which was near six months after his induction into WESTON, he said, 'I suppose your lordship will be surprized to see JAMES HERVEY come to desire your lordship's permission to be a pluralist; but I assure you, I do it in obedience to the repeated solicitations of my mother and

‘ my sifter, and not to please myself;’ or to that effect.

THESE two livings were within five miles of each other. He used to officiate alternately at them, with his curate, so long as his health would permit; till by his great weakness he was confined wholly to WESTON, where he constantly resided during the remainder of his life.

IN 1747 he published his **MEDITATIONS AND CONTEMPLATIONS AMONGST THE TOMBS, REFLEXIONS ON A FLOWER-GARDEN, and a DES-**

CANT ON THE CREATION. He made seven hundred pounds by the sale of the copy, and gave the whole of it in charity, saying, that as Providence had blessed his attempts, he thought himself bound to relieve his fellow creatures with it. It has now gone through eighteen editions. They have been since turned into blank verse, after the manner of Dr. YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS, by J. NEWCOMB, and published in two volumes, small 8vo.

IN NOVEMBER 1752, he published his REMARKS ON LORD BOLINGBROKE'S LETTERS ON THE STUDY



AND USE OF HISTORY, SO FAR AS  
THEY RELATE TO THE HISTORY OF  
THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND ESPE-  
CIALLY TO THE CASE OF NOAH DE-  
NOUNCING A CURSE UPON CANAAN.  
IN A LETTER TO A LADY OF QUA-  
LITY. The reviewers give the follow-  
ing account of this piece:

‘ OUR pious author, in his preface  
‘ to this letter, tells us, that it was not  
‘ intended for the press; and that the  
‘ publication of it is owing to a Right  
‘ Honourable Personage, whose name,  
‘ though it would grace and recommend  
‘ his papers, he is not allowed to men-

‘ tion. He observes, towards the be-  
 ‘ ginning of it, that the scriptures, though  
 ‘ they do not contain a compleat history  
 ‘ of the first ages, present us with a col-  
 ‘ lection of the most ancient, curious,  
 ‘ and instructive facts. Several of these  
 ‘ facts he mentions, and takes notice of  
 ‘ that majestic simplicity of stile in which  
 ‘ they are delivered: after which he pro-  
 ‘ ceeds as follows.

“ YET these books Lord BOLIN-  
 BROKE disparages; and, at the same  
 time extols the writings of TACITUS.  
 The remains of TACITUS, he tells us,  
 are precious remains. Those of the Ho-

ly Scripture are dark and imperfect accounts. In **TACITUS**, History preserves her integrity and her lustre. In the Holy Scripture, instead of history, you have a heap of fables; which can pretend to nothing but some inscrutable truths, and therefore useless to mankind.—Every line of **TACITUS** has weight, and cannot be mentioned without admiration. Whereas, the Sacred History is put upon a level with the extravagancies of **AMADIS OF GAUL**, and can never gain sufficient credit from any reasonable man.

“WHO IS THIS UNCIRCUMCISED  
**PHILISTINE**, said **DAVID**, THAT HE

SHOULD DEFY THE ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD? And who is this TACITUS, would I ask, this darling author, that he should be raised to the skies, while the divine historians are trodden to the dust?—If your ladyship is unacquainted with his character, let me give it in the words of a most elegant and masterly critic. ‘ Having considered the principal qualities of TACITUS, as a writer, and as an historian, I cannot help thinking, that there is a false sublime and affectation in his description: a scurrility and satirical vein, with too epigrammatical a conciseness in his wit; and a quaintness, but too speculative, and a po-

licy over-refined in his observations; a malignant and ill-natured turn in his characters; a philosophy too abstracted and elevated in his reasonings, and a vanity in his learning. In short, that he is in antiquity, a pedant; in the philosophy of nature, a sceptic; in morals, loose; in description, gaudy and pompous; in politics, subdulous, refined, and knavish.

(HUNTER'S OBSERVATIONS ON TACITUS.)

“ YET this is the writer that must be placed in such great superiority to MOSES, JOSHUA, and SAMUEL. This the history (rise, criticism, and resent-

the indignity!) that is spoken of with applause and rapture, even while the sacred annals are treated with disrespect and obloquy.”

‘ BUT why, may it not be asked, must  
‘ TACITUS die, that MOSES, &c. may  
‘ live? If Lord BOLINBROKE has spoken  
‘ of TACITUS in the highest terms  
‘ of respect, and disrespectfully of the  
‘ sacred writings, there was no reason,  
‘ one would imagine, in vindicating the  
‘ scriptures against what his lordship had  
‘ advanced, to represent TACITUS as a  
‘ pedant, a sceptic, and a knave: rife,

' candour, and resent the indignity! But  
' to return.

' AFTER some general remarks, our  
' author proceeds to consider particular-  
' ly the case of NOAH, denouncing a curse  
' upon CANAAN. He tells us that the  
' passage, CURSED BE CANAAN, and  
' many other such passages, which seem  
' to be imprecations, are really predicti-  
' ons, and that it would be much more  
' suitable to the prophetic style to translate  
' them as indicatives, rather than impe-  
' ratives; CURSED IS, rather than BE,  
' CANAAN. Such a manner of speaking,  
' he says, would remove from this par-

‘ ticular passage all that sounds harsh, or  
‘ seems uncharitable; and would, in the  
‘ general, impart an unequalled majesty  
‘ to the language of scripture.’

“ IT was GOD then, says he, and not man, from whom this avenging sentence came. And GOD, to shew his utter detestation of all iniquity, to manifest his singular delight in virtue, frequently takes occasion to denounce vengeance, or promise happiness, when some notorious evil is committed, or some laudable good performed. And was there not a most notorious evil committed here?—



“ BUT, supposing the turpitude and immorality of the action to be very enormous, and such as deserved some signal vengeance, the vengeance, it is objected, was misapplied. For HAM ALONE OFFENDED: CANAAN WAS INNOCENT.—My lord is not sure that CANAAN was innocent; though he asserts it pretty confidently.—If his lordship was unacquainted with the HEBREW, he will scarcely be thought qualified to pronounce so peremptorily, concerning a case related in that language. If his lordship was unacquainted with the original, he acts somewhat unfairly, in saying, This notion is not only without, but a-

gainst the express authority of the text. For he must know, that it receives some countenance even from the text itself. I would by no means offend your ladyship's eyes with any rugged figures, or uncouth quotations. But you may venture to believe me, when I assure you, that the most exact translation of GEN. ix. 24. is, NOAH KNEW WHAT HIS SON HAD DONE TO HIM, THE OF THAT LITTLE ONE. HAM could not so properly be stiled THE LITTLE ONE; since he was the middlemost, and is always placed in that order; SHEM, HAM, and JAPHETH. But the description agrees perfectly well with CANAAN, the

grandson of NOAH: and it was customary among the JEWS to call the grandchildren the sons of their grandfather. CANAAN, it is added, WAS ALONE CURSED.—The words would run smoother, if transposed in this manner: CANAAN ALONE WAS CURSED. As for the fact, that wants some better confirmation than my lord's bare assertion. To me it is evident, that HAM was not exempted from the curse. What? If it did not fall upon him in person? Yet, to be punished in his offspring must be very affecting, and no less afflicting.—

“ WHERE is the equity of cursing a

people that are yet unborn? Does not this contradict all our notions of order and justice?—It may be contrary to our notions, at least it would be unjustifiable in our practice; but is quite otherwise with regard to the all-seeing GOD. Is it not agreeable to the strictest rules of justice, for a magistrate, when he has heard the witnesses, summed up the evidence, and found the prisoner guilty—is it not agreeable to the strictest rules of justice, to pass sentence upon such a criminal? The question can admit of no doubt. Yet it is equally certain, that this was the very case, with reference to the SUPREME JUDGE, and

those finners the CANAANITES.—  
They practised the grossest and most in-  
human idolatries. They abandoned  
themselves to the most horrid immorali-  
ties: such as violated nature; confoun-  
ded all order; and such as it would be  
shocking even to mention.—Now all  
these provoking crimes were present to  
the view of HIM, by whose inspiration  
NOAH spake. He saw them with the  
same circumstantial exactness, as if they  
had been already perpetrated.—Let us  
take these very important particulars in-  
to consideration, the excessive wickedness  
of those nations, and the all-foreseeing  
discernment of JEHOVAH, and then who

will dare to insinuate, that the everlasting Sovereign acted unjustly; that he launched the lightnings of his indignation, in an arbitrary manner, or upon an innocent people?—Who will be so precipitate as to affirm with my lord, That no other writer but a JEW could impute to the œconomy of Divine Providence the accomplishment of such a prediction; nor make the Supreme Being the executor of such a curse?

