

**A MEMOIR OF JAMES
PARNELL, WITH EXTRACTS
FROM HIS WRITINGS**

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A Memoir of James Parnell, with Extracts from His Writings by Henry Callaway

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HENRY CALLAWAY

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P R E F A C E .

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 its martyrs. His character is already well known to Friends, as being remarkable for youthful dedication, faithfulness, zeal, and patient endurance, for the cause of Truth; but hitherto there has not appeared any detailed account of his life. The following sketch has been prepared, with the hope that his worthy

example might thus be 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 probably 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 other of his writings are very excellent, and indicate a deeply reflective and enlightened mind; they are, however, frequently prolix, and as the same subjects have been treated on more forcibly, by other members of our Society, it does not appear necessary to re-publish them here.

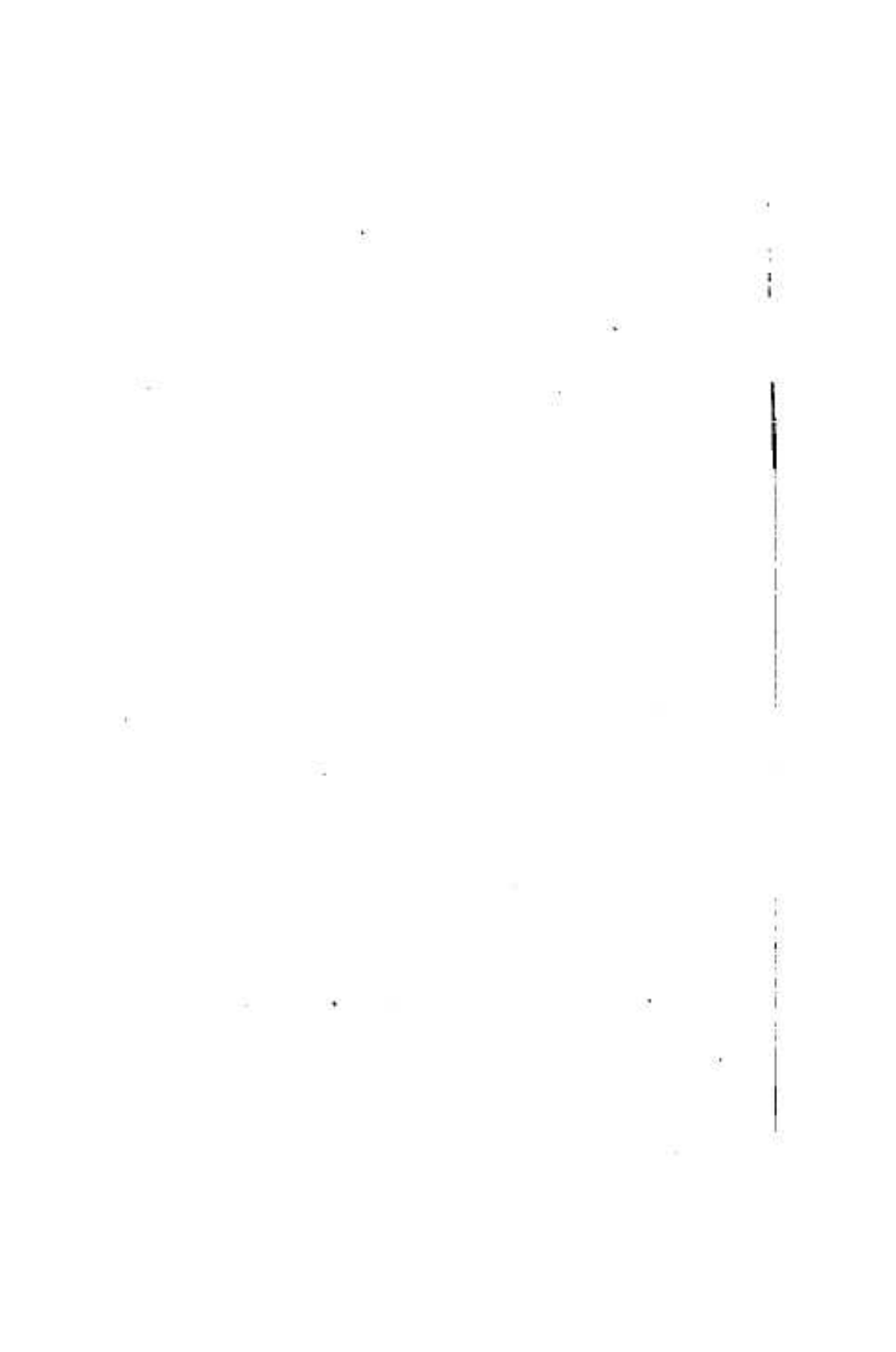
There is one class amongst us, to which the compiler would particularly recommend the perusal of this memoir,—*the young men*. Surely they may see in the early dedication, and the steady perseverance of this faithful youth, a stimulus to increased exertion in the cause of truth and righteousness, if 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 lukewarmness 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 all 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 1637.* It is not easy to ascertain the precise station of life in which he moved. It is stated in the mittimus by which he was committed to Colchester Castle, that he was a "labourer." He says of himself that he was engaged in his "outward calling," when he was not occupied in the service of Truth: and that "he challenged no property in the earth." It is hence probable, that his circumstances were humble. Our historian, Sewel, informs us that he was "trained up in the schools of literature;" a statement probably derived from a remark of James Parnell, that he was "sent unto schools of human learning for to learn human

* George Fox states that he was about 16, in 1653.—*Journal*, Leeds Edition, 231. And Stephen Crisp, that he was 18, in 1655.—*His Testimony to James Parnell*.