



A MEMOIR
OF
JAMES PARNELL
With Extracts From His Writings
By
Henry Callaway

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise, they seemed to die; and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction, but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of man, yet their hope is full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself.

LONDON

CHARLES GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE STREET

1846

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SITE EDITOR'S PREFACE

James Parnell's biography, with many outstanding letters included, is provided on this site because:

- 1) Parnell's young age, conversion starting at 14, made a minister by Christ at 16, and his powerful testimonies are proof of the power of the Holy Spirit to teach even a youth, resulting in his knowledge being light-years beyond what the ministers and preachers of today learn in their Bible Colleges or Seminaries. His youth, knowledge, and powerful ministry are reminders of the scripture: I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Prov 8:17. Parnell obviously found God, possessed him in great measure, and served him magnificently until death.
- 2) Parnell starts as he describes "the most wicked sinner, unsurpassed in evil" in his fellowship of mischief makers of the community in which he grew up. This should be encouragement to anyone who thinks they are too evil to be able to converted by the power of Christ, a doubt many have felt, after reading how pure George Fox was in his youth.
- 3) His martyrdom, a cruel death completely described within this memoir, at the hands of the Baptists and Calvinist Independents of England, is of particular interest and testifies to the authenticity of his faith - a faith that has become increasingly rare, and to almost cease to exist.

4) His letters speak to the conversion and crucifixion of self with such eloquence, such heavenly language, that whatever his age, they are more than worthy; and many will find their reading a heavenly blessing in themselves.

Suffering of his chosen ones has always been edicted by God: first to bring the chosen to perfection on the inward cross of self-denial that destroys the selfish spirit of man; and second, for very strong members of his body to suffer for other weaker members of the body, thus standing in for them to aid their maturity in Christ. This was documented by the Apostle Paul when he addressed the Colossians that he was suffering in their behalf. George Fox also suffered in behalf of others. James Parnell suffered unto death, the ultimate sacrifice of love for his fellow man; a sacrifice few are capable of making, and one that he knew was to be made, which he willingly endured out of love for his brethren; spoken to Friends by his side, his last words on his death bed were: *this death I must die*. He was the first Quaker to die in prison. Over three hundred died after him, either from being attacked by mobs in their meetings, or in prison. Jesus said: 'No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also'. James Parnell was a true servant of the Master and was highly favored by God: called at an early age, the spiritual father of thousands, and honored, as was our Lord and Peter, to die for his friends; for greater love has no man than he who lays down his life for his friends. *John 15:13*

Parnell reminds us that this life, which is estranged from God, is nothing, compared to Life in union with God. And he shows us that there is nothing worthwhile under the sun, but to live for the pleasure of God; for what else would a created being desire, other than to be pleasing to he who created him and gave him life? May we all be inspired to please our creator and to bring glory to his holy name.

Aside from the power of his words that he has left us, as so fortunately recorded in this *Memoir*, he has left us another inspiring work: *Does Christ or Scripture Rule?* - Also available on this site for your reading.

The biographer plainly tells us of his not attaining what Parnell pleads with all to possess. As God required Paul to address the Jewish Synagogues, so will he always desire those, who truly possess his Spirit, to proclaim Truth to their fellow men. The fact that the biographer did not feel required to reach the Seed, white on the ground, awaiting harvest, instead thinking it peculiar that the early Quakers *felt required to press upon the attention of their fellow-men*, only testifies to his lack maturity through crucifixion of self on the inward cross of self-denial. For anyone truly living in Christ, would be overwhelmed by their love for the souls of their neighbors and would risk ridicule to share with them the Truth and its heavenly rewards. So the Quakers of the early 1800s were already in a form, while **The Missing Cross to Purity** was plainly explained in hundreds of early Quaker writings; yet they were deaf to its call and to its heavenly reward, which went unclaimed. I cannot but wonder what has prevented the thousands of previous readers, as illustrated by this biographer, from seeing the far higher, but obviously attainable, spiritual state of James Parnell and scores of other early Quaker writers; instead to assume they were only writing with flowery Biblical terminology, and thus missing the good news of the promise - while alive on earth, to be translated into the Kingdom of Heaven and into union with Christ and the Father, through death of carnal self on the inward cross of self-denial. As Jesus said: Those who are strong and well have no need of a physician, but those who are weak and sick; I came not to call the righteous ones to repentance, but sinners. As he has told me, "it is hard for those in a form to hear the call of repentance to truth."

HENRY CALLAWAY'S PREFACE

The history of James Parnell, (who at the early age of sixteen, was made " an able minister of the Gospel," and when about nineteen, was called to evidence the stability of his faith, and to seal his testimony to the Truth, by long and painful suffering, even unto death), cannot but be interesting to the religious Society, which numbers him among the first advocates of its principles, and which has to place his name first on the list of martyrs. His character is already well know to Friends, as being remarkable for youthful dedication, faithfulness, zeal, and patient endurance, for the cause of Truth; but until now there has not appeared any detailed account of his life. The following sketch has been prepared, with the hope that his worthy example might be thus made more extensively useful. His career, though bright, was very short; the memoir, therefore, is necessarily brief. The materials from which it has been compiled, are scanty and scattered; it is, therefore, defective in many particulars, which would doubtless be interesting, but which now can never be known. Some letters and extracts from his writings, have been interspersed. These have been selected principally, with a view

to illustrate his character – the condition of the religious community in this country, at the time of the rise of our Society – and the truths, which our early Friends believed themselves especially required, to press upon the attention of their fellow-men. Some slight verbal alterations, corrections, and transpositions, have been made, but throughout the sense of the original has been carefully preserved; in a few instances, where the meaning appeared obscure, these alterations have been acknowledged by the use of brackets. Many of his writings are very excellent, and indicate a deeply reflective and enlightened mind; the are, however, frequently lengthy, and since the same subjects have been discussed more forcibly, by other members of our Society, it does not appear necessary to republish them here.

There is one class among us, to which the compiler would particularly recommend the perusal of this memoir, - *the young men*. Surely they may see in the early dedication, and the steady perseverance of this faithful youth, a stimulus to increased exertion in the cause of truth and righteousness, if happily, they have already given in their names, to serve in the Lamb's warfare. But, are there not those, who may here read a reproof for their luke warmness in relation to the holy testimonies, for which James Parnell, through divine grace, was made willing to suffer, even unto death? Oh! May these hear the reproof, and be led to examine, with earnest desires for divine guidance, the foundation on which those testimonies are built. It is believed, that such an examination, if pursued in a right spirit, would lead them to the undoubting conclusion, that our early Friends did not "follow cunningly devised fables," nor suffer for the mere opinions and notions of men, but that they were taught by the Spirit, principles in accordance with immutable truth – principles which appear only the more bright, the more fully they are brought to the searching light of the Sun of righteousness. And let us remember that the power which upheld the faithful James Parnell is still the same. The arm of Omnipotence is not shortened; His ear has not become heavy. Let there be only the same unquestioning obedience, - the same willingness to follow without murmuring, the manifested will of God, - the same faithful reliance on His guidance, - the same practical assurance, that He will give strength to His children, according to the requiring of the day; and we shall know now, as it was known then, that the Lord is "waiting to be gracious," waiting for ready hearts and willing minds, to which He would make known the greatness of His power, the riches of His grace, and the preciousness of His salvation.

H. C.

London,
8th Month, 1846

MEMOIR OF JAMES PARNELL

JAMES PARNELL was born at Retford, in Nottinghamshire, in 1636. It is not easy to ascertain the precise station in life in which he lived. It is stated in the legal document by which he was imprisoned to Colchester Castle that he was a "laborer." He says of himself that when he was not occupied in the service of the Truth, he was engaged in an "outward calling;" and that "he claimed no property in the earth." It is therefore probable that his circumstances were poor. Our historian, Sewel, informs us that he was "trained up in the schools of literature;" a statement probably derived from a remark by James Parnell that he was "sent to schools of human learning to learn human wisdom, for which purpose the schools were profitable." His writings, however, seem to indicate that, while he had received an education beyond the average of that day, it was limited; and it certainly did not extend beyond his fourteenth year. Henry Tuke, with good reason supposes that he might have received instruction at the grammar school at Retford; and it is highly probable that the following remark of James Parnell had references to the classical authors, "Many of the books which are read, [in the schools of human learning], greatly corrupt youth by nurturing the wild, profane nature, which then ruled me."

He thus commences a short account, which he wrote while in Colchester Castle, of his religious experience:

“First, I shall give the reader a declaration of the work of God in my soul, and the conversion of my heart from darkness to his marvelous Light; and from the power of Satan unto God; and from the path of death into the path of life, where I now walk in the Light of my God, and with the ransomed of the Lord, who are traveling towards the Holy City; and also the cause of my coming forth into the world to declare the Truth, for which I now suffer bonds by the persecuting generation.”

He says that he was once a child of wrath, as all are by nature, and followed the vain courses and ways of the world. His wicked natural propensities were nourished by the education he received; so that while he was at school, and after leaving it, the same depravity of heart remained, and grew in sin, and continued to follow the sinful vanities of the world. He was trained up in the customary worship of the nation, and attended the service on First-days; but as his religious exercises were not associated with any real conversion of the heart, and were undertaken in his own carnal will, he afterwards regarded them as mere idolatry.

But, even at this stage in his life, while estranged from God, and following the gratifications or the carnal mind, he was from time to time aware of the visitations of a heavenly light; not known to be of heavenly origin, but was at first “shining in the darkness,” not understood as to where it came from, or where it went. This Light would spring up in his heart when he was alone, and reprove him in secret for his transgressions; by which he was often led into serious self-examination considerations of his ways; and life and death were at times set before his eyes in such a manner, as to cause him to determine to forsake sin; but, being ignorant that these “reproofs of instruction” were the strivings of the Spirit of Truth with him, and not yet knowing that all strength and sufficiency to overcome sin could be derived from God alone, these determinations were made in his own will, and were kept only until his resolutions were tested by some fresh temptation, when the careless mind again wandered, and “led him to still delight his heart in the vanity, which the eye saw, and the ear heard.” But the pleasure derived from such vanities passed away with the using, and he was left to judgments renewed for his transgression; for the Spirit of Truth still followed him, “convicted him of sin,” and called him to repentance and amendment of life. The more he inclined his mind and drew near to God in these inward manifestations, he found that God drew nearer to him, so that after some time he had to thankfully confess: “He was found by Him when had not been seeking;” for he felt that it was the free, unmerited, and unsought goodness of the Lord towards him, “the chief of sinners,” that had called him to repentance in time creating a reforming of his heart. Thus God created in him, “both the will and the performance of it,” and plucked him as branch from the burning fire, to make him an instrument of honor in His house.

James Parnell states that he was, based on his age, “as perfect in sin” as any in the town where he lived, and that he exceeded many in the wickedness of his life. In this state he was loved by the worldly-minded people around him as being one them. But when the Lord had been “pleased to make known His power in him, and to turn his heart towards Him, truly to seek Him,” the change which was effected by divine grace caused him to become a wonder to the same people, and they hated and rejected him in his converted state with the same intensity as they had previously embraced him, when he had been leading an ungodly life. Even his own relatives, being in their carnal mind, which does not understand the things of the Spirit, tried to draw him away from the faithfulness to God and to destroy the work which He had begun in his heart. When they could not succeed in forcing him to conform to the world, in its “invented fashions, customs, traditions, ways, fellowship, and worship,” (for his eye, having being opened by the power of God, he perceived the idolatry of such things, and could no longer practice them), they became his greatest enemies and fostered persecutions against him, so that he became “a mockery in the streets,” and was considered unworthy to live among them; and some even said that it would be doing God a service to kill him. But this dedicated youth’s response was: “He who called me out from among them to Himself, that I might no longer follow the vain ways of the world or set my joys on the things of the world, but instead to serve Him in newness of life so that in me His workmanship might appear to the confounding of the heathen, who did not know him; He by His power kept me and gave me strength to bear His cross and despise the shame; so that neither fair words nor foul words could cause me to deny what God by His grace had created in my heart.” And feeling the preciousness of being brought into a spiritual relationship with his heavenly Father - feeling the incomparable value of being a son of God; and if a son, then an heir, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, he was made willing and enabled to go out from among his relatives and acquaintances and to “become a stranger to them who did not love truth.”

The real conversion of his soul was evidenced by a walk in the high vocation with which he was called,

and his vocation effect clearly showed the worldly character of the priests, whose ministry he had been previously accustomed to attend. While he lived in the vain conversation of the world, the priests took no notice of him; for since they were as deep in the world's spirit as others, they upheld by their lives and conversations the same evil, which they condemned in their sermons; thus they disqualified themselves to converting any individual members of the flock. They condemned sin in the aggregate, but feared to speak against it in particular cases, lest they should bring a reflection on their own lives; but as soon as a James Parnell manifested, by a closer walk with God, that he was truly and in earnest, on God's side - as soon as fruits manifested that he had been grafted into the true vine, and lovingly partook of its living sap, they became his enemies, and said, "he was deluded." When James Parnell found that the priests were carnal, and, with the people who followed them, had only a *form*, while they denied the life and *power* of true religion, he separated from them, and sought a people with whom he might have unity.

George Fox had left his relations, and was engaged in his mission in a private way, as early as 1643; but it was not until 1648 that he began his ministry in an extensively public manner, at which time Fox says, "Many meetings of Friends, in several places, had been gathered together to God's teaching, by his light, spirit, and power." The great work which has been mentioned as progressively going on in James Parnell's mind, and the decisive step of separating himself from the national mode of worship, took place before he was fifteen years of age, that is before 1652, by which time Friends must have been known as a people. There were, however, no Friends in the place where James lived, and up to this time he had no conversations with any of those with whom he was after united as a people who were gathered "to worship God in Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Indeed, it is clear from his own writings, that the work was the work of God alone by His Spirit in his heart; and he forms one among the many instance with which the early history of our Society abounds, of those who without communication with others, were led by the same Spirit to adopt some of the most important principles of truth.

It seem probable, that it was in the year 1651, when he was about fourteen years of age, that he separated from the carnal professors, [a professor was someone who stated their belief that Jesus was the son of God and the scriptures were true], and sought a people with whom he might become united in religious fellowship; and he says, "there were people with whom I found union a few miles from the town where I lived; whom the Lord was gathering out of the dark world, to sit down together and wait upon his name." With these he bore "the reproach of Christ," and was willing for His sake, to be numbered among those, who were regarded as the off-scouring of the earth; but in their afflictions and persecutions for the Savior's sake, they rejoiced in remembering that it was written, that they who would live godly in Him, should suffer persecution; and considered it greater riches to be His people, and to suffer the hatred and contempt of all, than to enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season;" and knowing that they were suffering for His sake, they felt their confidence fixed on Him alone, and in His strength were raised above all their trials.

"About this time," says James Parnell, "I was about fifteen years of age; and afterwards I was called forth to visit some Friends in the north part of England, with whom I had union in spirit before I saw their faces." It was probably during this visit to the north, that he went to see George Fox, who in 1653 was in prison at Carlisle, in whose journal we find stated "while I was in the dungeon in Carlisle, James Parnell, a little lad of about sixteen years of age came to see me and was convinced." From this remark of George Fox, it appears that until this time, James Parnell had not encountered any Friends, although the people with whom he had before associated in religious worship, had been brought near to some of their principles; and that from what had gone before, it is evident that James Parnell had already experienced real conversion of the heart; had been brought to see the formality of the priests, and had separated himself from the customary form of worship to wait on the Lord alone, so that by this meeting with George Fox, he was merely convinced that the Truth which he preached was the same as that which he was led into himself by the Spirit of Truth; and specifically that the despised and persecuted people named Quakers, were the people chosen by God in that day to show forth His praise. George Fox at this time was about thirty one years of age, and had been engaged in preaching the Truth for about seven years. It must have been an unspeakable comfort to him, when imprisoned for the Truth's sake to have received this visit from a "little lad;" to hear from him "what the Lord had for his soul," and to trace in his experience fresh evidence of the substantial reality those great principles, which had been opened to his own mind. And not less comforting must it have been to James Parnell, to meet with this father in Israel, and to receive confirmation of his own faith, and a conviction of the Truth, by conversation with such an elder. It is remarkable, however, that he nowhere mentions the name of George Fox. It is uncertain how long James Parnell stayed with him, but we find him mentioned as

being in his company at Drayton, where he had a dispute with Nathaniel Stephens and several other priests, in 1654.

James Parnell returned home from the north, and for a time pursued his outward calling and was favored to experience the Lord's work progressing in him, and His Truth more and more fully manifested to his soul. Keeping faithful to the measure of light imparted to him, through the strength of divine grace, he was soon called to proclaim the Truth to others. George Fox says, "the Lord quickly made him a powerful minister of the Word of life, and many were turned to Christ by him, though he lived not long." At first he was not sent far from his home in the service of Truth; and while occasionally engaged in the Lord's work, was still concerned to fill up the intermediated time with diligent attentions to his outward calling. When he was between seventeen and eighteen years of age, probably about the middle of 1654, he was sent to a people about fifteen mile distant to whom the Lord was teaching the way of Truth. He did not know when he left his home, that he should have to go further that that place; but when he got there, he was moved to go to Cambridge, and from this time on he was apparently exclusively occupied in the Lord's service, either by preaching, by writing letters to confirm those who were convinced, or books against the opponents of Truth, and by lying in prison for his testimony and faithfulness to the cause of Christ.