“THE former of these circumstances will set in a proper light what his lordship calls The cruelties committed by JOSHUA in the conquest of the CA-

NAANITES. It will make them appear to be acts of righteous vengeance; a much needed and most desirable extirpation of a pestilent people; altogether as serviceable to the public as it was formerly, to destroy the wolves from our island; or as it is, at present, to deliver over some flagitious malefactors to the sentence of the law.—Yet the execution of this vengeance was delayed, year after year, century after century. The seed of ABRAHAM, for several ages, were not permitted to enter upon the possession of their destined inheritance; because the iniquity of the AMORITES, which was the cause of their extermination, was not

yet fall.—Does it then bespeak the man of integrity, to represent those proceedings of JOSHUA, under the abhorred image of cruelties; which were acts of a justice, exemplary, salutary, and greatly to be revered? Is it becoming an honest enquirer after truth, to suggest, without the least shadow of proof, a selfish and malignant reason, for the destruction of the CANAANITES; when a reason, the most equitable in its nature, the most beneficial in its consequences, is expressly and repeatedly assigned by the sacred historians?—This I refer to your ladyship's decision, who, I am sure, will not err on the uncharitable extreme; yet



I believe will find it difficult, with all your good nature, to acquit the author of these letters from the charge of disingenuity.

“ Mr lord says, Who does not see, that the curse and the punishment fell upon CANAAN and his posterity, exclusive of the rest of the posterity of HAM?— The punishment was not confined to CANAAN and his posterity; it reached the other descendants of HAM; MISRAIM himself, the father of the EGYPTIANS, excepted. CANAAN, it is true, is particularly mentioned;—because he was (as from this very circumstance is ex-

tremely probable) an accomplice with HAM, in the breach of filial duty;—because this branch of the family was more than ordinarily corrupt, nay, beyond measure, vicious;—because the CANAANITES were, in the first place, and in the fullest manner, to feel the effects of the curse.—And MOSES, being charged with a commission to execute the vengeance on this people only, had no occasion to concern himself with any other. Just as the sheriff of a county, demanding the body of a condemned malefactor, produces the dead-warrant for his execution without intermeddling, or thinking himself under any necessity to in-

termeddle with the other prisoners in jail."

' OUR author now proceeds to shew,  
' that the curse was executed as well as  
' pronounced; after which he takes oc-  
' casion to mention some of the perfecti-  
' ons of the sacred writings, and con-  
' cludes with exhorting the lady, to whom  
' he writes, to cultivate an intimate fa-  
' miliarity with them: but the extracts  
' we have already given will enable our  
' readers to form a proper judgment of  
' the whole performance.'

THE reverend Mr. WHAZEY, vicar

MR. JAMES HERVEY. xxxvii

of St SEPULCHRE'S, NORTHAMPTON,  
has published, by way of supplement to  
this piece, A VINDICATION OF THE  
EVIDENCES AND AUTHENTICITY OF  
THE GOSPEL, FROM THE OBJECTI-  
ONS OF THE LATE LORD BOLIN-  
BROKE..

NEXT year he published his sermon  
called THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE  
CHRISTIAN'S GLORY, which he preach-  
ed at the visitation of the reverend JOHN  
BROWN, D.D. Archdeacon of NORTH-  
AMPTON, at ALL-SAINTS church in  
that town. This was published for the  
benefit of a poor diseased child. He

had before composed a sermon on **THE**  
**MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION,**  
which he could never be prevailed upon  
to publish in his life time. This ser-  
mon shews the merciful tendency of the  
gospel, and that it is the duty of minis-  
ters, as ambassadors for **CHRIST,** to press  
men to accept this treaty, as offered by  
him while upon earth.

IN 1753 he wrote a Recommenda-  
tory Preface to **BURNHAM'S PIOUS ME-**  
**MORIALS, OR THE POWER OF RELI-**  
**GION ON THE MIND IN SICKNESS**  
**AND DEATH.**

IN 1755 he published his **THERON AND ASPASIO**, in three vols 8vo. of which the reviewers give the following account.

“ SOME of the principal points which **Mr. HERVEY** endeavours to vindicate, illustrate, and apply, in this work, are those that follow: The beauty and excellency of the scriptures—The ruin and depravity of human nature—Its happy recovery, founded on the atonement, and effected by the spirit, of **CHRIST**. But the grand article, and which makes the principal figure in his work, is the imputed righteousness of **CHRIST**; an article

which he thinks eminent for its importance, little understood, and less regarded.

“ BY CHRIST’S righteousness he understands all the various instances of his active and passive obedience: by the word IMPUTED he would signify, that this righteousness, though performed by our LORD, is placed to our account, reckoned, or adjudged by GOD as our own; infomuch that we may plead it, rely on it for the pardon of our sins, for adoption into his family, and for the enjoyment of life eternal.

“THIS doctrine Mr. HERVEY earnestly contends for: but whether his representation of it be agreeable to truth, or such as does honour to the gospel-dispensation, we leave it to his readers to determine; and shall only observe, upon the performance in general, that whoever peruses it with attention, and without prejudice, will find in it all the marks of a benevolent, and well-disposed mind, greatly concerned for the advancement of the interests of virtue and religion. A judicious and considerate reader, indeed, will not often find occasion to entertain a very high opinion of the author's



judgment, but he will always have just reason to think favourably of his heart.

“THE descriptive part of the work is, in many places, entertaining and ingenious. Mr. HERVEY discovers an extreme fondness for the beauties of nature, takes great pleasure in delineating and displaying them, and endeavours to lead the minds of his readers from the consideration of them, to the contemplation of their divine author, and the methods of his providential government and administration. He introduces most of his dialogues with descriptions of some of the amiable scenes of the creation.

And though his transitions from these to the main subjects of his work are not always perfectly natural, yet this part of the performance will afford most entertainment to the generality of its readers, and be an agreeable relief from the argumentative part of it; wherein our sensitive faculties, to say nothing of the rational, are less concerned.

“ To diversify the work too, short sketches of philosophy are occasionally introduced, easy to be understood, and calculated to entertain the imagination, as well as to improve the heart; more particularly to display the wise and bene-

ficent design of Providence, in the various appearances, and numberless productions of the material world.”

IN 1756 he wrote a letter, which is prefixed to Mr. MARSHALL'S GOSPEL MYSTERY OF SANCTIFICATION, as no improper supplement to THERON AND ASPASIO. But in a letter prefixed to the fourth edition of Bishop FOWLER'S DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY, &c. published in 1759, both Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. HERVEY are animadverted on. Some passages in THERON AND ASPASIO gave offence likewise to those who were attached in general to

the author's own favourite system of Calvinism: the ARMINIANS too objected to that work, and Mr. JOHN WESLEY in particular, with some others, wrote against it. It is none of the least instances of our author's good sense, that he never gave into any of the enthusiastic notions of the Methodists. He also published three sermons in 1757, preached on the late public fast-days. To the third edition, which came out in 1759, after our author's death, were added his visitation sermon before mentioned, his posthumous sermon on THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, and his CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PREVAILING CUS-

TOM OF VISITING ON SUNDAYS.

He likewise published in 1757 a new edition of JENKS'S MEDITATIONS, to which he wrote a strong recommendatory preface.

IN 1757 he became a member of the assembly for Christian improvement, which was governed by twelve very good rules, though those would not be convenient for every society. His labours both in his ministerial office and in his study were pursued by him as long as possible, under the disadvantage of a very weak constitution of body, which, together with the severity of his last illness,

He supported not only with incredible patience, but without a single expression of peevishness. That illness which had been long coming on, greatly increased in the beginning of OCTOBER 1758, and grew very formidable in DECEMBER following, so that he soon became sensible of his approaching dissolution. He had frequent and violent returns of the cramp, attended with most acute pain; he had likewise a hectic cough, which broke his rest in the night, so that he could seldom lie in bed till four in the morning, and was often obliged to rise at two, especially as opium, how much soever guarded by other medicines, would

not agree with him. On the nineteenth the pains of his body abated, and he grew drowsy and lethargic; but in the night following his immediate death was apprehended. The next day, the twentieth, his physician, Mr. STONHOUSE, declared, that in his opinion Mr. HERVEY could not live above three or four days. The day before his death he went a few steps across his room, but presently his strength failed him, so that he rather sunk than fell down; but he fainted away, and was in all appearance dead. When he came to himself, and his brother said, We were afraid you was gone, he answered, I wish I had. On CHRIST-

MAS-DAY he complained much of a great inward conflict, and said two or three times, When this great conflict is over, then— but said no more. About three o'clock he said, The great conflict is over—now all is done; after which he scarce spoke any other words intelligibly, except now and then Precious salvation. During the last hour he said nothing, but leaned his head against the side of an easy-chair, and without a sigh, groan, struggle, or the least emotion in the world, he shut his eyes, and expired, between four and five in the afternoon, on CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1758, in the forty-fifth year of his age. When his body



