

The original of the following letter was so torn and defaced that it would scarcely hang together. I have faithfully copied it excepting alterations in orthography.

James P. Parker
5 mo 4. 1824.

Loving Father

My duty to thee remembered, I thought it might be convenient to let thee understand of what followeth; the last First day the meeting was at Ed. Dawson's in Blakely, and my master was to go into Yorkshire, but he went to the meeting first; from whence he was to go forward in his journey; he went from home (idem) to the meeting about half an hour before me, and he left his coat with me, and ordered me to bring it after him; so as I was going in the street with the coat to the meeting after my master, I met the constables and overseers and such like, and they demanded of me whether I was going: I denied to tell them, but I said, whether as I was going I did intend to go; the constables said I should go no further, nor I should not go home without I woul'd promise them I would keep me at home all that day. I said I woul'd make no such promise: then they said I should go along with them, and at after service was done, I must go before the justice of peace; so they took me and kept me prisoner, and set the Beagle to look to me until they came to me again. So after they had done at the mass house, the constables came in again and told me, if I woul'd give three shillings I should not go before the justices. I said I had none to give them upon that account; then said they, if you will borrow one shilling of your mistress, we will get you off with that if we can. I answered I had none to give, nor none I woul'd borrow, nor they were not likely to have any of me: so there was one by proffered me to lay down one shilling for me; I told him I should not take him as my friend, nor restore him any thing again, if he laid down any for me; and many flattering words they had, to have had me to have complied to their wills, but the Lord and his Truth was more to me than all the shares they could cast before me. So when they saw they could not get me yield either (to pay any) thing, nor to suffer others to pay it for me, they bade me go home, for they would not trouble

the justices with me then, but they would call on me either in the afternoon or the next day. So then I went on towards the meeting: before I came back from the meeting, the constable came again for me, to our house; so some made answer I was not in town: so he went away, and came not again that night. The next day I had business to go in Cheshire upon my master's account. When I was gone he came again and said he had a precept from the justices for me. They told him I was not at home. The next morning after, about half a hour after J. Barnes had been here, he came again, and took me before Justice Scaworth, so called, but he is fitter to be called a man of strife. When I came before him with my hat on, he commanded the constable to take it off: I asked why I might not keep on my hat as well as my shoes? with many other words we had about it; the constable took it off, and laid it upon the table before me: I took it up, and put it on again, and he pulled it off again. And when we had done about the hat, he asked me whether I was going upon the sabbath day? I told him, my master was some miles out of town, and was to go forward in his journey the next day following, and I was ordered to bring his coat after him. He asked where my master was, several times over, and I refused to tell him: he said he would make me; I said "Thou canst not compel me to reveal my master's secrets." "Were you at any church?" said he. I demanded what his reason was to ask? He said he must know. I answered, I was. He asked me, what I did there? I said, "to worship God." "It is enough," said he, "he shall either pay his five shillings, or go to the jail." — "Hard sentence," said I, "that I must go to jail, for worshipping God." He asked who was with me: I refused to tell him. He bade the constable take me away. I was taken, and put in a room at (the) constable's house, and both constables went (to) Scaworth again, and remained with (him) near an hour, and then they came to me again, and told me that Justice Scaworth was coming himself, and that he said he would find out where I had been. So he came to Ed. Greaves' shop, and sent for me. The constable took me to him. So he with many fair speeches, such as the devil had stirred up in him, he told me if I would come to their

church, he would pass by that time. I answered I should do as I had done a fortnight. Then he called for the Bible, and said I should swear in the King's behalf, and declare who was at the conventicle. I said we were at no conventicle: we were there truly and really to worship God, and not under any colour or pretence I said I should not swear at all. He bade the constable take notice I refused to swear for the King. Then he took the Bible in his hand again, and would have had me to have taken the oath of allegiance. I refused to swear at all. He bade the constable take me away to the house of correction. There I was locked up for about half an hour. So then he sent (the) constable again. (He) said I must come out for two or three days; as I said afore, when he could do no good with his flattering speeches, he began to threaten me, and said that this was the second offence, and if I offended again I should be banished; if I came again into the land, I should be hanged. He said, he would prosecute himself. I bade him go on, for I told him he could do no more than he was permitted.

But blessed be the Lord God of endless and everlasting goodness, that gave me power and dominion over and above them all; for I can truly say, when he had uttered all his (vaing) bitterness, and all the cruelty that was in him, it was no more to me than if he had smiled at me. Many more words passed amongst us, but I have here related the chief matters; for to express all, it would have been very tedious.

So I have been considering since, I believe that my master and thee might promise the sheriff that I should be forthcoming when he sent for me; now if they send me to the house of correction, I cannot appear at assizes; so I think if thou could go to the sheriff (forthwith) after this letter come to thy hands (and get the²) sheriff to send for me before I go to prison here, for they have made no mittimus for me as yet, it might do well: so (if) thou meet with the sheriff, and get an order, I would have thee to bring it thyself hither without any delay, if it may be convenient; I have spoken to my mistress, and she approves of it. So with my dear love to all friends, I remain thy dutiful son

5 month 13 day 1670.

Phineas Pemberton.

Superscribed "For his loving Father Ralph Pemberton in
Aspull, deliver!"

Copy.

Ralph Pemberton

Manchester.

5 Mo 13. 1670.

Ralph Pemberton

Aspull.