He went to Cambridge without knowing what was to be done for him there, or what he might have to do; and without being acquainted with any in that place, who would receive him into their houses. He had heard that the Mayor of Cambridge had caused two Friends to be whipped for declaring the Truth, as they passed through the town, and not knowing but that a similar portion awaited him, in obedience to apprehended duty, and without conferring with flesh and blood, or being intimidated by the rumor of persecution which others had experienced, he faithfully proceeded on his journey, and was comforted by the Lord's presence and direction.

Having arrived at Cambridge he was gladly received by some, and learnt that there was a Friend in prison for declaring the same testimony, with which he was himself commissioned. This did not deter him, however, from publishing, within a fortnight after his arrival, two papers, the one "against the corruption of the magistrates," and the other "against the corruption of the priests" for which he was committed by William Pickering, mayor, to prison. The day of this committal appears from the following remark in a letter from Richard Hubberthon to Francis Howgill, dated 4th of 9th month, 1654:- "James Parnell and I are in the dungeon as yet, where we were put the 28th of this last month; but we feel the mighty power God, and are in joy and peace in the Lord: to him be praise eternal for evermore." James Parnell might have escaped this imprisonment, if he had been willing to "give bond for his good behavior;" in allusion to which he has remarked :- "I am redeemed out of the generation [which is guilty] of misdemeanors; and was bound to good behavior by a stronger bond than man can make. He was detained in prison, at Cambridge for the time of two sessions, his enemies not being able to charge him with the of breach of any law. At the second session, a jury was summoned and an attempt made to prove the papers which he had published, "*scandalous and seditious*." The jury men appear to have been possessed of a more independent spirit than was common in those days, when a few individuals often had power to twist them [the laws] as they would, to act against everything associated with our sense of what is due to our fellow-men, and to the established laws of the community. They brought in their verdict, "*that they found nothing, to indicate that the papers were his*." His enemies being thus crossed in their intentions of obtaining a legal form, under the cloak of which they might continue to persecute him, even though they had so long unjustly detained him in confinement, did not so immediately liberate him, but re-committed him to prison for three days; and then sent him out of town under an escort of men bearing arms and staves, and with "a pass under the name of *rogue*." But on the day following, a justice of the peace, coming from Cambridge, and knowing that he was innocent, "witnessed the pass to be false and took it back." Thus Parnell was set at liberty. But, despite the rough treatment that he had experienced during his first visit, he soon believed it was required of him to return to Cambridge again; where in parts adjoining, he openly and freely proclaimed the Truth for about six months. Many gladly received his message, but he says, "*there were more adversaries; yet Truth spread and conquered over its enemies*."

James Parnell, being young in years and "little stature," and "poor in his outward presence and appearance," was named "the quaking boy," by the "envious professors," [a professor was someone who stated their belief that Jesus was the son of God and the scriptures were true]. Against whose formality and carnal security he was engaged to testify. Samuel Cater had been an elder among the Baptists, but having been convinced of the Truth through James Parnell's ministry, he became

affectionately attached to him, and kept with him as much as he possibly could; he thus had and opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with him, not only as related to his public ministry and doctrine, but also as to his private character. He informs us that, despite his youth and poor appearance, he was remarkably endowed with divine wisdom, and "in the name and power of the living God," was able "to stop the mouths of those, who came forth in the strength of the power of darkness to oppose Truth and God, to catch them in their own snares, and to confound them in the sight of all who had eyes to see. He had "a good gift to declare the Truth," was full of zeal and heavenly courage in bearing an unflattering testimony to all, and was eminently qualified for every service to which he was called, being enabled to divide the word aright, both by giving instruction to honest, seeking minds, and by marking out and manifesting deceivers. He called people to repentance, and to turn to the light of the Spirit of Truth which visited their hearts, that through the power of Jesus Christ they might come to experience their souls renewed, their lives sanctified, and their hearts brought into peace with God. He exhorted them to come away from the teachings of carnal men, and from their confidence in the arm and wisdom of flesh, to lean on the strength, and depend on the teachings of, Jesus Christ alone. - to learn in His Light their own conditions, and the way to an efficacious apprehension of Him, as their Savior. And when any had turned to the Truth, he was earnest in his exhortations to them, that they might be careful to walk in the Truth to which they had turned, to watch unto it, to walk in God's fear, and to deny themselves; to bear the daily cross, and to be faithful to that little measure of light and truth that had been already received, that thus they might come to know more. But he not only proclaimed good doctrines, but was also good example and pattern in life and conversation, by which he preached the Truth to them, as well as by words. He was grave, humble, blameless in his conversation, and unspotted from the world; patient and meek under the sufferings he endured for the sake of Christ; diligent and willing in the Lord's service, even at the jeopardy of his life." Thus his presence was a strength and comfort to the upright, but an awe and dread to those who did not walk answerably to the profession which they made. "He was" Thomas Bayles has remarked, "an innocent man, and lived in the testimonies and the fear of God; he sought nothing here for himself, but alone labored and travailed, so that the people might be brought to the knowledge and love of God." The reader will be interested in the following treatise, selected from James Parnell's works; it appears to have been the first of his publications. It was written in 1654, when he was seventeen years of age. It is entitled, "A TRIAL OF FAITH: wherein is discovered the ground of the faith of the hypocrites, which perishes; and of the FAITH of the SAINTS, which Is founded upon the Everlasting Rock; so that all may see what their faith is, and what they trust to."

Come! try your faith - all you professors, [a professor was someone who stated their belief that Jesus was the son of God and the scriptures were true], of godliness, of God, and of Christ; who say God is your Father, and Christ your Redeemer; and that you believe in God, and are saved through faith in Christ. Come! Search the ground and bottom of your faith, upon what it is built; for the faith and hope of the hypocrite perish, (Job 8:13), which stand in words, and on an unsteady foundation.

You say, you are saved by the blood of Christ, and by his stripes you are healed; so would make Him the ground of your faith. But from what are you saved? And of what are you healed? Search within and see. Christ came to save and redeem sinners from their sins, and to heal them of its wound, - to bruise the serpent's head, - to bind the strong man and cast him out of his house; to open the prison doors, to set at liberty the imprisoned, and to lead captivity captive; cast antichrist out of the temple of God, who sits there as God, and says he is God. And Christ came to rend that veil of darkness, open the eyes of the blind, and to unstop the deaf ears, - and to make blind those that can see, and to make deaf those that can hear; to give strength to the weak, and to make weak those that are strong; to feed the hungry, and to starve the full; to make a separation between the precious and the vile, between the wheat and the tares - the sheep and the goats; and to purchase to man, that which man has lost. To this end He came. And they who can witness this, can witness Him, and may claim a possession of Him, and have an assurance of their salvation; and their faith will stand against the beast, and overcome; for the Lamb shall get the victory. But they who cannot witness this, cannot witness Christ, and so are the reprobates concerning the faith. Now here - all you drunkards are shut out; all you swearers are shut out; all you scoffers, and backbiters, revilers, extortionists, and envious ones, and f gamblers, and who take pleasure in sports are shut out. And all you self-righteous *believers* who live in the fashions and customs of the world, delighting in the pleasures and vanities of the world, and having fellowship with it, whose conversation is among the children of the world; all in one generation, cleansing only the outside of the cup, while the inside is full of lust and filthiness, pride, covetousness, and all uncleanness; you are a whitewashed wall and painted tomb who deceives the carnal eye and ear: - *but the Lord searches the*

heart. You are all shut out of the true faith, which purifies the heart; the serpent [your selfish spirit] is the head in you, and your strong man keeps the house, and a stronger man than he has not yet come; but the antichrist sits in the Kingdom [the ego which rules in your heart is antichrist] as an “angel of light;” and the wound of sin is still fresh – the veil of darkness is spread over you, and death reigns. Christ lies low in the manger, and the inn is taken up with other guests. And here, you can claim no possession of the blood of Christ; you have nothing to do to talk of God and Christ, and you have no right assurance of your salvation, [only what you read and others tell you]. All your faith is vain, and your hope is vain; and the foundation thereof is sandy, and will not stand in the day of trial, but will be as a broken reed to lean upon. And all your prayers and praises, singings, graces, baptisms, and sacraments, upon which you build your faith, and think to be of value, are in vain, being offered up from an unclean heart. For how can your hearts be clean while you live in sin? For sin lodges in your hearts; and while sin is there, purity cannot dwell there; nothing that is pure can come forth from an unclean vessel. God does not put his treasure in an unclean vessel. He is pure and receives nothing that is impure. And here, all you faith is shown to be vain; for you destroy your faith out of your own mouths, who say you believe you shall never overcome sin so long as you are in this world, and that you shall never be made free from sin. And here you show that your faith is not built upon Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil and to cleanse from all sin. And they whose faith was built upon Him did witness it, and said, “The blood of Christ has cleansed us from all sin; and they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, which are the ground of sin; and he that believes is born of God; and he that is born of God cannot commit sin.” So now, what right assurance have you of your salvation; or upon what is your faith built, when both Christ and the scriptures testify against you? Faith, which is not built on the rock, Christ Jesus, is vain, and perishes; and he who hath the [right] hope in him, purifies himself, even as He is pure. Here your faith is searched, tried and proved, and is found all vain and perishing; and so is not built upon the Rock, which perishes not.

Therefore, come down, all you high-minded Pharisees; lay aside all your professions; throw down all your old building, and begin to lay a new foundation. For the higher the Pharisee climbs, the greater will be his fall; and he that will be wise must first a fool; *for man by his own wisdom knows not God.* Therefore the Pharisee, who stands in his own wisdom, is shut out from the saving knowledge of God.

And all you willfully blind, carnal, ignorant tares, whom my soul pities, when I see how ignorantly you are led, who pin your faith on the sleeves of your forefathers, blind in lightness and wantonness, spending youth in vanity, in gambling, pleasure and sports: in drunkenness, swearing, and lying; in vain talk and foolish jestings; in pride, lust and filthiness; and say, *you follow your forefathers*; and that your pleasures are pastime and recreation; and your vain talk and foolish jesting is pastime and merriment; and so you pass your time away, and say your drinking, and rioting, feasting, are good fellowship and neighborly: and so you cover your iniquities. But, woe unto him that hides his sin, and covers his iniquity! All this will profit you nothing; neither can your forefathers excuse you before the Lord. For in the beginning Eve could not justify Adam, nor excuse him; but he was condemned, because he listened to her voice, and disobeyed the Lord. Thus Adam suffered for his own sin, and so did Eve for her sin. And so it will be no excuse for you in the day of account, to say you followed your forefathers, and did as they did before you. But then will the Lord say, Because you followed the traditions and fashions, the customs and inventions of men, and have hearkened to the voice of the serpent, and have disobeyed my voice and command, and slighted my counsel, and would none of my reproof; but cast my law behind your backs, and trampled my mercy under foot, and have turned my grace into wantonness, and have spent my creatures upon your lusts; and have stoned, stocked, buffeted, imprisoned, and shamefully ill-treated my messengers, which I sent unto you to forewarn you of your iniquity, and have killed my Son; therefore, *Depart from me, you workers of iniquity.* (I know you not,) into everlasting torment, prepared for the devil and his angels.- See now how vain your hope is and how unsteady is your faith, when you have more assurance of your damnation, than of your salvation; for the Lord said, *no unrighteous person can enter his kingdom, nor any unholy, unclean thing,* [and ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.’ John 8:34]

Therefore, all you who desire salvation to your souls, try and prove your faith and hope, in which you trust; and take heed of trusting to a broken reed, for fear it deceive you. Experience has taught you that if the foundation of a building is decayed and wasted and come to nothing, the building will fall when a storm comes. Therefore, he that thinks he stands, beware that you might not fall. And all of you, whose desires are after righteousness, pay attention to that in your consciences, which creates desires for righteousness, and which shows you the vanity of your lives, which checks you when you do wrongly, and troubles and torments you when you have done any evil act: be willing and if you are willing to be

guided by that, and it will lead you to repentance and newness of life, and to forsake those things which it discovers to be contrary to the will of God. And if you are willing to follow your conscience, and to be guided by it, you will find a Teacher continually present, checking you in your conscience for vain thoughts, and for vain, idle, and needless words and actions; and this will crucify the lust which is the root of these things; it will lead you out paths of death, into the way of life; the traditions, customs, fashions, and opinions of the world, into the assurance of the Eternal Truth. And you who are willing to follow this, and to be guided by this, shall need no man to teach you; but it will be a Teacher to you, teaching and directing you in righteousness, purity, and holiness; and if you are diligent in keeping your mind turned within, with an ear open to the pure voice, you shall find it present with you wherever you are in the fields, in your bed, in markets, in company, or wherever you are; when your outward priest or teacher is absent or far off, it will be present with you, and will check you and condemn you for that which no outward eye can see, and will cleanse your heart from lust, and deceit, and uncleanness; and will purify your heart, and make it a fit temple for purity to dwell in; and then your sacrifices will be pure, which come from a pure heart, and the Lord will accept them. But, if you would attain to this, you must be willing to deny your lusts, your vanity, your delights, and whatever has been your life. For Christ has declared whoever will save his life, shall lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. So there is no obtaining life, but through death; no obtaining the crown, but through the cross. Therefore you must deny yourself, and take your daily cross, and follow Christ, if you would be his disciple, and give up yourself wholly to be guided by the will of God, that all which is contrary to the will of God, may be crucified, (though it be ever so dear or close to you), and be forsaken; lands or wife or children, friends and acquaintances, or all the world, and all delights in the world, for the Lord has said, 'He that loves anything more than me, is not worthy of me.'

So the Lord God Almighty prosper all the tender desires, which are raised up to Him, and feed the hungry and thirsty souls, as he has promised, and raise up his own [into dominion] in all His children, that he alone may be glorified, praised, and honored, who is worthy, to whom all belongs.

And this is the desire of his soul, who is a servant of the Lord; who is hated and reviled, and derided by the world, because he has no fellowship with it, or with its vanities; but testifies against its ways, fashions, traditions, customs, fellowships, words, and worships; and sees them all to be formal limitations, and the invention of men, out of the covenant of God, and therefore cannot but deny them: and for this cause he is hated by all, both priest and people; whose name according to the world is:

James Parnell

The following extracts from his works, will enable us to form some idea of his ministry and the closeness of his dealing with carnal professors, [a professor was someone who stated their belief that Jesus was the son of God and the scriptures were true], of whom he expressed himself as follows:

But, praised be the Almighty, who has so weakened their hands, and shattered their foundation, and caused his light to shine out of darkness, that they are so exposed, that all you people, who love light better than darkness, may now see how ignorantly and blindly you have been led, as strangers from the Father of light, after the vain traditions, customs, forms, ordinances, and imaginations of men, with a vain profession and feigned faith, which you have gotten into the imagination of, but still live in your sins and iniquities. Still alive in the first nature, under death's dominion, still strangers from the God of life, and from Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of his people from their sins. And therefore you lie under the power of darkness, and delusion of antichrist, both priests and people; for *like people, like priest*, and so said the prophet; and your leaders cause you to error by their lies and their superficial understandings. And though have many teachers, yet you are lost for the lack of true knowledge, and are still led in your sins and iniquities, after those, who have gotten the form of godliness, but deny the life and power, "ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the Truth' in yourselves. Only differing from the heathen in name or stated beliefs, judgment or opinion, but still alive in the same nature, in the fall, under the curse, and children of disobedience, in whom the prince of darkness rules. And you must have a law without you to keep you in awe and fear, as they have, whom you account heathen; but the righteous need no law, for because of transgression the law was added. You are fighting, and killing, and devouring one another, as they do whom you call heathen; and you are drunkards, and swearers,