1 THE LIFE OF

was conveyed to church, it was covered, by his express desire, with the poor's pall; and he was buried under the middle of the communion-table in the chancel of WESTON-FAVEL church on the twenty-eighth, in the presence of a numerous congregation, full of regret for the loss of so excellent a pastor. It may be said of him, that few lives have ever been more heavenly, few deaths more triumphant. In charity, though he had some few equals, yet it is certain he had no superior: for it was his desire to die just even with the world, always saying, I will be my own executor; and his fund almost expired with his life, the little that

did remain he desiring might be given in warm cloathing to the poor in that severe season. In his performance of the public service at church, two particulars are very observable. When his weaknesses obliged him to shorten his sermons, he concluded each head with a pertinent text of scripture, desiring his congregation to turn to their bibles, and double down that text. Now, added he, my dear brethren, if you forget my sermon, you cannot forget GOD's word in this text, unless you wilfully throw your bibles aside; shew these to your children, to the absent part of your family, when you return home. This obliged the ge-

generality of his hearers to bring their bibles. His method of catechising children in church was very engaging and useful. He would put little questions to them, after they had repeated the words of the catechism: as for instance, Well, my little maid, let me hear if you understand what you said; if you do understand the meaning of these words, you will then be able to answer the questions I shall put to you. He would at these times ask not only such questions as were suitable to the words of the catechism, but also such as would strike at the capital vices of the parishoners, yet without giving personal offence: thus, some of

his parishoners having lain in bed on a SUNDAY morning longer than he approved, and others having been busy in foddering their cattle when he was coming to church, and several having frequented the ale-house; he thus catechised one of the children before the congregation; Repeat me the fourth commandment— Now, my little man, do you understand the meaning of this commandment? Yes, Sir—Then if you do, you will be able to answer me these questions—Do those keep holy the Sabbath-day, who lie in bed till eight or nine o'clock in the morning, instead of rising to say their prayers and read the bible? No, Sir—Do those keep

the Sabbath-day, who fodder their cattle, when other people are going to church? No, Sir—Does GOD ALMIGHTY bless such people as go to ale-houses, and do not mind the instructions of their minister? No, Sir.

— IN point of learning, though not in the first class of scholars, yet he was far from being deficient. He was master of the three learned languages, and well read in the classics, of which the bible was his particular favourite: he esteemed it as the best, and thumbed it most: he was a critic in HEBREW, which is found only in the bible, and delighted

in it. In the younger part of his life he wrote some copies of verses, which shewed no contemptible genius for poetry.

He established a weekly lecture every WEDNESDAY evening, as well as preaching twice on SUNDAY; but in the latter part of his life, his health was so impaired, that he could only preach once on SUNDAY; and the last year of his life he was not able to continue his WEDNESDAY lecture, which gave him great uneasiness; but he encouraged all his parishoners, and other serious Christians, to resort to him, and converse free-

ly about their eternal interests. He always preached without notes, and to a very crowded audience; but when he drew near his end, his strength failed him so much, that after explaining and dividing his text, he gave them a few particular texts to read at home, and concluded with an earnest exhortation, as before mentioned. This was falling into a good Calvinistical practice of the famous old reformers. He made it his constant practice to level his discourses to the capacity of the meanest of his hearers, and never to shoot over their heads. In this he imitated the great LUTHER, who said, If in my preaching I were to pay a

regard to PHILIP MELANCTHON, and other learned divines, then I should do little good. I preach in the plainest manner to the illiterate, and that gives content to all. He always kept up the worship of GOD in his own family, and when he went abroad to visit, always introduced something that afforded instruction and consolation to those about him; nay, even in his own family, at his different meals, his discourses always tended to edification, as he was never without his bible, or GREEK testament, which were always his companions. He was of a most chearful and engaging temper, and had a particular turn for



moralizing and spiritualizing almost upon every subject. It was his usual method never to give any thing to strolling idle beggars, observing, that those who supplied them with money were encouragers of their vices. He always bought the cloaths for the poor himself, never allowing them to buy them; for which purpose he always applied to some eminent pious tradesman, who gave him every thing at prime-cost, or under; and gave large charities to distressed persons, by such means as it was impossible for them to come at the knowledge of the donor: and always in his charities observed the Christian rule, not to let his left

hand know what his right hand did in charitable affairs. He made interest with some of the gentlemen of the faculty, when they went through the different towns and villages where there were no regular physicians, to give their advice to such poor persons as should be recommended by the clergyman, or any other pious Christian; for he disapproved of the clergy's intermeddling with physick, as he thought it was impossible for them to do it with the necessary requisite judgment. He always got some pious apothecary to furnish the proper medicines, at prime-cost, and promised to pay them for their trouble. Nor was he less soli-

citous for the souls of the poor, for he gave away a great number of religious books, particularly bibles, and always inserted the promises and threatnings of the bible in some of the blank leaves. No man had ever so great a contempt of money as Mr. HERVEY; he esteemed it as unworthy of his notice, any further than as it furnished him with the means of doing good; an instance of which occurred just a few days before his death. When he had settled an account with a friend, wherein a ballance of eighteen shillings coming to him, he desired it might be laid out in printing a few hints concerning the promoting of religion in

ourselves and others, which were written by Mr. RICHARDS of NORTHAMPTON. He gave directions for some small improvements, so that it might be printed upon the side of a sheet, and hung up. As the reader may be desirous to know what they were, they are to be found in the appendix to his letters in two volumes. He made it the whole study of his life to improve every talent his LORD had given him, towards the advancement of his great MASTER's interests in the world, and for the common good of mankind, to whom he bore the most benevolent heart. But though this was his ruling passion, it did not screen

him from the malice of mankind; for an anonymous letter-writer sent him one by the post, wherein he told him, That his tenets were dishonourable to God, subversive of all gospel-holiness, and destructive even of common morality, and very injurious to society itself, by making men melancholy, and regardless of business. It is plain this writer had never read what Mr. HERVEY had advanced in his MEDITATIONS AMONGST THE TOMBS, volume second, page one hundred and twenty-four, where he observes, That real religion was never intended to make men renounce all converse with the world; and turn hermits; it was ne-

ver intended to make men idle, and neglect their business, but to make them industrious, not out of a principle of avarice, but out of conscience, as another worthy divine has observed, That a Christian should work with both hands. Religion was never designed to extirpate the passions, but to restrain their irregularities; so that all the different branches of trade may be carried on at the same time that a Christian is travelling to Heaven: for Christianity was never intended to withhold any real pleasure from its sincere votaries. Mr. HERVEY was a favourer of Calvinism, exactly agreeable to the articles of the church of ENG-

LAND, which the Arminians could by no means relish: though Mr. HERVEY was of so condescending a disposition, that he always declared, he was ready to retreat and alter any sentiment which was in the least liable to objections. This shewed the goodness of his heart, which is the only thing that will avail us at that great day, when the learned, the wise, and the mighty disputers of this world, shall stand for ever speechless and confounded. In short, Mr. HERVEY may be looked upon as a sort of miracle in our age, when we consider the holiness of his life, and his most exemplary behaviour.

To close this short account of his life, we shall insert his character from the **NORTHAMPTON MERCURY**, published after his death.

“ **ON CHRISTMAS-DAY**, in the afternoon, died, in the forty-fifth year of his age, the reverend Mr. **JAMES HERVEY**, rector of **WESTON-FAVELL**, near **NORTHAMPTON**, and author of the **MEDITATIONS ON THE TOMBS, FLOWER-GARDEN, &c.**—He was one of the most eminent instances of the power of Christianity upon the human mind. In his ministerial province he was pious,



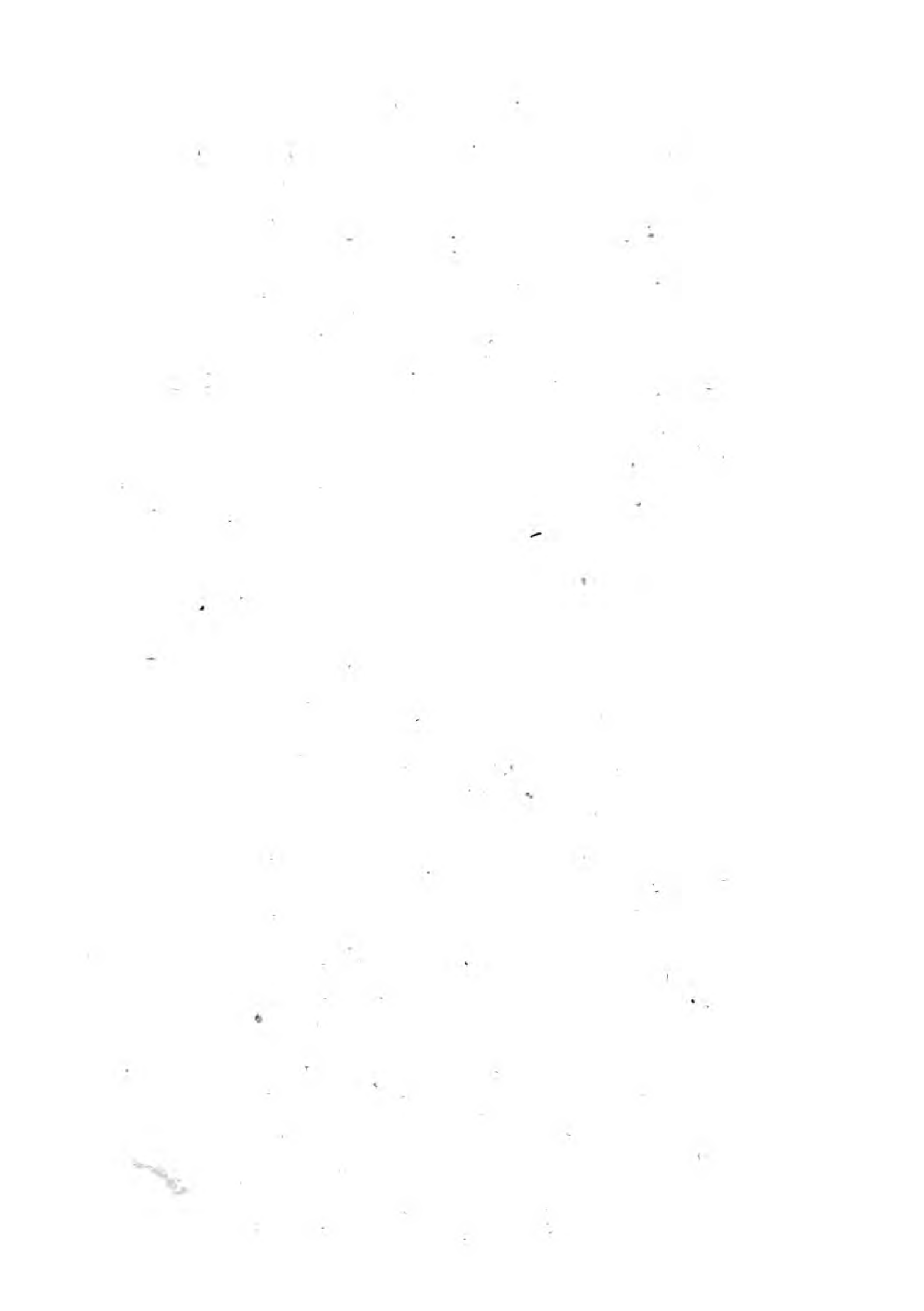
fervent, and indefatigable. In his ordinary connexions with the community, he was ever chearful, conscientiously punctual in all his dealings, and amiably candid to persons of every denomination. To his charities he set no bounds, scarcely leaving himself the mere requisites of his station. Under the severest trials of infirmity for several years, he displayed the highest example of fortitude, serenity, patience, and an entire resignation to the Divine Will. His writings most abundantly evidence his learning and ingenuity. But, reader, it is not the acquisitions of his under-

MR. JAMES HERVEY. lxvii

standing, but the improvements of his heart, and his confidence in the great REDEEMER, which will now avail the most excellent man.”

END OF THE LIFE.



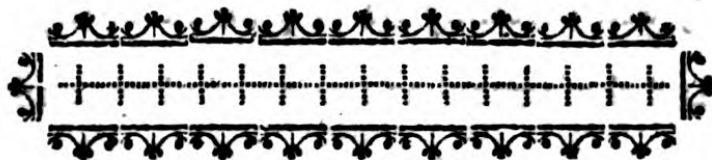


**S E L E C T L E T T E R S**

**O F T H E R E V E R E N D**


**M R . J A M E S H E R V E Y .**





T H E  
P R E F A C E.

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 R. HERVEY frequently wrote religious letters to his friends, upon various occasions, always taking care to have some striking passage of scripture in each of them, which might have some lasting impression on the mind. The following letters, which have not been hitherto print-

P R E F A C E.

ed, will certainly be of publick utility.

And those peculiar strains of piety, and that elegance of stile, which distinguish the other works of Mr. HERVEY, are so plainly discoverable in these, that no reader will, in the least, doubt of their being genuine.

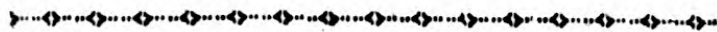




SELECT LETTERS

OF THE REVEREND

MR. JAMES HERVEY.




LETTER I.

TO RICHARD NASH ESQ; AT BATH.

Nov. 11th, 1736.

SIR,

 HIS comes from your sincere friend, and one who has your best interest deeply at heart; it comes on a design altoge-

A



ther important, and of no less consequence than your everlasting happiness, so that it may justly challenge your careful regard. It is not to upbraid or reproach, much less to triumph and insult over, your misconduct: no, it is pure benevolence and disinterested good will prompts me to write, so that I hope I shall not raise your resentment. However, be the issue what it will, I cannot bear to see you walk in the paths that lead to death, without warning you of the danger, without sounding in your ears that awful admonition, RETURN AND LIVE, FOR WHY WILL YE DIE? I beg of you to consider whether you do

not in some measure resemble those accursed children of ELI, whom, though they were famous in the congregation, and men of renown, yet vengeance suffered not to live. For my part, I may safely use the expostulation of the old priest, WHY DO YE SUCH THINGS? I hear of your evil dealings by all the people; nay, my brother, for it is no good report that I hear; you make the LORD's people to transgress. I have long observed and pitied you, and a most melancholy spectacle I lately beheld made me resolve to caution you, lest you also come into the same condemnation. A gentleman not long ago, one of the most

robust of body, and of the gayest temper I ever knew, but when I visited him, oh! how was the glory departed from him! I found him no more that sprightly, sparkling and vivacious person he used to be, but languishing, pining away, and withering, under the chastising hand of GOD, his limbs feeble and trembling, his countenance forlorn and ghastly, hastening a-pace to the dust, to lodge in the silent grave, that land of darkness and desolation, his soul just going to GOD, who gave it, preparing itself to wing away to its long home, to enter upon an unchangeable and eternal state.—When I was come up into his chamber, and

seated on his bed, he first cast a most wistfully look upon me, and then began as well as he was able to speak. Oh! says he, that I had been more wise, that I had known this, that I had considered my latter end! Oh! Mr. — Death is knocking at my doors; in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp, and then judgment, the most tremendous judgment, is the thing that I look for. How shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing and omnipotent GOD! How shall I endure the day of his coming! I asked him among other questions, what he thought of strict holiness, which he had formerly so much

flighted? Oh! replied he with a hasty eagerness, how highly I value it! I would gladly part with all my estate, or a world, to obtain it. Now my benighted eyes are enlightened, I clearly discern the things that are excellent. Oh! what is there in the place whither I am going but GOD, or what is there to be desired on earth but religion? But what would you do, SIR, if GOD should restore you to health? Do! I call Heaven and Earth to witness, I would labour for holiness as I shall soon labour for life: as for riches and pleasures, and the applause of men, I account them as dross and dung, no more to my happiness

than the feathers that lie on the floor. If the righteous JUDGE would try me, in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days! I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than to perfect myself in holiness: whatever contributed, every means of grace, every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver. But alas! why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late. The day in which I should have worked is over and gone, and I see a sad horrible night approaching, bringing with it the black-

ness of darknes for ever. Heretofore, alas! when GOD called, I refused, when he invited, I was one of them who made excuse: now therefore I receive the reward of my deeds, fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, I smart, I am in sore anguish already, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows. It doth not yet appear what I shall be; but sure I shall be ruined, undone, and destroyed with an everlasting destruction.