and liars, as they are; and scorners, and scoffers, and revilers, and backbiters, and proud, and covetous, idolaters, and high minded oppressors, as they are, both priest and people. You are idolaters, as they are, eating and drinking, and rising up to play. You are envious and malicious, suing, and rending, and tearing one another at the law, both priest and people, pulling down others to set up yourselves; and you are dissembling, and cheating and defrauding one another of the earth, which is none of you own; and you are persecutors and strikers and stoners of the innocent children and servants and messengers of God. What sin is there among those, whom you account heathen, that is not among you, and abounds! Yes, those whom you call heathen, may condemn you in much of your practice. Oh! Be ashamed and blush, you teachers of England, to see your ministry, so openly exposed in front of your eyes. And thus you are shown to be those, who come near to the Lord with their lips and mouths, but their hearts are far off from Him in the world, or else you would walk more uprightly. But, the Lord said, 'in vain do you worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.' But I know that some of you modern Pharisees and priests are ready to say: - We are not drunkards, nor swearers, or such as those. But I say to you, you are hypocrites, and your hearts are full of deceit, envy, wrath and bitterness, covetousness, pride and earthly-mindedness, and self-love, and self-wisdom; and you are persecutors, and the greatest oppressors of Truth; and publicans and harlots will enter the kingdom before you. Jesus Christ, the Light, marked out your forefathers and found them to be such as were more strict and zealous than this generation; and by the same Light you are found to be in their steps. And these things, both Christ and his Apostles judged to be without, and condemned them, as being out of the new covenant; for there no unrighteous person can dwell; and there, all wars are ended, and 'the swords beat into ploughshares, and the spears into pruning-hooks;' and there, is oppression, or self-exalting, but he that would be greatest, must be least; and in righteousness are they established, and are far from oppression, and the Lord alone is their Teacher; and there, is no need of an outward, law, for to them there is 'no condemnation, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' and there is no respect of persons but all are members of one body, of which Christ is the Head; and they serve one another in love. And here is the new covenant, and the children of the new covenant who are washed and made clean by the Blood of the new covenant; but you are aliens and strangers from this covenant, who are living in mere imaginations and professions. In the same work he thus describes the true Church: - "And concerning the Church, which is now being gathered and redeemed, not by the will of man, or by the wisdom of man, but by the will and power and Spirit of God, which, according to His promise, He has poured upon His sons and daughters now in these latter days. By which we are carried abroad in the power of the Almighty, declare His powerful Truth, which the Lord has decreed, shall prevail upon the hearts of the people, which is glad tidings of great joy to them that receive it; but to the stubborn and stiff-necked, and rebellious, tidings of woe and misery. And though the messengers of the Gospel are by some rejected, reviled, reproached, scoffed and scorned, stocked, stoned and imprisoned, despitefully slandered and abused; yet, nevertheless, blessed be the name of the Lord, there are some found worthy, and receive with much joy the messengers of the Gospel, so that they know, how beautiful are the feet of those that bring glad tidings, to the reviving the just witness for God, and raising up the dead to life. And so the living come to know the Lord; and so the Just comes to reign, and the wicked comes to be judged; and the mind comes to be turned from darkness to light, to which we preach in every creature, and to the same are made manifest. And both from where we originate and the testimony we declare, it is made known to them, who like to retain it in their minds. But to them who do not receive it, we are not known; and therefore we are esteemed by them as deceivers and deluders, vagabonds, wanderers, and the like; yet at all this we are not surprised; for we read, 'the servant is not greater than his Lord; for if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household?'- and, 'if they had known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' Yet we have a witness in every conscience, both in them that believe, and in them that perish, to which we do clear our conscience, and leave all without excuse by the same, which will answer for us in the mighty day, (though to the condemnation of those that hate it), wherein we have our great joy above all our sufferings. But, as many as receive this [divine light] to them He, gives power to *become* the sons of God; and those are they, who are led and guided by the one Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive, even the Comforter, of whom you have been told in scripture that He would come, by which they are separated out of the world, and redeemed out of the rudiments and pollutions thereof, its fashions, its customs, its words, its ways, its manners, its breeding, its fellowship, love and friendship, its honor, its glory and worship. So they have become as strangers to the world, and are hated by the world because they are not a part of it. And the enmity stands between the two seeds; for while they were of this world, and testify against it, both in words and actions, therefore the enmity is raised in the world against the righteous Seed; and those are they, upon whom the ends of the world have come, to who it is given to know the mysteries for the kingdom, but to the world in parables. And those are they, who have come with a mighty arm and power, to turn the world upside down, whom the Lord has gathered and is gathering out of the world, by His own Spirit of truth and love, to walk in the way of truth, even the way of holiness, where the ransomed of the Lord walk, and serve and 'worship Him in Spirit and in truth.' Such

worshippers in Spirit and truth, such the Father is seeking to worship Him, in whom He is doing His own work, even to destroy the old creation, and to 'create new heavens and a new earth,' where dwells righteousness. And these are the new creatures, in whom the new work is witnessed, in whom the Father hath manifested His Son, that He might condemn sin, and bind the strong man, cast him out of his house, and spoil his goods, and so 'destroy the works of the devil,' and cut down that man of sin; even that son of perdition who is exalted above all that is called God, sitting in the temple of God, and saying he is God. This is he by whom the world is deceived, who is the god of this world, even the prince of darkness, who rules in all the children of disobedience. So says John in the Light: 'the whole world lies in wickedness;' and unto this does Christ come with a sword to make war with him, and to cast him into outer darkness, and so take his kingdom from him, and rule Himself in righteousness.

And this is the King of Saints, who comes to redeem unto Himself a pure people and to wash and cleanse them from their sin by His blood, and so wash away all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit; and this is the baptism by which they are received into His church and faith; and here is the effect of his blood wrought in man; and thus he does and will manifest His mighty power to purify, and cleanse, and make man a fit temple for himself to dwell in. And thus is 'God with us,' manifest; and thus are the saints' bodies made the temples of the Holy Ghost; and thus the word of life and reconciliation is witnessed to the raising up the soul to life, and reconciling it to God. And those are they that are begotten and born again of the immortal Word, which lives and abides forever. And here is the household of God, the household of faith, and the household of love, who speak the things which they have heard, seen, and tasted of the good Word of life, who was in the beginning. And those are the children of light, who are gathered out of the dark forms, judgments, and opinions, into the life and power of godliness, to walk in the light of life in which they are gathered and united by the one Spirit of God love and life into one body, of which Christ the head. And here is the true Church, in which the Lord is gathering, and washing, cleansing, and purifying by his Spirit. So that He may redeem unto Himself a pure Church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, whose insides are washed and made pure through the Word, by which they are reconciled into the love and union, which comes from the life of God. And here is the vine and branches; and here is the communion of the Church, all feeding upon one Bread and drinking of one Cup. This is Christ, the life of the saints; and as many as are baptized into this Church, partake of this communion and these are they who have denied selves, and have borne the cross of Christ with which they are crucified unto the world and the world unto them. Who are gathered into one covenant of life, where all are servants under one master, who serve one another in love and meekness, and have the true humility wrought in the heart. And here is the true washing of the feet without hypocrisy, which some are imitating without the life, but they fall short; for the Lord requires the heart.

"And thus is the church of Christ gathered by one Spirit, and by the same circumcised, and baptized into one life, light, and power, where all dwell as members of one body, of which Christ is the head. And here is the blessed union and communion in one. And here is God worshipped 'in spirit and in truth;' and as Christ is spiritual, so is [His church, which is] His body, and so are His ordinances. And here are the true Christians, not those who have the imagination of these things, but they that can witness [testify to the reality], and possess them in life. **They that believe, have passed from death into life;** and the life they now live is by faith in the Son of God; they are new creatures, who are 'in Christ Jesus,' to whom there is no condemnation, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; against such there is no law, for **they are translated out of that nature,** for which the law was added; and are set free by the law of the Spirit of life, and are made partakers of the *divine nature* of Christ, by *which* they are made Christians. And such now witness the effect of the blood of Christ wrought within them, **and the end of His coming,** and the benefit of His death, **who are dead with him, and risen through the death of the cross;** and these are those who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Son of God within them; "Christ within, the hope of glory," or else no hope of glory; **for they who cannot witness Him so are in the reprobation,** as the Apostle said. And here is the Son in the saints, and the Father in the Son, and thus all are made perfect in one. And here is *the true Church* where there is *one Teacher, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one light, one life, and one way, one shepherd and one sheepfold, and one priest over the household of God, and one hope, and one language, one family, one God and Father of all.* [To be translated, is to be in the Kingdom.]

This was written in 1655, when Parnell was between seventeen and eighteen years of age.

While traveling in the work of the ministry, he sometimes held public disputes with the different religious professors, [a professor was someone who stated their belief that Jesus was the son of God and

the scriptures were true], of the day, who, although under ordinary circumstances, were bitter enemies to each other, ardently and cordially united to oppose that pure and spiritual worship, that sanctity of life, and that reality in religious experience, which James Parnell had come to proclaim. These public disputations were, for the most part, of a very unsatisfactory character; and it appears only right to say, that while his opponents exhibited great ignorance of divine Truth, and sometimes even of the letter of the Scripture, showed uncontrolled emotions and exhibited bitterness, that James Parnell appears, [to the unsanctified biographer, who probably found Jesus' criticisms excessive too] in some instances, too readily to have adopted condemnatory language: and even on occasions, when the disputants seemed disposed to maintain a proper degree of coolness, a hasty assertion that they were "false teachers," was followed by anger and bitterness on their parts. And although they thus clearly manifested 'of what spirit they were,' yet one is disposed to think that greater forbearance might have been followed by a different result. [This exhibits the classic case of an unfinished man of the flesh judging a spiritual man obviously under control of the Spirit of God: a man of the flesh cannot comprehend the degree to which false prophets are held in contempt by God, and therefore spared no extent of verbal lashing, especially when in a debate with others listening who might have been misled].

On the 30th of the 3rd month in 1655, while James Parnell "was freely declaring the Truth of God," in a house at Fenstanton, in Huntingdonshire, several baptists with their teacher" Richard Elligood, entered the room. After a time the teacher arose, and addressed James Parnell: "Sir, if you please I will speak something to what you have said." James Parnell replied: "Here there is no need of compliments." The teacher continued, "that he had said, that God did not respect any forms, and yet he used the form, and so used that which God had no respect to." And being asked what form had been used, the baptist replied, "the letter," [the baptist accused Parnell of quoting the Bible]. To which James Parnell answered, "He that takes the Letter, to talk of it without the life and power, such sets up a form, and makes a form." This answer satisfied the people, but the teacher still disputed. In alluding to this subject James Parnell says :- "A form is this, - the likeness of a thing, but not the thing itself; as, they have the likeness of a church, with their elders, pastors, and teachers, but not the Church itself; and so they imitate the Scriptures, but live not in the life of them that spoke forth the Scripture, and so want life and power: and those are the formalists who make forms and likenesses to deceive the simple, as the devil may take the form of 'an angel of light,' but not the light and power who appears to rule in formalists and self-actors; but the *day* [the light of Christ as exhibited by his true followers] makes him visible, and therefore he argues.

On several occasions when James Parnell returned to Cambridge, he heard it reported that when he was absent, the baptists had boasted of intending to have a dispute with him. After some preliminary difficulties in coming to a mutual understanding, as to the mode and regulations of the dispute, the 20th of the 4th month in 1655, was appointed. [Recognize that Cambridge was a college that only taught religion; so here was a single youth, with no formal learning, going to debate with many and the best of the college educated Bible experts, students and professors of religion- a testimony to Truth being his only needed ally to defeat the hundreds of fleshly opponents]. When they arrived at the place provided by the baptists, they were not allowed to meet there. They went to the house of one of the baptist party, where the woman of the house behaved in a very unchristian manner towards Friends; which led James Parnell to remark that, as she was "nothing departed from the old nature," it was evident, she had derived no benefit from water baptism. James Parnell then retired to a Friend's house, amidst a great rabble of rude scholars and people, to whom he declared the Truth. After a time, a message came that the baptists were at the Shire-house, [government building], in the castle yard, and had sent for him. Here James Parnell found one Doughty, a Baptist, and Rix, an Independent two great enemies to each other on ordinary occasions, united against him. But after all the trouble in determining how they should meet, and the difficulty in getting a place, only one question was asked, and only one answer given by James Parnell, which satisfied some, but not all; and the conference broke up after various charges and recriminations on both sides. James Parnell, however, had an opportunity of speaking to the people, and proving to them, that the charges brought against the Truth and himself as its messenger were groundless. Many rude scholars [students of religion, studying to be priests] were present on this occasion; and having plotted together, as soon as James Parnell left the castle yard, flocked together around him, and treated him very shamefully; while the baptist party was allowed to depart without molestation: thus, says James Parnell, "it appears, that the world loves its own."

In the month following, while "several of the Lord's people" were meeting together in a Friend's orchard, at Littleport, in the Isle of Ely, John Ray, with two other teachers, came among them, to "excommunicate" Samuel and Ezekiel Cater, who had formerly been elders among the baptists; but, having been convinced of the Truth by James Parnell's ministry, had united themselves with Friends. John Ray, "having run out into many disorderly words," excused himself from staying to prove

his assertions, saying "he must be at the steeple-house [his sect's building used for worship and meetings] shortly." When their meeting was over, James Parnell passed into the town, and having been informed that John Ray was railing against the Truth in the steeple-house, he went there with some Friends. When the sermon had ended, James Parnell "stood up and claimed the order of the true Church, that all might speak, one by one, and if anything be revealed to him that stands by, let the first be quiet to allow the person to speak his revelation." John Ray refused to stay and defend his statements, although many of his congregation wished to detain him. James Parnell afterwards addressed the people in the graveyard.

[The conduct of James Parnell is worthy of notice. Although John Ray had disturbed the meeting of Friends on the same day, he quietly waited until the service was ended; and then claimed the order of the True Church laid down by the Apostle Paul in 1Cor14:29-33. He manifested a similar disposition to maintain right order on an occasion, just mentioned, refusing to speak in the Shire-house, until the jailer had given permission. Another instance will be cited further in the memoir.]

On the following day, the same Ray told a friend, that James Parnell had said, "he was head of the true Church." This led him with several Friends, to attend a meeting which the baptists were holding in a private house, where they found John Ray speaking to the people. As soon as he saw James Parnell, he stopped speaking, closed his Bible, and ordered him, "Get out of the house." Parnell answered, "Is your spirit limited? Is your spirit bound?" Ray again told him to leave and asked him why he disturbed them? James Parnell inquired how he had disturbed them, and was he not silent until spoken to? Since it was an open meeting, although held in a private house, James Parnell did not consider himself bound to leave, (although John Ray showed great anger, and one of the elders pushed Parnell on the chest with his hands several times), until the woman of the house came and asked him, [to leave]. A person standing by said to the baptist preacher: - "You say they are deceivers, and they say, you are deceivers. Now, I would have you to debate it, that those, who are ignorant, may know which are deceivers." But Ray did not like this advice; and "refused to have his deeds brought to the light, to be tried." James Parnell did not resist the person, to whom the house belonged, but, having told John Ray that he was ashamed of his doctrine, "he shook off the dust off his feet for a testimony against them, and so left them." - Surely, the recital of such scenes as these, is calculated to cause us to feel thankful that we do not live in times of such religious excitement. [Here again is the man of the flesh, this time thankful he is not required by God to contest with false prophets, which anyone truly under the control of God would gladly do for the sake of the Truth].

However severely James Parnell might at times address those whom he regarded as at ease in their sin, or as deceiving themselves and others by a profession without a possession of the Truth; or as false teachers, ignorantly speaking to the people about doctrines of which they had no knowledge by experience, or causing them to err, by teaching them doctrines which were only the traditions of men; yet it appears clear from the testimonies of his friends, who were acquainted with his private character, that he was meek, gentle and patient; and his addresses to those who were convinced, and at times to those who were still in darkness, evidenced an amiable an affectionate mind. His only object in using sharpness, was to arouse men to a sense of the awfulness of their conditions, if they remained in an unrepentant state. He was himself firmly persuaded of the Truth: "he had known the terrors of the Lord," and therefore was earnestly concerned to call others "to flee from the wrath to come;" and he knew the sweet consolations of Jesus Christ, and therefore was imminently qualified to invite the truly thirsting soul to come and drink of the same living Fountain of spiritual refreshment. He was without doubt, "an able minister of the Gospel," and left many seals of his ministry. In that day, it was remarkably verified, that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise was ordained, and the weak things chosen to confound the mighty. Samuel Tuke remarks in his memoir of Stephen Crisp: -"The Society in the counties of Cambridge, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, was first raised and became very numerous, principally through the labors of three instruments: James Parnell, William Caton, and George Whitehead, none of whom had attained the age of twenty years."

The following original letter, in the possession of the Meeting for Sufferings, addressed to Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill is inserted here. It is dated "the 18th day of the 5th month." There can be no doubt that it was written in 1655. It presents many points of interest.

Dear Friends and brethren,

In the eternal, unchangeable love and life of the new covenant I am with you, and there I do salute you, where we are one in our measures, though ten thousand. All children of one Father, brothers and sisters

of one family, and heirs of the promise, ever one in the measure and gift of grace given to us, of which to be good stewards. And here our joy abounds and is made full in one another, in the Light of the new covenant you read me, where I am present with you and do embrace and salute you, though absent in body. For since we have all been born by the Immortal Word, and born again, we come to bear the one image of our Father; so that by this we come to know one another to be the children of one Father; and do see, and read, and enjoy one another in this same unchangeable covenant of love and light; and here is the blessed union and communion, and fellowship, and the glorious liberty, of the children of the new covenant, who are sealed in this everlasting covenant of life; and this is the great riches of the love of God bestowed upon us, that should be found worthy of this high calling.