THIS scene I saw with my eyes, and heard with my ears, and quickly after attended the unhappy gentleman to his tomb. The poor skeleton spoke in such

an accent, and with so much earnestness, that I could not easily forget him or his words: and as I was musing upon this sorrowful subject, I remembered Mr. NASH. No sooner did I remember you, SIR, but I discerned too near an agreement and correspondence between you and the deceased. They are alike, said I, in their way, and what shall hinder them from being alike in their end? The course of their actions was equally full of sin and folly, and why should not the period of them be equally full of horror and dismay? I am grievously afraid for the survivor, lest, as he lives the life, so he should die the death of this



wretched man, and his latter end should be like his: for this cause I take my pen in hand, and counsel you to bethink yourself; nay, I request of you to repent while you have opportunity, if happily you may find grace and forgiveness. Yet a moment and you may die, yet a little while and you must die, and why will you go down with infamy and despair to the grave, rather than depart in peace, with hopes full of immortality? But I must tell you, SIR, plainly, and with the utmost freedom, that your present behaviour is not the way to reconcile yourself to GOD; you are so far from making an attonement to offended Jus-

tice, that you are aggravating wrath. For what say the scriptures, those books which at the consummation of all things the ANCIENT OF DAYS shall open, and judge you by every jot and tittle therein? What say those sacred volumes? Why they testify and declare to every soul of man, THAT WHO SO LIVETH IN PLEASURE IS DEAD WHILE HE LIVETH. So that as long as you roll on in a continual course of sensual delights and vain entertainments, you are dead to all the purposes of piety and virtue; you are as odious to GOD as a corrupt rotten carcass, that lies putrefying in the church-yard: you are as far from

doing your duty, or working out your salvation, and restoring yourself to the divine favour, as a heap of dry bones nailed up in a coffin is from vigour and activity. Think, SIR, I conjure you, think upon this if you have an inclination to escape the fire which will never be quenched. Would you be delivered from weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth? Sure you would: but be certain this will never be done by amusements, which at the best are trifling and impertinent, and for that, if for no other reason, foolish and sinful. It is by seriousness, it is by retirement, and mourning, you must accomplish this great and de-

firable deliverance; you must not appear at the head of every silly diversion, but enter into your closet, and shut your door, commune with your own heart, and search out your spirit: the pride of life and all superfluity of naughtiness must be put away, and you must make haste and delay not, for the time to come, to keep all *God's* holy commandments, always remembering that mighty sinners must be mightily penitent, or else be mightily tormented. Your example and your projects have been extremely prejudicial, I wish I could not say fatal and destructive, to many: for this there is no amends, but an alteration of manners,

as signal and remarkable as your person and name. If you do not by this method remedy in some degree the evils that you have sent abroad, and prevent the mischievous consequences that may ensue, wretched will you be, yea wretched above measure, to all eternity: the blood of souls will be laid to your charge, and GOD's jealousy, like a consuming fire, will smoke against you: and you yourself will see it in that day, when the mountains shall quake and the hills melt, and the earth be burnt up at his presence. Once more then I exhort you as a friend—I beseech you as a brother—I charge you, as a messenger from the

great God, in his own most solemn words,  
TO CAST AWAY FROM YOU YOUR  
TRANSGRESSIONS, MAKE YOU A NEW  
HEART, AND A NEW SPIRIT, SO INI-  
QUITY SHALL NOT BE YOUR RUIN.  
Now, SIR, my mind is eased, I have  
discharged the divine commission, in that  
I have spoken to you his words. Whe-  
ther you will hear, or whether you will  
forbear, henceforward I am clear; I shall  
in no wise be accessory to your misery;  
if you perish, your blood will be on your  
own head. Perhaps you may be dispo-  
sed to contemn this and its serious pur-  
port; or to recommend it to your com-  
panions as a fit subject for railing: but

let me tell you before hand, that for this, as well as for other things, GOD will bring you into judgment. He sees me now, I write; he will observe you while you read. He notes down my words in his book, and he will note down your consequent procedure, so that not upon me but upon your own self will your neglecting or despising my sayings turn. If you be wise, you shall be wise for yourself. If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it. Be not concerned, SIR, to know my name, it is enough that you will know this hereafter. Tarry but a little, till the LORD, even the most mighty GOD, shall call the heaven from above,

and the earth, that he may judge his people; and then you will see me face to face; there shall I be ready at the dreadful tribunal, to joy and rejoice with you, if you regard my admonitions and live, or to be a swift witness against you, if you harden your heart, and will mind none of my counsels.







L E T T E R II.

DUMMER, HOLY INNOCENTS,

Dec. 28, 1736.

GOOD MADAM,

**O**N this day was se'night I got safe to DUMMER, and ever since I have been so busied, that I have not had leisure, no not to my best friends to write; but now the hurry of my employment is a little abated, and I have some respite from walking in and out among my parishoners: This therefore is the opportunity for reflecting upon

and returning thanks to those who have wished and done me good. Accept then, MADAM, my best and sincerest expressions of gratitude, and go on to do good to multitudes, to six and to seven, so shall you be like our father who is in Heaven; he is merciful and gracious, and of great goodness, and that to the most unthankful and undeserving. For oh! what kind things has he done for me, ever since I left LONDON! He sent his angel before me, to be my guide and my guard in my journey; he preserved me from wrong and robbery; he kept all my bones, so that not one of them is broken; and at length brought me out

into a wealthy place; I mean into such a place which appears to be a good ground, mentioned by our LORD, and promises a comfortable increase to the gospel-fower:—Oh! may I scatter the seed plentifully by my instructions, and water it thoroughly with the dew of my prayers!—I parted from you and my Christian acquaintance on SUNDAY, that high and holy day, in which we had been taking sweet counsel together, and holding a still sweeter communion with GOD. The next morning I was encompassed with unhappy wretches, whose mouths were full of cursing and bitterness. Sad and lamentable exchange!

One day to be joining with saints in their devout supplications, to bear a joyful part in singing psalms of praise; and on the morrow to be grieved with ungodly speeches of wicked men, and surrounded with the horrible din of their execrations! Here I called to mind our poor first parents, thinking that my loss was in some sort like theirs: one while they were regaling themselves among the flowers, and in the goodly garden of EDEN; soon after they were wandering up and down among the thorns and briars of a wide world. Well, said I to myself, since we are constrained to dwell with MESHACH, and have our habitati-

on for a little while among the tents of KEDAR, it will at least make us long more earnestly for that blessed place, where dwelleth righteousness, where is no shame to curse, but only such innocent and holy ones as we are now commemorating, in whose mouths there is no guile. There we shall no more hear the voice of the slanderer and blasphemer, but the voice of joy and health shall make glad our hearts: thither, therefore, O my soul, hasten and aspire; meditate on those peaceful mansions, my heart, be talking on them, my tongue; yea, all my powers and faculties concur with the blessed spirit, to bring me safely to them,

In the morning, when I was going to step into the SALISBURY coach, I was told that I must not go in that, but in the WINCHESTER : I said I had taken a place in that, which I had by paying earnest secured, and so must demand a part of it : but it signified nothing, my seat was assigned to a great person, an officer's lady, who, though she came after me, yet, because of her riches, was preferred before me. Then remembered I a passage in ECCLESIASTES, which, with a little variation, was applicable to me ; GIVE PLACE, (says an imperious one) THOU STRANGER, TO AN HONOURABLE MAN ; A FINER AND RICHER

THAN THEE COMETH TO BE LODGED, AND I HAVE NEED OF THY ROOM. On this occasion I likewise reflected on the wonderful orderings of Providence, that he wisely disposeth all things, (even such minute things as these) for the good of every one of his servants. If I had went into that coach, and rode with that company, it is a thousand to one but I had come out from them much worse than I went into them. GOD is omniscient, so that in all his doings, as well when he disappoints as when he furthers, he is not only to be submitted to, but adored.

I HAVE read of St. AUSTIN, that as he was going out one evening to preach at a distant town, and not being himself thoroughly acquainted with the way, he took one that was to accompany and direct him. As they were walking, this very person whom he chose for his guide, and who knew those roads perfectly well, even was mistaken, and mislead the good man: and happy was it that they did; for in the way they should have went there lay in wait a band of blood-thirsty men, with a resolution to have murdered them. Who knows but some evil would have befallen me, if the all-watch-



ful eye had not taken this method to direct it?

•      WHEN I was settled in the coach, I was driven to a certain street, in order to take up another passenger; here we made a tedious stay, it rained, and was cold: the coachman fretted and grumbled, nor did I, though a preacher of peace, possess my soul in patience. This brought to mind our SAVIOUR'S promise, THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH. For though I was at that time the owner of a good deal of the most valuable kind of earth, of the white and yellow earth, that men call

money, yet, alas! I took no delight in it, I received no benefit from it; so fadly and uneasy, discontented, turbulent spirits marr the satisfaction of all our worldly advantages, making them in point of enjoyment as though we had them not; whereas if we have the contrary temper, it would produce the contrary effect: we should not only possess but enjoy; we should not only eat but taste; we should rejoice in the things that are our own, and perhaps in those that are another's; we should be the real (though perhaps others might be the titular) inheritors of the earth: let us say therefore to the LORD, Evermore give us this:

happy disposition.—At length there came a little master to be my companion; his mamma led him to the coach, though it was wet above and dirty below, and here was a moving sight indeed; the concern which the tender mother expressed for the poor little traveller struck me not a little; how did she beseech the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY to bless him and be his safeguard! How did she intreat me to take care of him, and to do what I could for his welfare! Indulgent woman! She need not have told me her mind, or the desire of her soul; her eyes, her accent, and the earnestness of her gesture spoke it sufficiently. This sug-

gested to me that comfortable scripture,  
 LIKE AS A FATHER PITIETH HIS  
 OWN CHILDREN, EVEN SO IS THE  
 LORD MERCIFUL UNTO THEM  
 THAT FEAR HIM. If a parent so loveth the fruit of her womb, how much more does our SAVIOUR love the redeemed of his blood? May this occurrence strengthen my faith as long as I live!—I intended, MADAM, to have troubled you with a full account of my journey, and all remarkable or useful circumstances that attended it; but I find my desire was extravagant and unweildy, not to be executed within the decent bounds of a modest epistle, therefore I

am obliged to desist, and shall only add a repetition of my thankful acknowledgments for the many favours I have received at your hospitable house; I recommend you to the protection and favour of Heaven, and am,

MADAM,

*Your very much obliged*

*And humble servant,*

J. HERVEY.



L E T T E R III.

DUMMER, April 15th, 1737.

GOOD MADAM,

**Y**OU know this day was se'night  
was remarkable for the most sur-  
prising transaction that ever the world  
saw; a transaction so full of wonders,  
that my ears seem to tingle at the late re-  
lation of it; the King of glory put to  
shame, the Lord of life slain, the Prince  
of princes crucified; He whom angels  
praise and adore, covered with contempt;  
He whom the Heaven of Heavens can-

not contain nailed to a tree; He in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, made a curse and an astonishment; the tender temples mangled with thorns, the back torn and ploughed up with the lashes of the scourge, the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet bored through and cleft with iron wedges, the gash in the side, and the spear plunged to the heart of the innocent lovely sufferer; his whole body discoloured with wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; all his bones out of joint, together with all the studious and unrelenting barbarity of the JEWS, make up such a night-piece of war as has never had any parallel. If

we had not the pure word of scripture to vouch for its truth and reality, we might well take it for the product of some gloomy imagination, affaying some masterly strokes in sorrow of the deepest distress. I admire at the invincible patience of our REDEEMER; I admire at that bloody sweat; I admire at the artful and merciless cruelty of his murderers; but chiefly I admire at that bloody sweat and bitter cry, and the extream anguish that caused them both. We do not find our SAVIOUR (so brave and courageous was his spirit) so much as shrink at all the soldiers could do; we do not hear him utter one complaint for all the bitter



pains of the flesh; but in the garden of GETHSEMANE what a mournful confession does he make! It was then a very cold night, and our LORD was in the open air; the bloody drops flowed from his limbs, and trickled apace to the ground; no outward violence was used, for his enemies had not apprehended him, nor his treacherous friend betrayed him, therefore, without doubt, the eternal GOD was at that time the executioner; His mighty arm was at that time stretched out, and his glittering sword unsheathed, to put the holy JESUS to sorrow: The afflicted REDEEMER struggled the fierce wrath of omni-

potence, which crushed him as though he had been in a wine-press, and stained all his garments. All that many millions of the most horrible provocations committed against infinite majesty, that the transgressions of ages and generations past and to come, any one of which was liable to be punished with eternal death; all that so many and such heinous abominations had deserved, did the almighty hand of GOD inflict, and the ever-blessed JESUS endure. Well therefore might the holy prophet cry out, in the person of CHRIST, WAS EVER SORROW LIKE UNTO MY SORROW? And well may every weak and feeble

Christian say, Is any comfort like unto the comfort which is derived unto my soul from the meritorious passion? Its benefits and blessings are incomparably greater and more inestimable than all the things that can be desired. How precious should that propitiatory death be unto us, and here should we make our boast of it all the day long! It is by virtue of this that I am still in the land of the living, and not consigned over to the fiery lake. Many a time would the almighty justice have awoke, and rendered me double for all my iniquities, had not our MEDIATOR interposed, and represented the satisfaction of his sufferings.

•

Whence but from this source arises all my present consolation, as well as my past preservation? When I find my foot has slipped, and I have been overtaken by a fault; when I feel my will unresigned, not in subjection to, but rebelling against, the good pleasure of GOD; what a cordial it is, how reviving and comforting to the soul, to remember that the LORD JESUS was falsely accused, wrongfully condemned, and most rigorously executed, that the guilt of those offences might not be laid to my charge! Oft-times I summon my best endeavours, and rally my poor resolutions, to attack my inbred corruptions, but still they re-

main triumphant. . . Often I look out by prayer for the help that comes from above, which alone is able to give a total overthrow to the whole body of sin; and because it is not speedily and sensibly sent down to my relief, the busy enemy would insinuate that my manifold sins have made GOD forget to be gracious, and have caused him to shut up his loving kindness in displeasure; that it is not for me, so very unrighteous, to expect so divine a gift as the holy spirit. When such dangerous suggestions as these are thrown upon the mind, what a happiness it is that we have such considerations as these to withstand them! In

vain, O Tempter, dost thou labour to shake our faith: It is not bottomed on any merits of our own, but built on the rock of ages, CHRIST; I am content, accounted as vile as words can express; but I know of a surety, (and O may I never be unmindful of it!) that the unworthiness of the servant, though greater than every thing else, is infinitely less than the worthiness of my LORD: If I was left to my own deserts, I confess it is undeniably true, that I must never hope for any good, nor to obtain any favour from the MOST HIGH. But trusting in the interest and intercession of an incarnate GOD, what is there that I may

not hope for? I myself am less than the least of all mercies; but for the Lamb that was slain and liveth for ever, the choicest blessings are not too valuable, nor the greatest abundance too much. To despise the world and long for GOD; to have our affections above, while our bodies are below; to be filled with charity, adorned with heavenly virtues, and to have all clothed with humility; these are gifts unspeakably rich; and if they were to be set up to sale, I know not whether the highest angel could bid high enough for them: but JESUS CHRIST, the everlasting SON, the only begotten and well-beloved of his FATHER, He,

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even He has bought them for us, and paid for them with his best blood, so that for his sake they are freely offered to all penitent sinners, without money, and without price.

If my paper would give me leave, how much more might be said upon this blessed subject! but I have not room to transcribe, by way of conclusion, the first verse of the eighteenth psalm, and apply it to our blessed REDEEMER.

I SHOULD not have deferred my thankful acknowledgments for your letter, &c. had not business great and un-



gent, and constantly recurring business,  
tied up my hands. I beg my humble  
service and thanks may be accepted by  
Mr. SMITH and Madam REEVES.

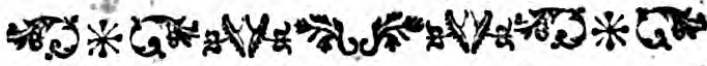
*I am, MADAM,*

*Your very much obliged*

*And humble servant,*

J. HERVEY,





L E T T E R IV.

GOOD MADAM SMITH,

**I** HUMBLY beg pardon for disappointing your expectations, and denying what was a condescension in you to ask, and would have been an honour for me to perform: though I know it was no manner of loss to you, yet I confess it was very rude, disobliging and ungrateful in me. Give me leave to say thus much for myself, that I mistook your meaning, and thought you had set me a Whitfunday, and not an Ascension task.

Surely, MADAM, for such a sinner to write upon such a subject as Heaven, is like the captive ISRAELITE singing the songs of SION in a strange land. How unfit and unable to do this! Our LORD is gone to his FATHER to receive the reward of his own obedience, and to prepare a place for his followers. But oh! who can describe that unknown felicity he is already possessed of, and which is laid up in store for the righteous? To paint the colours of the rainbow with my ink and pen were feasible and easy, in comparison of this; nay more, if any one give me the tongue of an archangel, and the years of METHUSELAH, and the pen

of a ready writer, I durst not profess, even in all that time, and with all those qualifications, to shadow out so much as the fourth part of that mighty bliss.

Arise, ye moles, forsake your beds of  
clay,

And shew the all-enlightning sun his  
way;

When Indian arrows pierce the yielding  
sky,

Leap forth, ye lame, arrest them as they  
fly.

Ye babes, present your breasts, and ward  
the blows,

When wide-mouth'd cannons pond'rous  
bolts disclose:

There's the same prospect of succeeding  
given,

When you try these, and HERVEY  
writes of Heaven.