Dear brethren, the letter which you sent from Cambridge I received, with the same [love] that sent it; and did own it, as [an evidence] of your care and wisdom. And I shortly [after] went into the Isle of Ely; and I had meetings at Ely town, and was moved to go to the steeple-house. The rude people would not allow me to speak; but mightily was I preserved by the power of God; and had a great meeting in the town that day, and in much power was I carried forth, to the binding and chaining the heathen, and the raising of the Witness, so that many were convinced; but the town is much hardened again the Truth; but yet I see a further work to be done in it. There is a pleasing people arising out of Littleport, in the Isle. I remained there a sufficient time among them. There are about sixty people who meet together in that town alone. On the first day I had a meeting at Sohm, within three miles of Colonel Russell's; and there I was moved to go to the steeple-house, and there was a London priest who had gotten up into the seat of the Pharisee; and he a right Pharisee, for he was much painted, [he was dressed very godly for show]. And I was allowed to stay until he was done; and then I was carried out in a mighty power, to speak to him and to the people, which bound them all under. And they were a great people and rude, but the power of God was wonderfully seen in delivering me, so that I can't remember if they hit me. And the crowd was so large that I went into the yard, and there they made way for me, and I was moved to speak in much power, and they stood like lamb around me. After some time Robert Hammond came up to me; he was a justice, who had been at the steeple-house, and he said there was a proclamation, that anyone who disturbed the ministers in their public exercise, should be apprehended as disturbers of the peace, so if I would not pass away, he said, I should be apprehended. So I was free to pass from that place; but I told him and the people, that I would declare the Truth in the town that day. And so upon these conditions, I was set free. And I had a great meeting in the town that day; and several of the people were present who belonged to those people at Chippenham; but I heard of none that had come from the town; but those that were there received the Truth willingly, and there were many people convinced that day. This went to Hammond's ears, and stirred up his spirit against the Truth; so the priests and he consulted together against me, and the next morning he sent a warrant for me, and committed me to Cambridge jail for speaking to the priest, even though he had before set me free from that in the presence of a hundred people. So this was on the last second day, that I was sent to Cambridge, and there I was put into the low jail among the thieves. The next day Justice Blackeley sent his warrant, and set me free from tyrant's hands; but I was made very willing to remain if it had been the Lord's will; but in His great wisdom he ordered it, according to His good will and pleasure, for I did not request the warrant from Blackeley, and he did it of his own accord. The next day I went to a meeting six miles from Cambridge, where I met with my dear sisters, Ann Blakely and Dorothy Waugh. They remain in this region for awhile. My sudden release and going into the country proved to be very appropriate because the heathen were very happy and rejoiced at my imprisonment. If the Lord wills it, I will likely quickly return to this area, where I was arrested, for there is a people there to be brought into the Truth. But the heathen, I perceive, are plotting together to put me in prison again, because the jailer has been meeting with Blackeley about it, and is disturbed that he released me from jail without bail; so he threatens to get another warrant for me, but according to the good will of God, so be it. As it stands to his glory, I am content, whether in bonds or free. But I have thought to be in this area until my next return, in case you have thought to write anything [to me here]. Salute me dearly to my dear brother, G. F. [George Fox] and all the rest of my brethren, sisters, and fellow laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Salute me dearly to all my dear and tender hearts, who the Lord has chosen out of that great city, Sodom, so to be renewed into his image and to glorify his name, and to be as signs and wonders in that adulterous generation. The Lord God prosper and increase his glorious work in them and among them, with a strong arm, and power to beat down their enemies before them.

James Parnell

This is from Cambridge,
18th of 5th Month.

I shall be glad to hear from George or any of you. It is thus directed: - For my dear and faithful brethren, Edward Burrough, or Francis Howgill, these are.

It seems worthwhile to insert in this place, the following extract, which forms the conclusion of one of James Parnell's works, entitled, - "A Shield of the Truth," in which he briefly states some of the accusations brought against Friends, and replies to them, frequently with remarkable clearness :

And now something to all you tender-hearted ones, who are convinced by the Light of God in your consciences, which tenders your consciences; for whose sake I have laid open myself freely; and so I desire that you may mind that Light of God, to which I speak, which is my witness, which has convinced you, that it may be your guide, which will lead you into conversion into the life, and witness with me against the world, that my labor may not be in vain. And look not out at scandals, false accusations, and reports, for this is the reward, which the righteous have always received of the world; and Christ, our Lord and Captain, showed the example, it is written, "they who will live godly in Christ must suffer persecution;" and "they that depart from iniquity, make themselves a prey." But *that which cannot bear these things is not of God.* But turn your minds inward to that measure of Light in you, which is without guile, which is gentle, which can bear all, as it did both in the prophets and apostles, and all the holy men of God; *this led them through good report and evil report, through persecutions and through death.* And this is the way to life, and he who enters must enter this way. So fear not, but be willing to give up and to part with all, though never so near and dear, yes, though it be your bosom friend and darling. 'For he that loves anything more than me is not worthy of me,' said the Precious Pearl; and he that will not leave all and follow me, is not worthy of me.' Moses thought it greater riches to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of this world. The afflictions of this world endure but a time and pass away, but the joy of the righteous endures forever. If our hopes are only in this life, we are of all men most miserable. But he that endures to the end shall have a crown of glory, as Paul witnessed. So, 'fear not little flock; be faithful, valiant, and bold, for it is you Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' A hundred-fold shall you receive of what you loose, whether lands or livings, wife or children, or whatsoever it is. The promise is to the faithful, and your joy and advancement shall be in the destruction of your enemies [within], when the Lord shall make your enemies your footstool. But this is witnessed through the war; and he who endures to the end of the war shall witness this. And this in my measure I witness; and out of tender love from my soul to your souls do I declare it, and desire that you may all endure to witness with me. For love is charity, and the Light leads through all. So I rest in my habitations, known to all that can read men in spirit.

Farewell,

James Parnell

The following paper, written in 1655, will be read with interest, when we consider the youth of the author: -

A word to you all, who are still in your own formings, self-actings, and imitatings.

You are acting in that nature, which is 'enmity against God,' which is 'not subject to the law of God, neither can be;' so all your formings and acting are in vain; for they are not from life, but from death instead of life; but life comes from death, for in the destruction of death, life is obtained. Therefore to the Light of the Lord Jesus in all your consciences take heed, which is the witness for God, to which I speak in you all, which witnesses for God against the secrets of your hearts, which reproves you in secret for your secret actions and deeds of darkness; and it will search you through, and let you see what you can witness of the work of God in your hearts, for all your long and great profession, and esteeming yourselves of the Church and faith of Christ, and to be saints in Christ; and if you have yet witnessed the [spiritual] earthquakes, and the earth removed out of its place, and the mountains removed by the eye of faith, and the veil of darkness yet torn away.

Is not the first man still standing? and the first image? - is not the serpent still the head?

For while you are strangers to the Light, and your minds are from the Light, you are wandering and straying in the paths of darkness, and so are the children of darkness, in whom the prince of darkness rules - even the serpent who is head in the [carnal] man. But the promise is, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' But you are acting in your own wills and wisdom; the serpent is your head; and you have not yet come to witness the first promise fulfilled; but are still in the fall, under the power of darkness, in the disobedience, and strangers unto the cross; and so you have no part in Christ,

in that nature. For none come to have a right in Christ, but through the cross; for *as many are baptized into Christ, are baptized into His death; and they that are dead with Him, do live with Him; and they that are in Christ are new creatures: old things have passed away; all things have become new.* But they that are not in Christ, are still in old Adam, and so in the fall, under the curse, and under death's dominion; driven out from the presence of God into the earth; and death reigns over all, Adam until Moses, [and beyond] regardless of what you say without hard experience.

Therefore, now read yourselves by the light which comes from Jesus Christ, and shines into your dark hearts, and searches the hearts and tries the reins, and makes manifest the secrets; to which light I am made manifest, and by it witnessed in you all, and unto it I direct your minds, turning you from the darkness to the light, all you that have a desire to find the way of Truth, in whatever form. That thereby you may come to see, how you have wandered and been scattered in the many ways of darkness, in the land of darkness, in the cloudy and dark day, as sheep without a shepherd, being carried about after the voice of strangers from the Shepherd of your souls. Therefore, hearken no more without to those who cry, '*Lo, here, ' or 'Lo, there is Christ;'* and so draw your minds without, to seek for a Christ without, and a redemption without, and a sanctification without, and a righteousness without, and a God without, [*'without' being outside the heart*]. But turn your mind within; for it is to be found within, if ever you find it. For there is no way to come unto the true knowledge of the truth, or of God, or of Christ, but by that of God within; for "*that which may be known of God is manifest within.*" (Rom 1:19). And so the way to God is to be found within by the light, which manifests and slays death, "*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, ' and 'His life is the light of men.'* So turn in your minds to the light of the Lord Jesus, which, if you love it, and bring your deeds to it, will let you see the deeds of darkness and the paths of death; and it will also search your heart, and make manifest your inward parts, and let you see what you have lost; and as you love this light, and like to retain it in your minds and to be guided by it, it will lead you out of the crooked and disobedient ways of darkness, into the light of life. So you will find and know the *voice* of the true shepherd, who comes to seek out and gather all His scattered sheep from among the mountain and valleys, and the many ways and crooked paths where they have wandered; and to gather them together into one flock, into one into one sheepfold. He alone will be their shepherd. And this you shall come to witness [observe], as you love the light, and follow it. It will lead you out of your many forms and many way into one way; and out of your wisdom and imaginations, by which you have been building Babel; and it will strip you of all your own righteousness, by which you have covered over your deceitful hearts; and it will lay your deceits before you, and bring you to judgment. And if you love this light and follow it, and be willing to wait upon it, out of your own wills, and wisdom and imaginations, and carnal thoughts, reasonings and consultations, and self-acting and imitating, it will lead you to know the voice of the true Shepherd within you, [away from outside voices of strangers and away from the stranger within] from the voice of the stranger, and so to know the precious from the vile. He who said, "*I am the Light,*" said, "*I am the good Shepherd,*" who will bring you to know the way and door into the sheepfold, if you do not run out of it in your own wills, and seek to climb up another way - for the way is but one; and He that said, "*I am the Light,*" said, "*I am the way,*" and "*I am the door into the sheepfold.*" So if you turn from the Light, and stumble at the Light, you stumble at all - and so fall. But if you love the Light, and be willing to follow the Light, it will lend you through all - to deny yourselves, to take up the Cross to yourselves, and *to pass thru the good report and evil report, through persecution, and through death;* and the way will not be grievous, but joyous.

And so you will come into the way, and in at the door into the sheepfold, and so into the fellowship, and into the life, and into the power, and into the faith of the saints, where all live in unity in One – united by One into one body. And here is the end of all schisms, doctrinal arguments, divisions, and disputes. The Apostle said, "*Therefore, where is the wise? – Where is the disputer of this world? – Has not God made the foolish the wisdom of this world?*" Therefore, I call you to come out from among them, and to be separate, and to touch no unclean thing; and "*I will receive you,* said the Lord. And I will be unto you a Father, and you shall be my sons and daughters."

"Now you are called, and this is the day of your visitation; for now light has come into the world, and if you choose to retain it in you minds, you will be happy; but if not, by it you are left without excuse, and it will judge you in the last day. For he that loves the light shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life; but he that does evil, hates the light, which is then his condemnation. Now the way is plain to all simple ones, who have a desire to find it, declared by a friend and witness to the Eternal Truth.

James Parnell, having diligently labored in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, passed into Essex, probably about the middle of the 5th month in 1655. According to Stephen Crisp, - "The fields in that country were white awaiting harvest." For there were very many, whose spirits for some time had been heavy and weary on their way under the burden of sin, who had been seeking among the different sects and opinions of that time; they were looking for the knowledge that could relieve them from the burden, until they had become as weary of looking for the solution as weary of carrying the burden itself. "In answer to the cry of His own seed," the Lord sent James Parnell among them to preach the Word of life and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Having preached the gospel in many parts such as: Felstead, Stebbing, Witham, Coggeshall, Halstead, and other places, where many hungry souls gladly received the Word of life, and having planted many good meetings, and confirmed them that believed, he at length went to Colchester, about the 6th month.

In the 7th month of 1655, George Whitehead visited Halstead and has left the following testimony to the effectiveness of James Parnell's ministry. -

At that meeting at Halstead, the Lord greatly enlarged my heart, in his gospel testimony toward that people. For the hearts of many of them were well disposed, and inclined towards God and His blessed Truth. And He by His invisible power had opened a door of entrances to their hearts, as well as a door of utterance to them. James Parnell had been instrumental to convince many of those parts that summer, before his imprisonment at Colchester; and by his testimony and living ministry, many believers were shaken, and at a loss in their beliefs and assumptions, which they had gathered in their minds, without ever experiencing the Christ's power to change their hearts. For profession and talk of religion and church was abundantly present those days among many, as well as pride and self-conceit, which the Lord was about to stain and abase, as he manifestly did in a short time after. For those summer-shows of religion could not endure a stormy winter." From *Christian Progress*.

Colchester was the place of Stephen Crisp's birth and where he then lived, since he was engaged as a preacher among a separate people. He was from his earliest youth sensible of the visitations of heavenly light, (although not having known the source of the light), which both reproved him for sin, and caused peace and joy to spring up in his heart, when he as obedient to its direction. But his carnal mind would arise and excuse his sin by rationalization, and lead him into transgression, which created a burden of guilt that caused him to bitterly mourn. He sought various ways to escape from condemnation, but while he remained a "servant of sin," the light of Truth pursued him with deep convictions and broke down any peace which he had attempted to build for himself, and broke it faster than he could rebuild it; this caused the fig-leaf aprons of his own works, with which he was attempting to cover his nakedness, to appear as tattered and filthy rags. He says that he saw no further than his own works as a means to bring him peace with God. He had heard talk of Christ and a savior, but was still in the anguish of spiritual ignorance so that he exclaimed, "But, Oh! That I knew Him!" He listened to the various spiritual debate of the day, pursued the most reputable ministers, and read sermons; but all was futile, for he could not find rest. He still felt the power of sin in him, and what he wanted was a way to overcome that. He sought help from others in his distress, both among the national and separated professors, [a professor was someone who stated their belief that Jesus was the son of God and the scriptures were true], but none helped him; and he still asked, "Where is the faith which purifies the heart and gives victory?" The prevailing ignorance of experiential religion, (religion with real experience of change), of those who made a great profession of religion, drove him away from religion altogether for awhile to seek joy and consolation in the world. But the Lord's hand was too heavy for him there, so that he soon turned again to seek after something more substantial in religion. Under these feelings, he submitted to water-baptism, but soon was mourning that it was only a ritual or form without power, only cleansing the outside without cleansing the inside, which would have enabled him to have "the answer of a good conscience towards God."

Thus finding that he still wanted what he had previously wanted, he told the elders of the Baptist church that "God would soon overturn all their worship and religions, which stood in outward and carnal things, and make known some way that way over them all that would stand forever." He had heard of the Quakers, and longed much to see some of them. But his carnal mind was able to greatly reason against some of their doctrines, especially freedom from sin, although it was that for which he had all his life been longing. Stephen Crisp was about twenty-seven years of age, when James Parnell came to Colchester. When first he saw the youthful messenger, he thought that he would be able to contest with him, and began to question him, and endeavored to draw him into a conversation. But he soon found that James Parnell had a different spirit, even a spirit of sound judgment, which was superior to

his carnal reasoning; and he was forced to acknowledge the wisdom with which he spoke; and said to those around him: "All our rods of profession must be lost, and be devoured by his." The next day he went to a meeting appointed by James Parnell, and he preached with authority that was so great that Stephen Crisp was forced to own and confess the truth. (per Stephen Crisp's Works).

The very interesting and instructive account, which Stephen Crisp gives of his own experience in religious matters, previous to his meeting with James Parnell, - his feelings on seeing a stripling, coming forth against the Goliaths, who had been too powerful for his own more matured years, and with greater acquaintance of the weapons of war, - the inward contempt which he felt, when he thought to triumph over him by argument, and his subsequent conviction of the Truth, afford us striking proof of the power and authority of James Parnell's ministry. He was young, diminutive natured, and of a poor appearance; yet the wisdom of man was made to bow before that Spirit by which he spoke, and of which he was the instrument. The following original letter, obtained from the Colchester Monthly Meeting, was addressed to Stephen Crisp, probably a short time after his conviction. It is without date:

Friend,-In that stand, and to it keep your mind, which lets you see your enemies to be of own house; your imagination is an enemy; your wisdom is an enemy; that which has been precious to you is now your greatest enemy. Therefore now sacrifice your precious, and yield up to the death, [of self] that the Just may be raised to life and the righteous Seed be brought forth to reign and to be your head; and so will the head of the serpent be bruised. And this in your measure you will come to understand, as you dwell low in the Light, which shows you your condition; for whatever exposes your condition is the Light. And that eye must be kept open, which the god of this world has blinded, but by which the children of light see the god of the world; and the tempter is known, resisted and denied. So with this eye make your watch constant, and let not the fool's eye wander abroad, which draws out the wandering mind after visible objects; but stand in the warfare, not giving ground up to the enemy, nor to his delusions; but be content to become a fool, that all selfish thoughts may be judged. You will receive wisdom from Him, who gives liberally and does not criticize so that you can discern and know the enemy's tricks; but in the cross to your own will and hasty mind, the gift of God is received. Therefore, it is said, "He that believes is not in a hurry." Therefore, do not become weary of the yoke; for in faith it is made easy, and the impatient nature is crucified, and patience has its perfect work: therefore, be still in the measure of Light, which exercises your mind towards God; and purpose nothing, but let your thoughts be judged, and let the power of God work, so that He may be seen to all. By this principle alone you may be led and placed on the cross to the carnal part of yourself, by denying self, both in specifics and in general. And give no thought to pleasing man, when God is pleased; for by doing so, you prevent offending Him, for the enmity is in the love of the world. As that leads you to walk towards God in faithfulness, so it also leads you to walk towards man "with a conscience void of offence." And so to that keep your mind and do not be hasty to know anything beyond what you have been shown, for by such desire Eve lost her paradise. But lie down in the will of God, and wait on His teaching so that He may be your head. By such you will find the way to peace and dwell in unity with all the faithful; and though you are hated by the world, yet in God is peace and well-being.