THERE is one ingredient of the celestial happiness I shall be glad to bestow a glance on; it is by far the least and most inconsiderable, and therefore the properest to be touched on by a boyish pencil; it is what I have a quicker relish on than ordinary, by frequently wanting of it, and so am most inclined to think and speak of it, I mean the perfection

of body which the faints will enjoy. It will be refined and spiritualized, and so no longer a clog to incumber or press down the soul: there will be no more weakness and infirmity to disable, no more latent seeds of corruption to disincumber them to the exercises of devotion, when the spirit is willing to soar above this transient world, and make an excursion into the invisible state, and contemplate its adorable author. Oh! how often does the flesh, like an unmanageable dead weight, retard its flight, and fasten down to earth! But in the country we seek, the case will most comfortably be altered. Mr. B—t—n's com-

plaint of this kind will be turned to triumphs : He will no more feel his body interrupting, like a troubled medium, but facilitating the views of his soul, enlarging its prospect like a perspective, and speeding its motion like wings. How crazy are our earthly tabernacles ! How often do they languish, and how continually are they exposed to manifold diseases ! But when corruptible shall have put on incorruption, when this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written ;

**HIS EYE SHALL NOT WAX DIM, NOR HIS (MORE THAN) NATURAL FORCE BE ABATED : FATIGUE AND WEARI-**

NESS, DISORDERS AND DEATH, WILL  
BE FOR EVER SEPARATED FROM THE  
CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION;  
AND THEY WILL BE YOUNG AND  
LUSTY AS EAGLES, VIGOROUS AND  
ACTIVE AS THE ANGELS OF GOD,  
BRIGHT AND SHINING AS THE SUN  
IN THE FIRMAMENT. How agreea-  
ble and delightful a surprize will it be for  
those who have laboured under compli-  
cated maladies, and been the prey of lin-  
gering pains, to find themselves every  
whit whole! To feel a tide of never-cea-  
sing health flowing in their veins! The  
chambers of the grave seem to be like



the words of some universal infirmary, where every one of the misfortunes incident to human bodies are taken in hand to be cured, without any expence to the patient. We generally make one way to them through the agonies and pains of death; we are received into them perfectly cured, and set thoroughly to rights. They will send forth holy JOB healed of his biles, and LAZARUS of his sores, both of them meet to sit down with ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB. When old BAROILAI returns thence, he will forget and leave behind him the feebleness of his decrepid old age; he will not only be

able to hear the voices of singing men and singing women, but will bear a part himself in the joyous and exulting choir. Blessed, thrice blessed are they who have possessed their vessel in sanctification and honour, who have preserved their bodies pure and undefiled! The day is coming, yea hastens onward, they shall be established in a state of never-fading youth, and glory, and power. The LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT, who raises them from the tomb, will gird them with strength, cloath them with beauty, and nourish them with life and immortality: and if our vile bodies will be thus glorified,

how marvelously will our souls be perfected! If the cabinet be thus ennobled, with how superior and excellent a lustre will the enclosed jewel be made to shine! Well, though I cannot give you the least glimpse of it, yet GOD, through CHRIST, will give you the full enjoyment of it. It is yours, MADAM, in reversion, though we hope you will not enter into immediate possession: May you see it, but not now! May you behold it, but not nigh! And O may I also be his elect! Be pleased, MADAM, to pardon the improprieties of this, and beg of Him who forgiveth transgressions, to pardon the errors

MR. JAMES HERVEY. 53

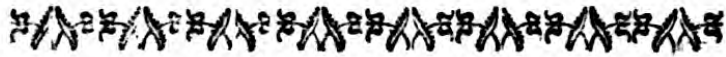
of my life; and permit me to profess myself

*Your very much obliged*

*And humble servant,*

J. HERVEY.





## L E T T E R V.

DUMMER, July 27th, 1737.

GOOD MADAM,

**I** RECEIVED your last, and thank you for it, and beg pardon for not doing it sooner. I went to BASINSTOKE the MONDAY after, with a friend to whom I committed the management of this affair, for I am quite unexperienced and unskilled in matters of this nature. We could not come to a sight of the carrier, but his wife engaged for the speedy payment of the money. I am sorry you

have not yet received it, and will the first opportunity put in practice your advice; I mean I will re-demand the money of him, and stay till I can have a safer way of conveying it to you. I hope the sum is recoverable, and still above water; but if it should be sunk, the same almighty power that caused the iron to rise from the bottom, and float on the surface, can fetch it up again. I hope I shall use all proper care, and then commit the issue to GOD, for He, MADAM, who numbers the hairs of our heads, has a hand in this matter. We greatly mistake if we imagine the injuries done by unreasonable and unjust men are all the work of

chance, or the sole effects of malice, exclusive of the divine providence; believe it is the supreme hand, though it is the occasion, that over-rules all the wicked actions done in the world. He sits on high, and turns them as the rivers of water, whithersoever He will. Very frequently His infinite wisdom directs their force against His own children, not to overwhelm but to purge them, not to consume but chastise them. - It may be I have been an unfaithful steward of the mammon entrusted with me; and my LORD and MASTER, who is in Heaven, may have taken this method to convince me of my fault, and reduce me to a more

Christian oeconomy, which is to be more sparing to myself, and more liberal to others. Oh! MADAM, of what admirable service are the support and aids of religion! What a sweet and sovereign cordial is the hope of everlasting felicity! Was that firmly engrafted in my heart, it would bear me up not only under the loss of my money, but under the loss of my blood. I should not only smile at such petty disappointments, but calmly behold the instruments of death preparing for me. Dear Mrs. SMITH, never cease to pray earnestly for me, that I may henceforth live as a person whose all is lodged in eternity; who longs for



nothing else but to serve his SAVIOUR  
in sincerity, and to win the approbation  
of the infinite GOD, that so I may con-  
clude with a full assurance of faith, that  
when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved,  
I shall have a house not made with hands,  
eternal in the heavens.

*I am, MADAM,*

*Your very much obliged*

*And humble servant,*

J. HERVEY.



L E T T E R VI.

MADAM,

**I** HUMBLY thank you for the kind concern you was pleased to express for my health. I am not yet robust and strong, so as to be fit for business, and therefore great is the goodness, tender is the care of Providence, in vouchsafing me a comfortable respite from it. The beginning of this week we were entertained with a curious concert of musick at Mr. ORCHARD's. This made me reflect on the immense goodness of GOD,

and that rich beneficence which exerts itself in such an infinite variety of ways. He it is and none other that causes all the delight we receive, all the pleasure we enjoy, when the tuneful artist strikes up and plays, and ravishes our souls with the sweetness of his notes. Let us not think ourselves chiefly obliged to the mortal hand, or the brittle instrument, the sounding strings, the skill to touch them, and the harmony produced; even they all are the LORD'S: was he to withdraw himself, the harp would be silent, the ear locked up in deafness, and the right hand of the musician would forget its cunning. It is GOD, the all-suffici-

ent and ever-blessed GOD, that is the sole fountain of every thing pleasing and delightful; it is he that charms in the nightingale's melody, that soothes us in the murmuring of the gentle brook; it is he that alarms us with the noise of his thunder; it is he that meets us in the fragrance of the blooming spring, that breaths deliciously from all the odoriferous plants, and fills the air with a profusion of sweets; it is he that fills the lively red that blushes in the rose; his is the virgin lustre that whitens the snow; and the flaming splendor that burns gloriously in the sun is his. He gives our food its agreeable relish, and furnishes it

with its nourishing virtue: he gives softness to our pillow, and makes our eyes to sleep, and our eye-lids to slumber. Indeed he gives delightfulness to all our delights, and comfortableness to all our comforts. O wonderful and diffusive loving kindness! It is strange that we are not continually admiring it, extolling and loving with all our souls the most amiable possessor of it. Would we frequently give our thoughts such a turn, and consider every pleasure we feel as a gift vouchsafed us by GOD, this would help very considerably to shed the love of GOD abroad in our hearts: We should by this means discern such numberless instances

of his liberality, we should see the oil of gladness swimming so sweetly on all our enjoyments, as would almost constrain us to gratitude; we should never be weary of serving him who is never weary of doing good to us: we should gladly pay him the best of our services who is incessantly pouring down the choicest of his blessings on us.

*I am, MADAM,*

*With very great respect and gratitude,*

*Your most obliged*

*And humble servant,*

J. HERVEY.



L E T T E R VII.

STOKE-ABBEY, Dec. 1st, 1738.