James Parnell

About ten years after this, Stephen Crisp was called to write a testimony to the character and ministry of James Parnell, which he did in a spirit that shows his still precious remembrance of Parnell as an instrument of God, by which his long wandering and weary soul had been turned into the Way, which led into an establishment in the Truth. After speaking of the great work by which the Lord with His own arm and power had created in those days, he goes on to say:

Babes have been His messengers, and children have been His ministers, who in their innocence have received the revelation of His Holy Spirit, by whom the deep things of His law and of his glorious gospel of life and salvation have been revealed. And among these babes, who came to receive the knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, by the working of His divine power, was this noble child, James Parnell; who was a vessel of honor indeed and was mighty in the power and Spirit of Emanuel, breaking down and laying desolate many strong holds and towers of defense, in which the old deceiver had fortified himself with his children. Much might be spoken of this man, and a large testimony lives in my heart, to his blessed life, and to the and power and wisdom that abounded in him."

The diligence with which James Parnell labored and the eagerness of the people to hear the Truth, are strikingly exemplified in account of his services, the day after he arrived at Colchester. He went there on a seventh-day; and on the first-day preached the Truth to many thousand people, - first in his own place of lodging, - then in the Steeple-house after the sermon, and then at a great meeting appointed for that purpose, - and after the meeting, he disputed with the town-lecturer, and another priest. In all which "the wisdom, power and patience of Christ appeared very gloriously" to the convincing of many, who were witnesses at day's work. During the week as he was diligently engaged "preaching, praying, exhorting, and admonishing, turning the minds of all sorts of professors [stated believers in Christ and the scriptures] to the Light of Jesus." Many received the Truth, which was declared to them, and found by a living and individual experience, the reality and substance of that religion, which up to this time they had only in name. But there were others who turned away from him, and refused to believe; with these he disputed daily, "with great soundness, and in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit," by which mouths of opposers were stopped, and many more were reached and convinced of the Truth.

The prevalence of the Truth among the people stirred up the anger of many, who 'gnashed upon him with their teeth;' an some undertook to make up the deficiency in the strength of the priests' and professors' arguments by beating James Parnell with their fists and staves, [long sticks of wood]. Under the many ill treatments which he had to suffer, "his spirit was never seen to be raised in heat or anger, but he was a pattern of meekness and patience," cool in disputes and not resentful under infliction of personal injury. One day, as came out of the Nicholas Steeple-house at Colchester, someone struck him with a great staff, saying with blasphemous sarcasm: "There, take that for Jesus Christ's sake." - To which he simply replied: "*Friend, I do take it for JESUS CHRIST'S sake.*" He stayed at Colchester for about ten days, diligently laboring and suffering for the Truth.

This declaration of true Christian principles by James Parnell, among a people who had long desired and expected a brighter day to arise on the Church, resulted in such a large number of people being convinced that the priests and professors became alarmed. Through the priests' and professors' actions and preaching, many slanderous reports were raised against the Truth and its messengers. They tried their best to make the Truth appear hateful to the people; but when James Parnell came among them to reply to their false accusations, they turned away from a public admission of their accusations and left their congregations, leaving James Parnell the opportunity to proclaim still further the true doctrines of the despised Quakers, without doubt doing so in a much more effective manner than would have been possible, had the hiring preachers not fled but remained to dispute with him. They appointed special meetings in great number to try to persuade the people that Truth was an error and heresy; and thus by incensing and prejudicing their minds, preventing the people from believing the Quaker ministers. At the same time they sought their own protection and suppression of their opponents by calling in the assistance of the governmental powers.

James Parnell heard that one of these meetings had been appointed to be held at Great Coggeshall on the 12th of the 7th month; as the priest had declared, "fast and pray against the errors of the people called Quakers." Parnell felt drawn to be present at the meeting. And, although he was convinced that their objective was to ensnare him and arrest him, he felt he should go to Coggeshall to defend the principles which he had been preaching. Yet he said: "I was made willing, not only to be arrested, but to suffer for the pure, eternal truth, of which I am made a witness." He showed on this occasion, as in others, a strong desire to proceed in an orderly manner to give as little offence as possible; being, as he says, pressed in the spirit to go among them in the behalf and defense of the Truth of God, he left his Friends, (probably assembled for worship), without telling them where he was going. A Friend followed him to the door, and asked if he might accompany him. James Parnell told him if he wished, to use his freedom to come with him, but he preferred to alone. When he came to the steeple-house, several children would have flocked in after him, but he requested them to go in first, so that no disturbance might be occur. He entered in an orderly manner, and stood in silence; while the priest was reviling and reproaching the Quakers. When the priest had finished and was leaving his seat, James Parnell said, "This is the order of the true Church, that all may speak one by one; and if anything be revealed to him who stands by, let the first hold his peace;" and then proceeded to speak on behalf of people, which the priest had ignorantly and maliciously slandered. But he was soon interrupted by the priests, who "ran out into many words, and thus caused great confusion." At length, the priest who had been preaching, asked James Parnell, "what Parnell could possibly object to regarding him?" To which Parnell replied, "that he had reviled the Quakers, and said they were built on a sandy foundation; but he would prove their foundation was not sandy, and the priest to be a false prophet." He was

then allowed to vindicate "the foundation of the Quakers - the real people; not all who were called Quakers." - which he stated, their foundation was Jesus Christ, the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, on which the true Church had always been built, and which would break in pieces all of those that were in the mixture, [of flesh and spirit, without purity]. Some then accused him that he acknowledged no church. He replied, "he did acknowledge a church - the Church in God." To which priest Willis, who had been preaching before said, "he spoke nothing but nonsense." Parnell asked him to cite an example of the *nonsense* to which he referred. Priest Willis cited the expression Parnell had used of the "Church in God." James Parnell then took out his Bible, and showed them that it was a scriptural expression, which shamed the priest and his companions. After some further disputes, they commanded James Parnell to take off his hat while the priest prayed; but rather than doing this, Parnell left the Steeple-house.

He was followed by one named Justice Wakering and arrested. But he was allowed to go into a Friend's house until their worship was over. Here Parnell spoke to the people who had come together with him. He was afterwards brought before the Justices and committed to the common jail at Colchester, having been found guilty of: "with very many other persons of his gathering together," of a riotous entrance into the parish church at Great Coggeshall; causing an unlawful assembly in the highway; and using menacing and threatening speeches, tending to the breach of the peace. This mittimus [legal document of commitment to jail] bears the date of, "the 12th day of July, 1655," and is signed by Herbert Pelham, Thomas Cook, Dyonysius Wakering, and William Harlackinden. It was clear enough who were the chief actors in this persecution, for when he was brought before the Justices, in the court were six or seven priests; four of these were independents (Calvinist Puritans) who were acting as parish-priests. These preachers came from different places in Essex, but all came from locations where James Parnell had so effectively preached to the conviction of the people; and one of them spoke publicly to the Justices in order to stir up their spirits to persecute. "Thus," says James Parnell, "the churches gather themselves together against Christ and his kingdom; and now the ravening wolves in sheep's clothing do appear; yes, their fruits make them manifest; and these are they who call themselves Jews, but are not, from the synagogue of Satan; and these are the builders who have rejected and do reject the Cornerstone, which has become the head of the corner; and wee unto them, on whom it falls."

He was kept very close in prison, none of his friends were permitted to see him "with peace and freedom." He occupied the time which transpired until the assizes [trial courts], in writing a reply to his mittimus [commitment document], (in which he clearly exposes its falsities,) which he sent to the magistrates who had committed him, "to clear his conscience of them." The assizes were to hold at Chelmsford, which is twenty-two miles from Colchester. He was forced to walk to Chelmsford whole hooked with six felons to chain. He was coupled with one suspected murderer and with three others. He was forced to remain on the chain night and day." Thus," James Parnell remarks, "I was led through the country to be a gazing-stock unto the world; but Truth was preached in all this, and prevailed on the hearts of the people. Thus I could rejoice in all and triumph over my enemies."

James Parnell, as if the greatest of criminal of all the felons, was brought before the judge with irons on one hand. But when some of the people cried out against the severity of this, on the next day when he was brought up again before the judge, the irons had been removed. A long indictment was read, containing the same charges as in the mittimus. After several witnesses had given their testimony against him, the reply which he had written to the mittimus was sent to the justices and was read openly in court.

Judge Hills did all he could, by a wrong interpretation of Parnell's writings, to incense the jury against him; and even went so far as to tell them that if they did not find him guilty, the sin would lie on their own heads. He did not allow James Parnell to say a word in his own defense. Despite this unjust conduct of the judge, the jury returned and said that they could charge him with nothing except the paper, which he had written in reply to his mittimus after he had been imprisoned. They could not find him guilty of the charges in the indictment. But this did not satisfy the Judge; and after some time, he succeeded in drawing some words from the foreman, to which the rest of the jury did not consent, by which he assumed a legal power to recommit him to prison, having imposed two fines, to the value of about forty pounds; one fine for contempt of the ministry, and the other fine for contempt of the magistracy; saying, "the Lord Protector had charged him to see to punish such persons, who showed contempt of either the magistracy or ministry." Such were the unconstitutional proceedings of his enemies against him. Some of his accusers were even allowed to stand upon the bench, near the

Judge, and frequently whisper in his ear during the trial. But Parnell said, "as the deceit of my enemies was manifested to many, and caused them to own the Truth in their hearts, I was made to rejoice in all, and my sufferings were not grievous, but joyous."

Not feeling at liberty to pay the fines which had been imposed, he was remanded to prison. The Judge gave a special charge to the jailer not to allow any "giddy-headed people," by which he meant Friends, to visit him. At which point James Parnell remarked:

"So they brought me back to prison again, where I still remain in *the peace and freedom of my spirit*, which none can take away, though [my body] be in the hands of my enemies."

Yet this I know that the invisible God is working in secret by His power, and with a strong arm is carrying on this great work, which he has begun in the earth. Yes, He will bring down and overturn all, until it comes into His hand, whose owns it all. He will exalt His Kingdom in the hearts of His people, and His Son shall rule over the earth. Yes, all His enemies shall be His footstool, and shall bow down to Him, and lay down their crowns before Him, and acknowledge His power. Yes, and He will dash all the forms, and false likenesses and images, which have been set up by man in his own imaginations, and called *churches*. He will dash them and the powers of the earth into pieces one against the other, like a potter's vessel. Though now they set for nothing the cornerstone, yet then it shall grind them to powder. For "our God is a consuming fire;" and who is able to stand in the day of His wrath. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Therefore, woe to all His enemies, and to him who lifts up his hand against his Maker, to do contrary to what he has decreed."

After the assizes, James Parnell thought it right to send a letter to the judge, in which, after complaining of the prejudice and injustice which the judge had shown to him, he says,

Consider what it benefits you, or what it will benefit you, when you come to give an account before the Lord God of heaven and earth, *the Judge of all, the quick and the dead*, if you now have power to keep me in prison until my death, which life I am freely willing to give up, rather than deny the Truth of my God? And if I should pay one penny for the liberty of my body in this cause, it would be as much as paying the whole fine, which you have unjustly laid upon me. For by doing so, I should admit myself to be a transgressor, when I am not guilty. And, also, a *bought liberty would be a bondage to my spirit*; but the *liberty which I have, even under your bonds*, is bondage to you. And this liberty you cannot rob me of, by all your methods that you can do; for it is the free gift of God.

In Colchester Castle, James Parnell had to undergo a series of cruel persecutions of an amount and character, perhaps, scarcely ever surpassed. The jailer rigidly carried out the directions of the judge, not to allow his friends to come and see him, as far as suited his own convenience or fancy. James Parnell's youth, his character as a living minister of the gospel, his persevering diligence, and the sufferings he had already undergone, created great interest in the minds of Friends on his behalf; and many came from considerable distances to see him. Those who did were required to *purchase the permission* of the jailer and were then much abused and only allowed to remain in Parnell's company for a short time.

George Fox remarks in his Journal:

"As I passed through Colchester, I went to visit James Parnell in prison, but the cruel jailer would hardly let us come in or stay with him. They were very cruel to him. The jailer's wife threatened to have his blood, and in that jail they destroyed him as the reader may see in a book printed shortly after his death, giving an account of his life and death." – In George Whitehead's *Christian Progress*, it is stated: "My dear friend Richard Clayton and I met again in High Suffolk, in the 7th month of 1655, and traveled together into Essex to Colchester, where James Parnell was prisoner in the castle, he having been committed a little time before. We visited him in prison. He was given up to suffer for his faithful testimony, and was comforted in our visit, and we were glad to see him so well, being under confinement."

In a letter written to a friend, soon after the assizes, he recounts some of the indignities to which he was subjected as follows:

Here I am committed to be kept a prisoner, but I am the Lord's free-man, and I know assuredly that He will judge and avenge my cause upon my adversaries. And so I rest with confidence in Him, who will not leave or forsake me, for whose sake I suffer bonds, for the time of His good will and pleasure."

But while those who wished to console and relieve him were abused and shut out, those who came to insult and scorn him were allowed free admission, and were even urged on by the jailer's wife, who showed a very bitter spirit towards him, often directing her servant to beat him, and frequently beating him herself. Her enmity against this innocent and unresentful victim was so great that she often swore, "she would have his blood or he would have her's." To which he would reply, "*Woman, I will have none of yours.*" Sometimes they refused to give him food. At other times they told the other prisoners to steal his food when it was brought to him. Some of his friends provided a trundle-bed for his use, but they refused to allow him to have this accommodation, and he was forced to lie on the stones, which in a wet season would run with water. At first he was allowed a room for which he paid four-pence a night; but his persecutors threatened him, even if he walked back and forth in the room. After some time, (as though their object was to wear out his patience by heaping injury upon injury, and by withdrawing everything that could aid his comfort, they could add suffering to suffering), they would not even allow him the room.

In the excessively thick castle walls were two rows of vaulted holes. They put him into one of the holes. It was not much larger than a baker's oven, though taller. It was twelve feet above the ground, and the ladder that they provided him was only six feet tall. So he was forced to climb the remaining six feet, over the broken wall by means of a rope. The jailer did not even permit him to use a basket and cord to lower down his food, but forced him to fetch it on every occasion. From living in this miserably cold and damp situations, his limbs grew numbed; and on one occasion, while attending to return to his hole, he missed his footing and fell to the ground. He received so severe and injury that he was thought to be dead. As the unrelenting jailer knew no pity, and placed him in a little hole, called the "oven," low down. Here there was no window or heat, and when the door was shut he scarcely had any air or light. When he had recovered a little from his fall, he was still kept close and confined and not allowed to go out for fresh air. When on one occasion that the door of the hole had been left open, and James had walked out into the yard, the jailer locked him outside all night in the extreme cold of winter.

In the midst of all his suffering, he was not unmindful of his Friends; but as Stephen Crisp has remarked, "labored for the building up of those that were convinced; and he saw the desires of his soul concerning many, in whom he lived to see the seed which he had sown, multiply and grow to his refreshment." Nor were his Friends unmindful of him, but labored earnestly to obtain, if possible, a mitigation of his cruel and severe suffering; but all their efforts were in vain. Then it might have been said, as it was said of the primitive members of Christ's Church – "See, how these Christians love one another." For one of his Friends, Thomas Shortland, offered to take Parnell's place in prison, so that Parnell could go to a friend's house until he had recovered, promising that they would return Parnell's body if he died. But this was refused, as well they refused a bond of forty pounds offered by two other Friends.

In this state of suffering and hardship, he lived about ten or eleven months; but after a time his constitution began to sink under the oppression. It appears that towards the latter part of his imprisonment, two Friends, Anne Langley and Thomas Shortland, were allowed to visit him. These were witnesses of his peaceful death, and that his faith remained unshaken to the end. He expressed to them his sense, that he "died innocently;" and said, "*now I go; this death I must die.*" He further said, "*he had seen great things.*" His last moments appear to have been remarkably calm. He requested his friends "*not to hold him, but to let him go;*" and saying, "*now I go,*" he stretched himself out and fell into a sweet sleep; and having slept about an hour, he ceased breathing. Thus he died as one, who in the very morning of his days, had yielded his heart to the visitations of the Holy Spirit, and through faith, patience, and steady obedience, became a mighty instrument in the Lord's hand to gather many into the Redeemer's one fold and true rest. He was buried in the castle yard, where other common prisoners were buried, because the jailer had refused to give up the body without fees.

The malice of his enemies, however, did not terminate with his life; but in order to cover their own cruelty, and to detract, if possible, from the character of Parnell, whose life and death had been like a reproach to themselves, both as men and especially as professing Christians, they carefully spread a report by ballads and other means, that Parnell had starved himself, because during the last ten days of his life, he was unable to take any food, beyond a little milk and water.

They also said he had killed himself by excessive eating, following long fasting. They professed to think that Thomas Shortland had brought some bread and milk for him, which was intended for two Friends, who had come to watch him during the night, previous to his death.

From George Fox's Journal: When he was dead, the wicked professors (*believers of the state approved deficit sects*), to cover their cruelty, wrote a book of him, and said, 'he fasted himself to death!' which was an abominable falsehood, and was shown to be so by another book, written in answer to that called, '*The Lamb's Defense against Lies*.'

Such a report, of course, had no weight with the serious and reflecting people of the community, many of whom, besides Friends, had been very interested in his sufferings, and had made efforts to obtain his liberty. James Parnell was the first Friend to die in prison for his religion, and his death appears to have produced considerable sensation among those in power, who now said they felt grieved that his case had not claimed more of their consideration before it was too late.

But it did motivate the Parliament to try to prevent another similar occurrence, that might be about to happen to George Fox, rumored sent to prison with the magistrates bragging that he would die there. From Ruth S. Murray's *Valiant for the Truth*:

The Little Parliament summoned by Cromwell, consisting mostly of members of his own choice, heard that at Carlisle a young man was imprisoned who was to die for his religion. The Parliament caused a letter to be sent down, inquiring into it. Two of the justices who were friendly to George Fox also wrote a letter to the magistrates, condemning their course, and the prisoner, from his dungeon, sent out a stirring appeal to all who denounced him to come forth and make good their accusations against him. The governor soon after came to the prison, and finding such a noisome place, censured the magistrates for allowing this treatment, and put the under jailer, who had been so cruel, into the same prison. Soon after this those who imprisoned George Fox, being somewhat afraid of the consequence of their actions, set him at liberty and he resumed his labors.

It seemed better to rapidly report the sufferings and death of this faithful servant of the Lord, during his last imprisonment, than to break the narrative with the interspersions of other matters. We may now retrace our steps a little and see how he was employed during his rigorous confinement. Men had the power to confine his body, but they could not limit or control the operations of the Spirit within him. His mind was active in the midst of his outward sufferings and inconveniences of a severity and magnitude for us to excuse him from much labor for the Truth, if not exclude the possibility of doing much of anything. Yet his earnest spirit still remembered the Lord's heritage, and from the lonely and suffering cell, he was concerned to address the newly convinced with letters to build up the assemblies that had been gathered by his instrumentality, and to which he was no longer permitted to preach the Word of life. And not only was his spirit concerned on behalf of believers, but also for the wicked, whom he exhorted to turn away from their evil ways, that they might not perish in the day of wrath and righteous retribution. Some of these papers from the cell of the first martyr of our Society will be interesting, as well as instructive.

Stephen Crisp has remarked:

He lived in that castle about ten or eleven months, in great self-denial and carefulness, being truly watchful over the flock of God, both in Essex and Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and the Isle of Ely, and elsewhere, where he had traveled and turned many to God. And he wrote many blessed and heavenly epistles, both to particular persons, and to the assemblies in general, which were so many that we have no certain account of them, and cannot place them in order if we could, if all could be collected together.

Soon after he was recommitted to Colchester Castle, he wrote the following epistle:

A few words to all my dear friends in and about the County of Essex.

And all you, my dear friends, you scattered and despised ones, whom the Lord, by His powerful Word, is now gathering out of darkness into marvelous light, - out of the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of His dear Son, whom He is separating to Himself to walk before Him in holiness, that you might know

Him, and he might know you in the light His countenance; whose faces he has turned towards Zion, to seek after a land of rest to your wearied souls, which have been tossed to and fro, from mountain to hill, in this cloudy and dark day, seeking rest, but finding none. But now has the day of beauty arrived near you, even in you; yes. And glad tidings have come into your wearied souls, by which a pure love to the everlasting Truth has been created in you, which has been freely declared among you by the messengers of the Most High, who have reached the witness for God in your consciences, which seals the same upon your hearts, which is your Teacher, to which you pay attention and obey. In this light all stand still and behold the work which the Lord has begun among us. And you shall have no cause of discouragement, though the raging sea does rise, and the raging waves do swell, as if the would swallow you up. Yet the sea [the sea is an allegory for the worries, trials, and oppositions of the world] is limited by the Unlimited, and it shall foam out its own shame. And as I had a time to preach the Truth among you, to the convictionment of many; so now **I have a time to seal the same with patient suffering in the bonds of the Gospel**, [this is testimony that his suffering was for the benefit of younger others in the Body of Christ], that you may see, that it is no other, but what we are made able and willing to seal with patient suffering, yes, with our blood, if we are called to it; as many of us have done in this nation, though it is called a land of liberty, yet it is, a land of iniquity. But truth and equity are strangers in it and are therefore persecuted. But happy are you, who are thought worthy to receive these strangers, [truth and equity]. And though the raging Sodomites surround you, pressuring you to cast out these strangers, so that they may work their wills on them; yet be faithful and fear them not. But [instead] cast out your pleasures and affections before them, and stand in the faith of the God of truth and equity, and you shall see the Sodomites struck with blindness, and they shall not be able to prevail against you. But when they are weary with striving, they shall be made to lie down in sorrow. And so it shall be fulfilled, which of old was prophesied, that ‘no weapon formed against the faithful shall prosper;’ but woe to them who lift up the heel against them. Therefore I charge you all, in the name of the God of Truth, be faithful, valiant, and bold for the Truth received; and as you have received it, so walk in it, that you may profess no more in word, than in life you seal; that the light may be preached forth in your lives and shine forth in your conversations to the glory of the Father of lights, and the confounding of the heathen, who profess God in words but deny him in their life. And be willing that self shall suffer for the Truth, and not the Truth for self, (for the Truth was ever sealed with persecution, since Cain’s generation existed on the earth). So own the cross and despise the shame and yield to suffer for the Truth received; all of you who would follow the Lamb to the land of rest. Through many trials you will grow strong and bold and confident in your God. For God is not known, what a God he is, until the time of trial. And all keep your meetings in the name and fear of the Lord God, waiting for His power, in the obedience to His light, which in your consciences reproves you when you do something wrong, that in the light you may wait, and watch over the foes that are in your own house, that you may know the warfare begun in your hearts against your spiritual enemies. And so the God of power manifest Himself among you by His mighty power, bringing down all that is in you which opposes Him, and would not have Him to reign over your hearts, and establish you in righteousness, that you may bear his image. And He shall be your God, you shall be His people.

And so in the unchangeable Truth I rest, in unity with all the faithful, in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, though in outward bond for you sakes,

Known to all that can read me in spirit,

James Parnell

To Friends in Essex.

Friends – I speak to that of God in all your consciences, which there witnesses God, which is according to the mind of God, which is placed in your hearts to be your teacher – to teach you to do the will of God, and how to walk up to the mind of God, and to distinguish between truth and error, and between him that serves the Lord and him that serves Him not. Which Teacher – the Light, enlightens your understandings, and lets you see the land of darkness, where the house of bondage is, where the righteous Seed lies oppressed, and where the man of sin rules, and death has its dominion. Which Light is your guide out of the house of bondage, and out of the land of darkness, and out of death’s dominion;

and slays the man of sin, and separates you from the children of darkness, and leads you out from among them, to seek after another kingdom, in which is witnessed the perfect day where sorrow and sighing fly away. But then you must come out of yourselves and deny your own wisdom and reason and whatever originates from self, which is at enmity with the Light, which by the Light is condemned. But if you listen to self, then you stumble in the way, and many stumbling blocks lie before you, and thorns and briars catch hold of you, and your feet stick in the mire, and there you toil in servitude, and many hardships and impossibilities appear before you, and doubts, and fears and questionings, and murmurings, longings and unbelief rise in you; and many temptations assault you - sometimes to return and die in Egypt, - sometimes to long after delights and fleshpots of Egypt, - sometimes to think that God has utterly forsaken you, sometimes to question the very Truth of God and to be ready to call it a lie. There is the wavering and unstable mind; and all this arises out of darkness, where self stands; all comes by listening to self. Therefore keep you minds to the messenger of God, the Light, which brings the message of peace and the glad tidings of salvation. Keep close to the Light and own it alone to be your teacher, guide, and counselor in all the way through which you are to pass, and in all thing that you are to do. Stand in the denial of self and all its goals; and own the Light, which leads into singleness of mind unto God away from selfish ends. Then the Light will remove all stumbling blocks and lead you through the briars and thorns; and your feet shall not stick in the mire, but the crooked way shall be made straight, and rough and hard way made plain and easy. For in the Light there is no occasion for stumbling, but it keeps your feet from erring and you tongues from speaking evil, as you obey it, which when you are going to the right or the left, it cries: 'this is the way, walk in it.' This is the word in you - from which comes faith, which makes all things easy and possible. But 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' And faith is the gift of God. So this is the word of Truth, from which faith springs, which judges down all murmurings, doubtings, and repinings, and all lightness, lustings and earthliness, and condemns the ground from which all these things spring. And here the Ministration of Condemnation is witnessed, which in its time is glorious; through which comes the ministration of peace, which exceeds the other in glory. But take heed of getting these things into the comprehension to talk about; instead let the time of silence and patience have its work, in which wait for the fulfilling of these things, that you may read them within, and that they may show forth themselves in the life, which adorns and honors the Truth; that so you may become vessels of honor. But this cannot be witnessed without faithfulness; for it is the willing and obedient that shall eat the good of the land.

Therefore, Friends, see how you stand in faithfulness to that, which in your measures is made known unto you; for faithfulness is of great value - and faithfulness is as well in secret, as in public, knowing that all things are public unto God, who will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. Therefore he that is faithful over a little, is approved by God, and shall be made ruler over much; but he that is slothful is cast out, and that, which he has, is taken from him. These things you have read without, but now learn them within; and read them inside yourselves, and you need not be deceived; for by the Light your hearts are searched, and by which all things are made manifest, by which you are either approved or disapproved unto God, in all your words and actions. Therefore, by his light set a watch over all your thoughts, words, and actions, that the righteous Judge may be set up in your hearts, which condemns deceit and iniquity, and establishes righteousness in the earth, and truth and equity in the inward parts, and cleanses the heart from evil, that this alone may guide you, and be your spring of action in all your ways and doings. And then self will have no part, but all things will be done in the cross to self, in singleness unto God. Then He alone is glorified, and His fear and awe are placed in the heart, and the tongue is bridled, and the will curved, and the heart cleansed, and kept clean; for 'it is that which goes out of the heart which defiles.' Therefore I say unto you all - watch, that the pure may exercise your minds, which crucifies the carnal part, and mortifies the deeds of the flesh, and established purity in the heart, and brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, which is love in a pure life, that here you may come to live and walk and grow together in unity in your measures. For that which separates from unity is self, which causes love to grow cold. But if you abide in the love of God, self is denied; but where self is owned, the love of God is denied. So here is the enemy of your own house, which you are to war against. In the Light that discovers self is your power and strength, and as you receive the Light, you receive power and strength to deny self in its appearances. This power reconciles your hearts to each other and brings you into perfect friendship and unity, which stands not in the will of man, but in the pure nature, which is the cross to that will, which the world cannot bear, for it breaks the world's fellowship, love, and friendship; all of which stand in the corrupt will of carnal men, in which stands all their customs, fashions, and traditions; as well as all their worships and professions, from which arises persecution against you, who dwell in the pure nature and use the single, pure language, which their corrupt wills cannot bear. But look not out at what they can do to you, knowing that the worst thing they can do to you is *kill your body*. But eye the Lord your God in the pure, and count it your riches that you are found worthy to suffer for righteousness' sake. For through many trials and tribulations you will come forth

pure unto the Lord and strong in the faith.

So the Lord God of power be with you, and by his mighty power keep you low and watchful in your conditions so that you may regard your eternal good above all things under the sun, and that everyone of you may walk and grow in the Truth, which you have received, daily dying to the things which perish, that you may come to dwell in the life of God, out of the things of the world; then the use of them will be given to you along with the pure wisdom, as it was in the beginning, when man was in the right use of the things of the world; **and here paradise will be found**. But he that believes is not in a hurry, and by 'patient endurance in well-doing,' you will reap the reward if you don't faint.

In which I say to you farewell.

Dear Friends, it was the love of God in me, which runs forth to the Seed in you, which constrained me to write unto you, and visit you with this epistle. Now my bodily presence is barred from you by the corrupt will of man. Yet my spirit does not cease to cry on your behalf, that the Lord by his power, (by which He has awakened you out of sleep and caused his witness to answer to his truth), would bless and prosper this his happy work in your hearts, to the bringing forth of his precious Seed to rule and have dominion. So his glorious Light may shine forth in your conversations, and his beauty appear in your image. That the heathen may be ashamed, and fear before the Lord your God. And here, my friends, is my comfort in the midst of bonds. Yes, if this body was to be sacrificed up, it would not abate my joy that I have in you, in whom the work of God prospers. Therefore, I charge you all in the name of the living God, whom you profess, to abide diligently and circumspectly in his fear, that you grieve not the Spirit of God, nor cause his holy name to be blasphemed, for fear that you add affliction to the bonds of the Gospel.

This is from a friend, who is known in spirit, who for the innocent Seed's sake suffers in the bonds of the Gospel.

James Parnell

From Colchester Castle
The 11th month, 1655.

To William Dewsbury

Dear and precious brother in the eternal unchangeable Truth of God, I do, in my measure, salute you. You are blessed of the Lord, dear brother; your fatherly care over me I do acknowledge, and your voice is a comfort to me. I am kept and nourished in the middle of my enemies, glory be to God in the highest, who has counted me worthy to bear the bonds of the Gospel.

Dear Brother, I am glad to hear from you and my dear brother, Thomas Stubbs, with you, whom I love in the Lord, and the rest of my fellow-prisoners; the Lord has set you as a father over them. I know your burden is great, for the work lies upon you, but your joy is in your children, [spiritual children].

Truly there has been a great appearance in these parts, but since I was put in prison, there is a great need of ministers; but I had a fairly large freedom among the people before the priests were allowed to arrest me. The work of the Lord was great, and it significantly spread to my great comfort. These bonds of mine have served to pierce the hearts of many to discover the spirit of my persecutors and to confirm to those the Truth that had been convinced. They have tried to make my imprisonment grievous to me, but the strength I have, the Philistines do not know. Friends are not permitted to visit me, but not all. Our tender sister, M. S. is her in bonds in the town prison – she was put in prison yesterday evening for speaking to a priest – she has been imprisoned twice before this within a week, but they had no power to keep her in.

So may the same power that keeps you, keep me; and please pray for me.

I rest with you in the brotherly unity, your tender brother,

James Parnell

For my dear brother William Dewsbury in the common Jail at Northhampton.

Colchester Castle,
12th of 12th month, 1655

An Epistle to Friends.

All you friends of the Light. Although we who are your ministers and messengers of the Light, are cast into *prisons, holes, and dungeons*, and are kept there by the devilish, corrupted will of man; although it is allowed by God, the Father of Light, for the fulfilling of the scriptures upon this generation, which was prophesied by the ministers and messengers of Light in the days of old, who suffered in the same nature, by the same generation, for the same testimony; although the Lord still allows this generation to act in their nature against us, and to fill up their measure of his wrath; all of these are allowed to show His Truth and to exalt his name of power. And through all this, are we known, and made manifest unto you, who are in the Light. The heathen come to know and confess that greater is He that is within us, than all those that can rise up against us. And in all this we do rejoice, and through our sufferings we are crowned, and get the victory over the world, without, [as well] as within. And though we are kept [in prison, yet it is for] the Lord's appointed time. Therefore Friends, eye the Lord in all these things; and look not out at man, nor at what man can do, either for or against us; but eye God in all his works, and in all his instruments; and there will be no cause for discouragement. For discouragement and fears, doubts and questionings, spring from the carnal mind. But an eternal witness we have in all your consciences, which by the Word of power is awakened in you, by which we are known, by which we are owned, by which we are witnessed and received into your hearts, wherein our unity stands with you, who are faithful unto it, by which we are remembered unto you, though far absent in body. And this witness we have in the men of the world; though they do not receive it, nor like to retain it in their minds; therefore they do not receive us; but because the witness lies slain in them, they strive to slay us. And this is their condemnation, which will witness unto God against them, out of their own mouths. And thus, we are a sweet savor unto God, both in you that believe, and in them that perish. Therefore, you that do believe, take heed unto this witness, and its answer in your consciences, that it may exercise your consciences in unity with God, that you may be kept in the sense of it, and taught and guided by it into the cross to your own wills, that the will of God may guide you, and not your own will. So that the living witness may be raised up in you, to live, rejoice, and be your head; and that which been your head, may be bruised. And so Friends, your hearts may come to be established and confirmed in the unchangeable Truth, to which you are called, that you may be the children of Truth. So all you who own this voice, keep close to the witness in your own minds and consciences, that you may feed on the living substance at the table of the Lord; and there partake of the union and communion of saints; and as every one of you dwell in your own measures, the things [of God] will come to be cleared up to you, and the shadows will vanish away.

Keep at home, every one, in your tents; and let the candle stand upon the candlestick, that the whole house may be enlightened; for fear that the thief gets into the secret corner and troubles you and robs you and casts a veil over your light.

So, while you have the light, abide in it, and in it you will see more light; and sweep clean within, and search every corner, and suffer not an enemy to remain in the house. Cast out that, which has been in the bosom, and let the Lamb be there instead, who has said, "He that loves anything more than me, is not worthy of me." So, unto the Light bring all. And woe to him that hides from the Light; the day will make him manifest.

Oh! rest not above the Life. Feed upon nothing below it. Follow the light, which leads your minds to the Son; for in Him is peace, yes, true peace, which cannot be broken. Yes, He is the bond of peace. If you abide in Him, He will abide in you; and you shall bring forth fruit plentifully; and He will refresh you with the heavenly dew, and you shall flourish, as in a summer's day, yes, as plants of righteousness. But

the spring comes first. Oh! how pleasant, and beautiful is the spring in a barren field, where barrenness and deadness fly away. As the spring comes on, the winter casts her coat and the summer is near. Oh, wait to see and read these things within." You that have been as barren, and dead and dry, without sap, unto Sun of righteousness is risen with healing in his wings, and begins to shine inside. For this is a day when he has come to visit you; yes, to you who have long sat in darkness. Now light has sprung up. Oh! Mind the secret springs and the tender plants.