DEAR MISS,

**I** AM quite ashamed to write now,  
and I should not have ventured to  
write at all, had not good Mrs. SMITH  
given me reason to hope you would kind-  
ly receive my letter: If you do kindly  
receive it, and not reject it with disdain,  
I shall acknowledge it as an undeserved  
favour. The last time I had the pleasure  
of hearing from you was when I lived  
in HAMPSHIRE; your excellent letter

I brought along with me into DEVONSHIRE, and have both read it and gloried of it to some ladies in these parts. I heartily wish, MADAM, you may possess the pious spirit that breathed through your whole epistle, without any other change than that of a continual increase of it. Happy, greatly and supremely happy they, who give piety the first and earliest ascendant over their hearts, who remember their CREATOR in the days of their youth, before the evil days come, in which they shall say, we have no pleasure in them: before they contracted such evil habits as will fetch from them this sorrowful complaint: Oh! how



grievously difficult, how next to impossible is it to subdue them! — I read wonderful things of Mr. WHITFIELD; how powerfully should his prosperity and success encourage us to devote ourselves, while we are yet young, to the study and pursuit of godliness! Has he lost any thing by giving himself up to his SAVIOUR'S service in the prime of life? Has he not gained hereby the favour and good esteem of men, the approbation and extraordinary blessing of GOD, and such a peace of mind as passes all understanding? In case he had deferred the practice of holiness, he had deferred the enjoyment of happiness. It

is the most unwise choice, the unthriftiest management, to put off religion, which is the medicine of life, and health of our souls, till old age. How should we pity those who are sick, that think any time too soon to be made well! How should we blame a miserable creature, who had rather stay till to-morrow to be happy, when he has it in his power to be so to-day! I believe, Miss POLLY, you have chosen the better part; you are persuaded, that to live a life of holiness is the best and happiest thing in the world; that there is nothing fine but a holy, devout and heavenly mind, nothing desirable but to excel in virtue, and to be

conformed to the image of CHRIST, and to die possessed of as high degrees of piety as possible. In this persuasion go on and increase, and act more and more agreeably to it, only one thing let me remind you of, which is, that you study to be humble, for humility is a precious and inestimable jewel: seek it therefore and purchase it, at any rate; despise all human glory as a most wretched instance of human folly. Never desire the admiration of men, who must die; yet a little while and they must go down into the dust, and mingle with the earth we tread on, and then what good will applause do us? Let us endeavour to know

ourselves, how corrupt our nature is, and how unholy our practice has been, how foolish and vain the imaginations of our hearts are; that our best and brightest actions are unclean before the infinitely pure GOD; and as for our sins, they are exceeding sinful: that even our prayers would be abominable, if not recommended by a bleeding, dying, and interceding SAVIOUR. On such truths as these let us often meditate, and if the LORD bless our meditations, they will fill us with a lowly, humble, and self-abhorring spirit, than which nothing can recommend more effectually to infinite mercy; which, because it is the richest,

70 SELECT LETTERS OF

noblest, and the best of blessings, is most  
earnestly desired for Miss POLLY  
REEVES, by

*Her faithful friend,*

*And humble servant,*

J. HERVEY.





L E T T E R VIII.

BIDDEFORD, Dec. 30, 1738.

MADAM,

**I** AM under a double obligation to pay my respects to you at this time, and to wish you a happy new year, under an obligation of gratitude for your last obliging letter, and under a no less inviolable one, contracted by a promise. Give me leave then, worthy and honoured MADAM, with the greatest sincerity of desire, to wish you many new years, every one happier, and every one holier,

than the preceding. May every addition of years and months, yea of days and hours, bring you a fresh accession of grace, and goodness, till you become a thorough new creature, and at length be fitted to pass, by an easy transition, into the new JERUSALEM, there to sing the song amongst angels and blessed saints, with infinite and unutterable delight, to endless and everlasting ages. You see, MADAM, by the date where I am at present; I propose to make some little stay in this place, to preach here to-morrow, and to visit my friends the following week. May GOD vouchsafe to impart some spiritual gift to them by my mouth! As

soon as I came to town (see how frail and uncertain life is) I received the news of a most surprizing and melancholy accident. A boat, with about sixteen or seventeen passengers in it, was overfet, and every soul drowned. They were going to celebrate a wedding, and the intended bride and bridegroom were on board. Should not this frightful dispensation of Providence teach us to be ever in expectation of, and in a daily preparation for, our last and great change? Does not such a sweeping calamity loudly call upon us, to have our loins girded about with holy circumspection and watchfulness? To have our lights burning with unfeigned



devotion and piety, that we may be in continual readiness to meet the everlasting bridegroom? For if he should come at an hour we look not for him, and find us unmeet for his holy presence, dreadful and amazing! what would become of us! These people thought as little of a hasty summons into the other world as we do; but yet such a summons was issued out for them by that absolute LORD, who killeth and maketh alive, and none asketh him, what dost thou? O what little reason have we to place any dependence upon things here below! Yea rather, what great reason have we to account it all as deceitfulness and empti-

ness, a wretched scene of false and amusing vanity ! They promised themselves the pleasures and merriment of a wedding; but behold, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they are hurried away to the Judge of quick and dead: no more to eat, drink, and be merry, but to stand a trial for everlasting life, or everlasting death. The good cheer provided for the marriage is left behind, and they for whom it was provided are sunk deep, and rotting in a watry grave; their own flesh being now a feast for voracious fishes. Pardon me, MADAM, for detaining you so long on this unhappy accident. Give me leave before I conclude to

breathe out a prayer for your good mother, who you say is about to breathe out her last. May the consolation of GOD be strong upon her while she continues here, and may she go hence with hopes full of immortality! May JESUS, the great shepherd of the sheep, be her guide till death, her comfort and assistance in death, after death her recompence and exceeding great reward.

*I am, MADAM,*

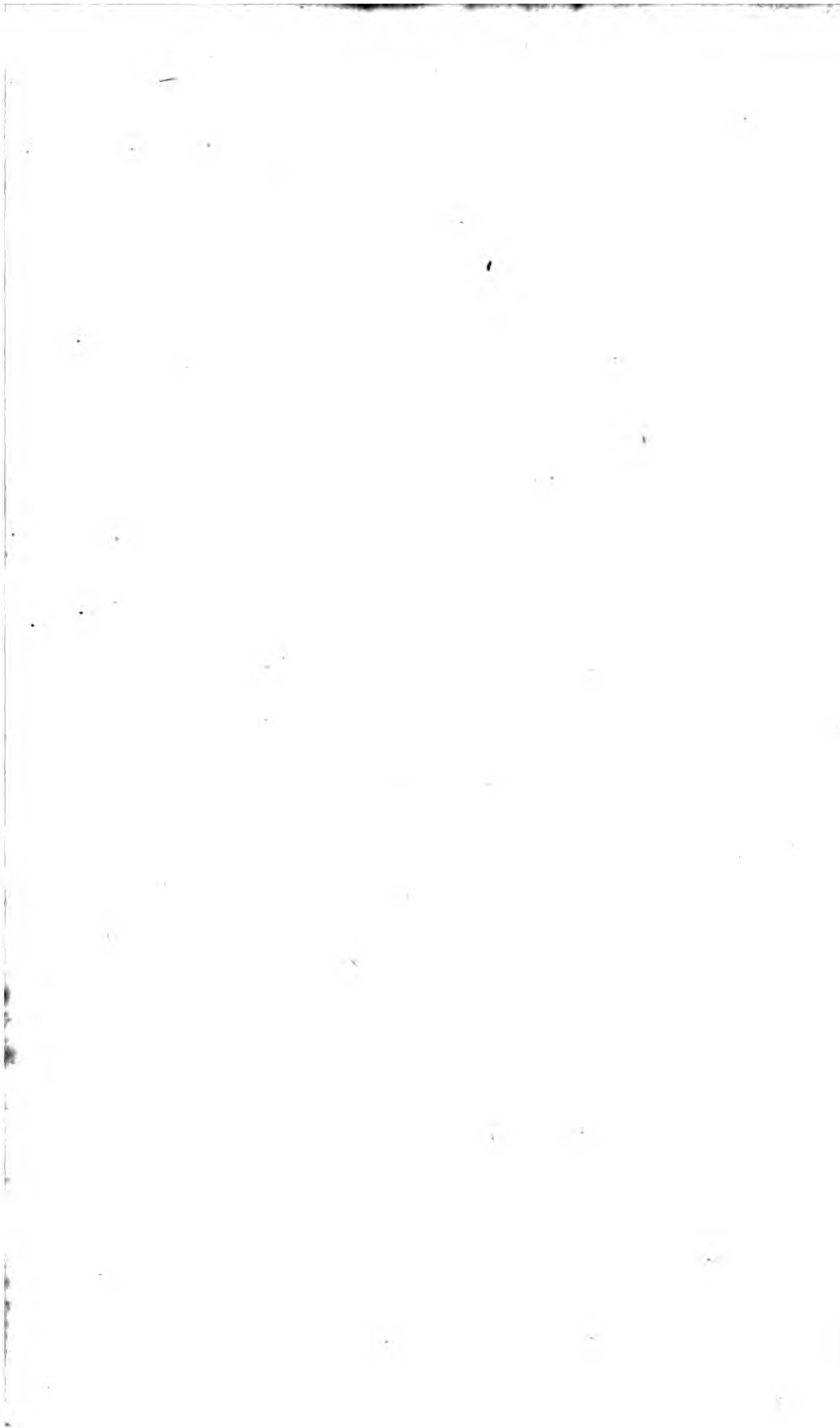
*Most sincerely and gratefully,*

*Mr. SMITH'S*

*And your humble servant,*

J. HERVEY.

END OF THE LETTERS.



1875

1875