Now you are called to dress the garden; let not the weeds and wild plants remain. Fretting is a weed; anger is a weed; self-love and self-will are weeds; pride is a wild plant; covetousness is a wild plant; lightness and vanity are wild plants; and lust the root of all. And these things have had a room in your garden, and have been tall and strong; and truth, innocence and equity have been left out, and could not be found, until the Sun of righteousness arose, and searched out that which was lost, and brought again that which was driven away. Therefore, do not be idle, but come into the vineyard and work. Your work shall be to watch, and keep out the fowls of the air, the unclean beasts, the wild bears, and the subtle foxes. He that is the Husbandman, will pluck up the wild plants and weeds, and make fences around the vines. He will tell you what to do. He, who is Father of the vineyard, will be near you. Now, read all this within yourselves in your heart, or you will stumble. Whatever is not clear to you, wait for the fulfilling of it. "*he that believes is not in a hurry.*" But, those of you who are only covered with leaves, the Son will search. You must come to the fall of the leaf, and to the time of deadness and winter, before the life will appear, and the living springs are opened. You must cast off your own garments, and then the Son will clothe you; but he will not clothe you until you are naked, [stripped of all your secrets, hidden desires, and self-righteousness]; you must not have, no, not so much as an apron of fig-leaves to cover your nakedness; for shame must come upon all flesh."

This Epistle has no date. There can be no doubt that it was written from Colchester Castle.

The following letter bears the latest date of any of James Parnell's writings, as far as I have been able to discover; it was written about five months from the time of his first imprisonment; but as there were many letters written by him, during his confinement in Colchester Castle, which have not been preserved. It is probably, not the last he wrote. It is addressed:

To my dear Friends, brethren, and sisters the city of London.

To you translated ones my love from the life does flow. You that are translated and renewed in heart and mind; [To be translated, is to be in the Kingdom], you that are separated and redeemed from among the children of this world, and the pollutions and abominations that they live in. In you are established the works of the new creation, where dwells righteousness. You are beautiful within, and are adorned within, and are decent within, and **are purified and cleansed within by the precious Blood of the Lamb**, with whom you are crucified; **who are in Him**; who have put on the wedding garment, and are admitted to the table of the Lord, and are partakers of the holy union.

Oh, you blessed of the Lord, you babes and children of the Most High, **who dwell in purity** and reign in majesty, who have established and set up His throne in your Hearts. In you is my joy and great delight. Yes, I remember you, when you were tender and springing up, but by waiting on the Lord, you have renewed your strength, and the more is my joy made full in you; and you are made precious in my sight, you are the *inward Jews*, of the heart circumcision, redeemed from kindred, tongues, languages and people, **who have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, there to worship the Father in Spirit and in truth**, whom He has chosen to bear His holy image, which has been so much defaced in the world, and in you to exalt, and glorify his name of holiness among the heathen, and them that know Him not, now in this day, in which He is visiting the earth with judgment, and with mercy, and with mighty power, to call to account the inhabitants of the earth. And blessed are you, who have responded to His voice; you shall sing, and rejoice, when others shall weep, and mourn, and howl; though your portions [now] among them are sufferings, scornings, mockings, deridings, backbitings, revilings, persecutions, stripes, and imprisonments; yet have you learned to account these things riches, who know the Comforter within you, and your Redeemer to live with you. I do rejoice in all these things, being now made partaker of them. I am not unknown to you; my voice you know of old. Oh how do I

long to see your faces, but in that I am straitened for a time! My life is bound up in many of your hearts, which makes me so that I cannot forget you, though my body is kept in strait bonds; but the straitness will be broken, when He has perfected HIS praise in them, who is my only keeper and supporter.

Oh, you simple doves, who sit without guile in your mouths! Oh, how I am ravished with the love of you, when I behold you in spirit! You who have given up unto death, to the famine, to the sword, and to the fire; and have patiently submitted unto the Father's will, and willingly sacrificed up your lusts and affections; your faith is imputed to you for righteousness; and the God whom you have trusted and believed in, will make you rich in Him, and give you incorruptible substance, and an inheritance that never fades. In measure you can set your seals I to what is written in you.

But some have listened to the evil spirit, which has brought evil tidings of the good land; and those have turned back into Egypt and joined with the magicians there to harden Pharaoh's heart against the innocent, and filled the mouth of the heathen with blasphemous speeches. But let them go on; "he that is filthy, let him be filthy still;" for He comes quickly, whose reward is with Him to give to them according to their doing. But all things work together for the good of you, who stand in the faith, who are not moved with the winds that blow or the storms that come against you, who watch the hand of Providence in all these things, which brings good out of evil to you children of God, who abide in the Truth, and stray not.

So, as you have tasted, felt, known and experienced of Him, so trust in Him, and remain in your sure confidence, which has been created in you by His Word; and be as lights in the dark world both by word and conversation, that in all things you may be approved by the Father's [Spirit] in your consciences, as faithful and obedient children, every one in your calling, where you were called, that you may obtain the prize there in the end of your race. Oh, lift up your heads and look up to the Father, and see how he has tendered you, and how his love has been tendered towards you all along, who has not left you without instructors and nursing fathers, who have watched over you with tender care. In much love and tenderness am I drawn forth towards you little ones, who spring from the root of the vine, because you bear my Father's image. Long have I waited to write to you, and lately I had an opening [Parnell saw them in the Spirit] of you, which caused me to visit you with this epistle; for you have often times been in my remembrance, though I could not write. And now you must read me in that love, which tongue cannot express, and in that epistle which is written in your hearts, without either paper or ink, by the immortal Word of life, and there my name you will know.

So the Lord God Almighty, the keeper of Israel, overshadow you, and in His holy presence keep you pure and innocent, that you may show forth His praise in the earth, and shine forth His praise in the earth, and shine as sons and daughters of Zion; into whose blessed protection I commit you, and do lie down with you, who am a sufferer in outward bonds by the will of men for the innocent Seed's sake, but at liberty with the faithful, who am called

James Parnell

Written from Colchester Castle,
The 12th of 1st Month, 1656

These letters bear a precious stamp, which evidences the writer to have been a true child of God through Jesus Christ; that we cannot doubt, as was remarked by Thomas Bayles respecting him, that "he was hated, and persecuted for righteousness' sake, and for testifying *against the gross hypocrisy of that day.*" The cruel, bitter, and unrelenting spirit of persecution, which his enemies manifested, and so long exercised towards him, too clearly shows, that they were the children of that Babylon, of whom it was prophesied that, she would be made drunk with the blood of Lord's children. While the entire dedication of his all by James Parnell to the Lord's service, - his meekness under wrong, - his patience under suffering and insult, - the steadfast integrity of his heart, through a long period, not of suffering only, but of bitter mocking, and subjection to the taunting and jesting of wicked men, which is more difficult to bear than severe pain, - his fervent love of the brethren, while he was in bonds, and the tender breathing of his very soul, that they might, through obedience to the light received, come to know God and His Son truly, and ever dwell under the protecting wing of infinite Love, - shows that he was redeemed from the world, and affords the strongest assurance that, through much tribulation, he has entered the kingdom of heaven, [Oh, but the biographer is wrong! being ignorant of the many

earlier Quaker writings that clearly testified to tens of thousands already in the Kingdom of Heaven while on earth. This is a classic illustration of those who have it staring them in the face, but cannot see, due to the blindness. **James Parnell was clearly already in the Kingdom of Heaven while alive in his earthly body.** He stated he had already fellowshipped with his spiritual children in Spirit, and fellowshipped with other brethren; and his testimony is solid evidence that he enjoyed the fellowship of his savior and Father. Parnell would never have been asked to do what he did, without the comfort of living in paradise, which he referenced in his letters. He finished his course, just like Paul and Peter, while living in the Kingdom of God in union and one with Christ and the Father] and is now wearing the crown promised to all those who are "faithful unto death." [Parnell earned many crowns, all of which I am sure he cast down at the feet of his Lord and Savior.]

APPENDIX.

COLCHESTER CASTLE

The following particulars respecting Colchester Castle, abridged from an account kindly supplied by a Friend of Colchester, will not be uninteresting to the reader' ..

The present Castle at Colchester a evidently Roman, that there cannot be doubt of its having been erected after be conquest, when fortresses were built in the most considerable towns of England, with a view to a more complete subjugation of the inhabitants. It was for many years in the possession of the Crown; and afterwards passed through several private hands, one of whom attempted to pull it down for the value of its materials, but the cement of the walls appeared to be of such strength and solidity, that the sale materials was not likely to pay the expenses, and it was left standing, although had been very defaced. It is now very obscured by surrounding houses, and would escape the notice of a passing traveler, who may be ignorant of its location. The structure is square, and flanked at the angles by strong and once lofty towers. It occupies a surface of more than half an acre. Its walls are nearly twelve feet thick at the basement, and eleven feet in the upper story. In the western wall there are two rows of singular cells or niches, which look as if they had been scooped out of the wall; they are about ten feet high, four feet wide, and three feet deep. These, perhaps, were formerly built up in front, and might have been used as solitary dungeons. Tradition says that it was in one these cells, that James Parnell was imprisoned.

The size of the cells are stated from memory. There can be no doubt, I think that it was one of these cells, which formed the last dwelling place of James Parnell. It appears from Sewel that he had visited the Castle, probably with the express view of seeing "the hole," in which this innocent sufferer was imprisoned. He describes the cells, as they are mentioned above, that is, "two rows of vaulted holes." At the time of his visit, the memory of James Parnell must have been still fresh; so that his testimony is almost as valuable as that of a living witness. The dimensions of the cell were so small, as to scarcely have permitted James Parnell, though small in size, to be unable to extend himself at full length. His stretched arms could have probably touched the opposite wall in every direction. This will give us some idea of the misery and discomfort of his outward situation. But we have abundant, and encouraging evidence that, in this lonely cell he enjoyed the comfort, and support of his Savior's presence; and, like Paul and Silas, had a song of praise put into his mouth in the midst of his enemies.

Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him.

For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may win Christ. Phil 3:8

Source: **UK New Foundation Fellowship** as transcribed by Simon K. Watson, subsequently modified for current language and punctuation.



CHRIST Exalted Into His T H R O N E and the S C R I P T U R E Owned in its Place

**A MESSAGE FROM A 18 YEAR OLD,
MADE A MINISTER BY CHRIST AT AGE 16**

by James Parnell, 1654

All that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution.** 2 Tim 3:12

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Mat 5:10

Persecuted, he died in prison, shortly after writing this and several other tracts.

A brief summary of his life is at the conclusion of this writing.

A complete biography of his short life, with several wonderful letters is also on the site.

Text in Light Blue **or bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

When you have clicked to the on-line Bible, you can change and update to see any Bible version that you prefer.

This then is the message that we have received of the Father, that God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all; if we walk in darkness, and say we have fellowship with him, we lie, and do not the Truth; but if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, then have we fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-7

And this is the Word which was in the beginning, by which all things were made; and in him was Life, and his Life was the Light of men. John 1:1-4. By which Light all the holy men of God, in the days of old, were inspired. By which Light Moses saw the things that were done in the beginning, and wrote of them. Which Word was a lamp unto David's feet, and a Light unto his paths. Ps 119:105. Which Light dwelled in the prophets and holy men, by which they saw the day of Christ, and wrote of him, (Isa 49:6 and 60:19), and spoke as they were moved by it; and by it saw the deceit, iniquities and transgressions of Israel; and declared against it, both in priest, people, and rulers; speaking the Word of the Lord faithfully, whether they would hear, or forbear. Ezek 2, Mic 3, Isa 56

And this Word came unto the prophets, which was as a fire and a hammer in their bones, (Jer 20:9 and 23:29), which Word in due time became flesh, and dwelt among the Apostles, and they saw the

glory thereof as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of Grace and Truth, (John 1:14), whom John bears witness of, to be the Light of the world, who enlightens everyone that comes into the world. John 1. To which Light Paul was sent to turn the minds of the heathen. Acts 26:17-18. Which Light is the condemnation of the world, who love darkness rather than Light, because their deeds are evil; and he that hates it, has it, though he will not bring his deeds to it, by it to be proved; therefore his condemnation it is. John 3:19-21

And there is a time, Light shines in darkness, and darkness comprehends it not, and this is the cause why many stumble at it, and are offended in it. John 1:5

And there is a time Light shines out of darkness, and darkness flees away, and then is witnessed the perfect day, where the children of the day do walk. Isa 42:16, Mat 4:16, Eph 5:8. Which Light is the true trier of spirits, and gives the discerning of spirits, and discovers the works of darkness, and manifests the deeds of darkness; and by it the secrets of the heart are seen, and hidden things searched out; and by it all things are manifest; and whatsoever makes manifest is Light, (Heb 4:12, Eph 5:13), all which the natural man knows not, and therefore cannot receive the things of God, but by this Light is seen and judged; for by this Light the spiritual man is able to discern and judge the natural man, but he himself is judged of no man. 1 Cor 2:14-15. For this is the judge of the world, and by this the prince of the air is judged, wherever he rules, (John 16:11), and therefore at it rages, and stirs up his servants to persecute it, where it is manifest; and so it is a stumbling stone and a rock of offence to the children of the world, in whom the prince of this world lodges. Rom 9:33

And of this Word the Apostle Paul bears witness, is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Heb 4:12), to which Word the Apostle directed the minds of people within them, from looking without to find it without. Rom 10:8. And from this same Word the Apostles spoke forth the scripture; which Word was their guide, and rule, and Teacher all along from the beginning; by which both the Apostles, and Prophets, and the holy men were acted, moved, and carried forth in the power of it, to declare that which by it they were taught. 1 John 1:2, 2 Pet 1:21. And this is the free Grace of God, which brings Salvation, and has appeared to all men, (Tit 2:11-12), which is their condemnation who walk despitefully against it, (Heb 10:29), but this was the saints Teacher, by which they were taught to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live godly, righteously and soberly in this present evil world. Titus 2:11-14

And this is the anointing, which teaches all things freely, which is Truth, and no lie, and leads into all Truth; and he that knows this, needs no man to teach him; but has come to the end of man's teaching, 1 John 2:27, unto which the Prophet has come, and therefore called "freely, come, buy wine and milk without money or price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not Bread, or your labor for that which profits not? Isa 55:1-3. And from this the Apostle spoke freely, nor coveting man's silver or gold; but as they freely had received, freely they gave. Acts 20:33. And whoever speaks from this, speaks freely, and its ministry leads to the end of teaching; and here let all flesh keep silence before the Lord. Zech 2:13

And let all hirelings, and greedy shepherds, stop their mouths, who cry peace peace to them that put into their mouths, but if not, they even prepare war against them, and such like the prophet in the Light saw, and by it testified against them. Mic 3:5. And all this, the scripture bears testimony of, which was spoken from the Light; but scripture is not the Light, nor the Word, nor the Life, nor the judge, nor the rule, nor the guide, nor the trier of spirits; for all this belongs to Christ, who is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, (Heb 4:12), who is the Light, (John 8:12), who is the Word, (John 1:14), who is the Life, (John 14:6), who blamed the Pharisees that thought in the scriptures to find eternal Life, but would not come to him that they might have Life, (John 5:39-40), who is the anointing, who is the guide and Teacher, and the rule, (1 John 2:27), who when we are going to the right hand or to the left, cries, "This is the Way, walk in it." Isa 30:21. Of which the scripture is a true declaration spoken from this Word of Truth, of which Light everyone has a measure, which to them is the free gift of God to profit withal, which Light in the conscience reproves for sin and iniquity, and manifests the deceit of the heart, and checks the creature when it swears, or lies, or does amiss, telling it, that it should not do so; and calls for repentance and amendment of Life, and leads unto the same as it is owned and followed; and as many as receive it, receive power to become the sons of god. John 8:12 and John 1:12, Rom 2:4

But he that does evil hates the Light, and will not bring his deeds to it, by it to be proved, and to him it is condemnation; but he that loves the Light brings his deeds to the Light, to show if they were done through God. *John 3:20-21*. **But** of this Light you people and teachers of the world are ignorant, and so are doting upon the scripture without, with your dark minds there, with the blind Pharisees, seeking for Life where it is not to be found; but you will not come to Christ the Light, that you might have life; but would cast him out of his throne, and exalt scriptures above him, calling them the judge, and the Light and the Word, and the Life, and the rule, and the guide, and thus with your dark minds you would take the authority from Christ and would give it unto the dead letter, which is but a declaration of these things. And thus your leaders cause you to err, (*Isa 3:12*), for their own ends, and of the scriptures they make an idol, to get money, by adding their own meanings, interpretations, and constructions upon them, which are all the conceivings and imaginations of their own hearts, by which they lead you in blindness, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth in your hearts; but are looking without, doting without in the letter, **acting and imitating out of the Light for Life**, (*2 Tim 3:6,7*), and so in darkness, doing your own works, (*Isa 1:2*), which are not required at your hands, but are for condemnation by the Light. And so in vain, (*John 4:22*), are you worshipping a God, whom ye know not, crying up his ordinances, and crying up his commands, and crying up the scripture, exalting it in the place of Christ, and thus coming near him with your lips, and your hearts far from him, (*Mat 15:9*), still living in the corrupt sinful nature, ignorant of the free grace of God, which should lead you to repentance and amendment of life. *Eph 2:5-8*

And because we do witness this mystery, which has been hid from ages and generations, now made manifest in us, which is, Christ within, the Hope of Glory, (*Col 1:26-27*), who is the Light of the world, who enlightens everyone that comes into the World, who is the true Shepherd, (*John 10*), and the true Teacher, no more to be removed into a corner, (*Isa 30:20*, *1 John 2:27*), who is the anointing, who teaches all things, and is the end of man's teaching. Therefore your ministers of the letter, who make a trade and a gain of the letter, by idolizing it, and setting it up in the room of Christ, by taking the authority from Christ, and applying it to the letter, that your minds, who are taught by them, may the more be drawn without, to look at it, and idolize it, expecting life and salvation by it, and no hope without it, that they may the longer make merchandise of you, and still uphold their trade, and gain by it, do now see that this our doctrine of Christ to be all in all, and that without him we can do nothing, (*John 15:5*), but that by him we can do all things without the help of scripture, or anything else without, (*Philip 4:13*), and that there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, but that he is able to save to the utmost all that shall come unto God by him, (*Heb 7:25*), and that **he is the Word and the scripture is not**; and that **he is the Light, and the scripture is not**; and that **he is the rule and guide, and Teacher, and Judge, and the scripture is not**; but a declaration of him to be so. And that the scripture all along witnesses with our doctrine to be one with it, and theirs to be another doctrine, which the scripture will not maintain, but the scripture is against, and is only brought in for money's sake to satisfy their own carnal ends, that they may bear rule by their means, as the false Prophets did before them. *Jer 5:30-31*

And this Light all along makes them manifest in all their colors and false covers so that they cannot hide themselves from being deceivers, and also this they do know, that if everyone comes to know and find a Teacher within them, which teaches them the will of God, and enables them for to obey it, so that they need no man to teach them; then indeed they will no longer spend their money upon them for that which is not Bread, nor their labor for that which profits not, and will be a prey unto them no longer. So not only their craft, and trade, and idol will fail them; but also, their great gain and riches will be taken from them, and all their honor, and fame and dignity will come to nothing. Therefore they in their hot rage, and fierceness, and enmity of their spirits, do set themselves to oppose this Light, wherever it is appears; and persecuting the publishers of this doctrine, railing against them as deceivers, and seducers and bringers in of false lights, and such as deny the scripture, and would rob it of its authority, and give it to a Light within them (which the priests call, natural light) and insufficient to lead to salvation without the help of scripture, and other outward helps; and so would set the scripture above the Light of Christ; saying among themselves, if we let go the authority of scripture, then all is gone; (that is to say) take away our idol, then take away our maintenance, then down with our ministry.

So here is clear the foundation they stand upon, and this is the cause why they call the scripture their foundation; and so all this authority, which they put upon the scripture, they take away from Christ, who alone is the foundation of the faithful, of whom the scripture is a declaration; and so we do own it by the same which gave it forth, which unto us opens it and reveals it, and shows them to be out

of the Life of it, and so by the Life thereof are judged and condemned, as before is proved. And though they call it the Word, yet in the same it does witness against them, and witness Christ to be the Word before the scripture was written. John 1 And though they call the scripture the Light, yet in the same it witnesses against them, and witnesses Christ to be the Light before the scripture was written, and is able to save to the utmost all that shall come unto God by him; and they that climb up any other Way, the same are thieves and robbers. John 10:1

And therefore is not a natural insufficient Light, as they that know not him do report of him, and therefore show themselves to be as ignorant as the Pharisees, who only supposed him to be the son of Joseph, yet wondered at his power, and the works that were done by him; as these do now wonder at the prosperity of this ministration of Light, and to see how it prevails upon the hearts of the people, so that they know not what to think of it; they are not able to encounter with it, but that they see it strikes so much at their Diana, and lies so hard at their foundation, so that it makes their building totter, therefore the rulers, priests and Pharisees take counsel together, saying one to another that if we let this people alone, all men will go after them, and they will draw away whole nations; therefore they take the same course, as ever the false prophets did, joining together with the earthly powers to make war with the Lamb, persecuting, stocking, whipping, imprisoning and shamefully treating his messengers, whom the Lamb sent forth to bear testimony of this Light in peoples consciences (where we have a witness both in them that believe, and in them that perish) and also, striving all the ways they can, by their evil incensing, lying, railings, and false accusings and reporting to defame this Light, and leave your minds against it (that if it were possible) to put it out, that still they might uphold their Father's kingdom of darkness, and bear rule by their means over the blind, carrying captive the minds of people.

But who is able to make war with the Lamb, or who shall withstand the day of his coming? Saul, Saul, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And though they call the scripture their rule and guide, yet in this it witnesses against them, to be in Cain's way, and Balaam's way, and in the gain-saying of Core, and so have not God, (Jude 1:11, 2 John 1:9), but are found to be the generation who are born after the flesh persecuting them that are born after the Spirit. Gal 4:29

And though they call the scripture their rule and guide, yet they receive not power from it to enable them to walk according to it; but are altogether erring from it, in anything that crosses self; but **as many as receive the Light, receive power to follow it, and come out of the corrupt sinful nature**, which they live in who know not the Light, (John 1:12), and here the Light is above the scripture.

And though they say, the scripture is the judge and trier of spirits, yet in the same it witnesses against them, to be liars, and bears witness of Christ to be the judge, and trier, and searcher of the heart, and discernor of the thoughts, (Heb 4:12, Rom 1:16, 1 Pet 4:5), and that whatsoever makes manifest is Light, (Eph 5:13), therefore that which manifests false spirits is the Light, and not the letter, which Light manifested and discovered false spirits before the scripture was written. And also, though they say, the scripture is the judge and trier of spirits, yet by the scripture they cannot discern or judge of spirits; else, what makes all this difference in judgment amongst them who profess to try spirits by the scripture, and profess it to be their rule, and ground their judgments upon it, yet are so confused in the same, and never a one knows which is the Truth, when the Way is but one?

So that it follows, that they have nothing but the scripture without, and are still without, in darkness and confusion, as all those appear to be who call the scripture their rule, and guide, and judge, and trier of spirits, and yet do not know the Truth; but are quarreling, and wrangling, and arguing, and disputing, and contending about the scripture, everyone with a several judgment upon it. Surely this distraction is not in scripture; for it was spoken from one, and all agrees in one.

Therefore you that so profess the scripture, see if you can find it out by the scripture, and see where you are; but they that are in the Light have fellowship one with another, (1 John 1:7), and are of one heart, and one soul, (Acts 4:32), and all agree in one, and are epistles written in one another's heart, (2 Cor 3:2), and by the Light they try and discern false spirits, and in it are able to judge them, and open the scriptures without wresting, adding or diminishing; and by it do know, they are of God, because they love one another with the same love with which Christ loved them; (1 John 4), it is not such love which is today, and tomorrow crosses the will, and it is turned into wrath and anger; no that love stands in the corrupt will, but this love stands in the bond of peace which endures; and here again the light is above the scripture; and though they say the light must be received from the scripture, yet in this, the scripture witnesses against them, and bears witness of Christ to be the light of the World, who

enlightens everyone that comes into the World.

And they, who cannot even read, have this light, which is sufficient to teach them and lead them into all Truth, after they come to the knowledge of it; and from this light the scripture was spoken, (2 Pet 1:21), and without this light none can read the scripture with understanding; and here the light is before the scripture, and out of it all the children of darkness are shut with their busy minds and vain contending spirits; and though they say, they must receive life and salvation from the scripture; yet, in this, the scripture witnesses against them and testifies of Christ to be the alone Fountain of Life and Salvation, and that there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved. Ps 30:9 and Ps 144:10

And that the Pharisees had the scripture, yet did not have the Light, neither could they see that he was the Christ, though the scripture bore testimony of him; neither would they come unto him for Life and salvation, but trusted in the scripture, thinking there to find eternal Life, and found it not therein. John 5:39-40

As all you are now who are seeking the living among the dead, and here again the light is above the Scripture, which Light is within us the hope of glory, (Col 1:26-27), and those that cannot witness this are in the reprobation, though they have the scripture without; (1 Cor 13:5), and from the Light we receive life and salvation, and from no other, and this alone is our guide, Teacher, Judge, and Law-giver, if we never see letter; (Luke 1:79, John 6:45, Isa 33), and this alone is the ground and foundation of our faith and hope, by which we are made able to cry Abba Father. 1 Cor 3:11, Rom 8:15. And here it is not self that judges or condemns, but Christ that lives in us, Gal 2:20, and it is not self that justifies us, but Christ that lives in us; and here Christ is exalted onto his throne, and the scripture owned in its place, without contempt or undervaluing.

And they are found the ministers of antichrist, who would cast Christ out of his throne, and take the scripture out of its place to exalt above him, applying to it that authority which alone belongs unto him, for their own by secret self-ends; so that in that, they apply such authority to the scripture, by doing so, they rob Christ of authority, and undervalue him, as the Pharisees did, who thought in the scriptures to find eternal life, but would not come to Christ that they might have life; in whose steps you and your teachers are now found, professing Christ in words, but in Life denying him, and therefore must be judged and condemned by him, as they were.

And if you priests do allege, there is a false light, as well as a true Light; I answer that, it is in you, which blinds your minds, so that you cannot receive this gospel, but from you it is hid. (2 Cor 4:3-4). And therefore you bring another gospel, calling the four books Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the gospel; in which, these four books will witness against you, and bear witness of Christ to be the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation; who is the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, who came to take away the sins of the world; and blessed are they that are not offended in him. John 1:26, John 1:13, Luke 7:23

And also, that is a false Light in you, which leads you into the form or resemblance, or outward show of holiness, but denies the Life and power, (2 Tim 3:5), and to profess the scripture to be your rule, but in life and practice deny it; and to be short, leads into a profession without possession; but that which leads into the Life and power is no false Light; for it leads into the possession, before the profession, and so the profession is from the possession; but your profession is from another's possession, and so boast in an others line, by which you beguile both yourselves, and others; and therefore in that you go about to arm yourselves with the scripture, to oppose the Light, by exalting it above the Light, thinking thereby to debase the Light, and so to keep peoples minds from the Light, that they may still remain in darkness and blindness under you.

You do, but in the same, bring a weapon to cut off your own heads, and raise a war to destroy your selves, and increase more light to the people, and manifest your selves odious, and to be the blind guides of the nation; who are to be denied, (2 John 2:9-10), and turned away from by us, as deceivers, and to be held as accursed, who bring another doctrine in opposition to the true doctrine which is held forth in the scripture; for the scripture and the Light agree in one, from both which you are shut, with disputing contentious spirits, by which you would wrest the scripture out of its place, to clash against its Original, thereby to uphold your father antichrist's kingdom, and therein do the more manifest yourselves to be the ministers of antichrist, who under profession of the true Christ, do oppose

him and make war with him, (2 Cor 11:13-15), but your weapons are weak, as is daily made manifest.

James Parnell

James Parnell's Biography

James Parnell was born in 1636 at Retford, Nottinghamshire, in England. Parnell reports that at age 14, he was "as perfect in sin" as any in the town where he lived, and that he exceeded many in the wickedness of his life. Despite being a principal worker of evil in his community, when alone he would be reproved by a light; and this light drew him more and more away from sin and the world, until finally his heart was so changed that he was rejected by family and community. The priests hated him, for his fruits exposed their lack of the same. And his former friends and associates were so angry at his good behavior that they threatened to kill him. When James Parnell found that the priests were carnal, and, with the people who followed them, had only a *form*, while they denied the life and *power* of true religion, he separated from them, and sought a people with whom he might have unity.

It seem probable, that it was in the year 1651, when he was about fourteen years of age, that he separated from the carnal professors, and sought a people with whom he might become united in religious fellowship; and he says, "there were people with whom I found union a few miles from the town where I lived; whom the Lord was gathering out of the dark world, to sit down together and wait upon his name." With these he bore "the reproach of Christ," and was willing for His sake, to be numbered among those, who were regarded as the off-scouring of the earth; but in their afflictions and persecutions for the Savior's sake, they rejoiced in remembering that it was written, that they who would live godly in Him, should suffer persecution; and considered it greater riches to be His people, and to suffer the hatred and contempt of all, than to enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season;" and knowing that they were suffering for His sake, they felt their confidence fixed on Him alone, and in His strength were raised above all their trials. "About this time," says James Parnell, "I was about fifteen years of age; and afterwards I was called forth to visit some Friends in the north part of England, with whom I had union in spirit before I saw their faces." [Parnell was already fellowshipping in the Spirit with others also in the Spirit, even though they were miles away.]

Parnell heard about George Fox, the founder of the Children of the Light, (later derisively named Quakers). Fox was in jail at Carlisle. So James walked 150 miles to visit Fox in his cell. Although Parnell has been raised by God to a converted state or heart and mind, when Parnell met with Fox, he was helped by the Godly elder Fox who had been preaching for seven years. The Lord soon made Parnell also a minister of Truth, the Word of Life, and he began traveling around his home area in the service of the Lord. He was very successful, turning thousands to Christ within.

Traveling south, he challenged the established sects in their meetings and this resulted in difficulty with the authorities. In the summer of 1655 he visited several towns in Essex, in one of which he was imprisoned for disturbing the peace among other charges. He was imprisoned at Colchester.

Although he was acquitted by a jury trial, he refused to pay a fine of 40£ for contempt of court and contempt of the "ministry" imposed by the judge in anger at the jury's *not guilty* verdict. On the principle that he had done nothing wrong, and it would be a stain on the Truth to pay the fine, he was imprisoned.

Here is George Fox's account of James Parnell's death from his *Journal*:

While I was in prison at Carlisle, James Parnell, a little lad about sixteen years of age, came to see me, and he was convinced of the truth. The Lord quickly made him a powerful minister of the word of life, and many were turned to Christ by him, though he did not live long. For traveling into Essex in the work of the ministry, in the year 1655, he was committed to Colchester castle, where he endured very great hardships and sufferings; being put by the cruel jailer into a hole in the castle wall, called the oven. The wall was so high from the ground that he went up to it by a ladder, which being six feet too short, he was obliged to climb from the ladder to the hole by a rope that was fastened above. And when Friends would have given him a cord and a basket in which to have drawn up his food, the inhuman jailer would not allow it. The jailer forced him to go up and down by that short ladder and rope to get his food, (which for a long time he did), or else he might have famished in the hole. After some time his limbs were very numb from lying in that place. He was still required to go down to obtain food, and as he came up the ladder again with his food in one hand, and

reached for the rope with the other, he missed the rope and fell down from a very great height on the stones. The fall so wounded in his head, arms, and body that he died in a short time after. When he was dead, the wicked professors (*believers of the state approved deficit sect*), to cover their cruelty, wrote a book of him, and said, 'he fasted himself to death!' which was an abominable falsehood, and was shown to be so by another book, written in answer to that called, 'The Lamb's Defense against Lies.'

He was buried in an unmarked grave on the Colchester Castle grounds. His wonderful words, with deep understanding of the Truth, **live forever**, and are an inspiration to us today - an inspiration to have Christ teach us, as he taught fourteen year old James Parnell.

For a wonderful account of his life and ministry, with many more beautiful and inspiring letters, see his Memoir on this site.

Early Quakers' Persecution

James Parnell the first Quaker martyr of 350 early Quakers killed in imprisonment or by attacks in their meetings in the years 1652-1692. The early Quakers exhibited the fruits of the true Church of Christ. As Christ was persecuted when he was on the earth, so he is also persecuted wherever he has risen in his followers. Over 13,000 were imprisoned, and 200 were sent into slavery across the seas. Countless thousands of Quakers had their property seized as spoils after conviction of any crime. They were arrested and imprisoned for traveling on Sunday, not attending the state approved religious services, failure to pay tithes to the state approved priests, failure to swear loyalty oaths, plus many trumped up charges such as blasphemy. Often haled into court on false charges, their refusal to take off their hats or to swear, resulted in automatic imprisonment plus frequent confiscation of their property. George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, was arrested and haled before the courts over sixty times. He spent 6 1/2 years in harsh imprisonment. He spent one year in prison for failure to remove his hat. The Light of Christ was very threatening to the Anglican sect, the Baptists, and the Presbytery as well as the later revolutionary Calvinist Independent Puritan sect of Oliver Cromwell, which started a bloody civil war, seizing power and executing the King. The early Quakers patiently suffered under all the governments of the time; blessing, forgiving, and praying for their accusers and jailers. They made personal, courteous appeals to the governing authorities, but never an organized protest or resistance. Their patient suffering eventually resulted in Parliament passing laws guaranteeing religious freedom, which were also incorporated into the US Constitution. The Lord used their suffering as the trial to bring many men and women to perfection and into the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

So many of the early Quakers' persecutors met strange, early deaths that there was a book published at the time documenting the revenge of God against the ravagers of his people. As it is written would happen to those who harm the apple of his eye:

It is mine to avenge; I will repay.
In due time their foot will slip;
their day of disaster is near
and their doom rushes upon them.

Deu 32:3

(The Quaker movement today is focused on outward social justice and war protests;
instead of seeking inward peace and purity, resulting in the Kingdom of Heaven within.)