

Mirfield. April the 18th 1770.

The Life of the M^{rs} B^{ro} J^{no} Astley
who went home Apr. 18. 1770

My Dear Bro & Sisters.

It will without Doubt be Expected: that Some Thing should be said of the Life of our departed Brother John Astley, for it is usual amongst us. but as he has left nothing from under his own Hand, and beside: has told me little or nothing by Word of Mouth: therefore I want Materials. He told me: that he was Born in Lower-Hyke in the Year 1712: and there learned the Trade of a Shoemaker. and there likewise he Married The present Widow, being a Wild, Wicked young Man &c.

But by the Preaching of our Late B^{ro} Lelamott: (who was invited in to Yorkshire by M^{rs} Ingham) he was Brought upon Serious thoughts, & a hearty concern about his Salvation. and that in this Situation of Heart & Mind: he fell early in to the hands of the B^{ro} = who soon after his awakening came in to Yorkshire, and that, by that Means, he was not only Happily preserved from relapsing into his former Course: but ^{also} by the simple and Evangelical Preaching of the B^{ro}, he became convinced of our Sav^rs unmeasurable love & Grace for sinners, and became more, & more acquainted ^{with} and confident toward Him; and therefore began to value & love the Fellowship of the Brethren and beg'd for reception in to the Congⁿ. He & his Wife: had this their hearty desire granted them, as near as he could Guess in the Year 1747. and were soon after admitted to the Holy Communion, for the first time. He thought =

It was the first communion which was kept in Trelney Hall.
However, he that as it will, it was the first, to him in that Place,
and numbered with him, amongst his particular Hours of Grace!
From that Day: He has maintained his Communion with the
Lord, to his dying Hour, tho' it was often times, but slenderly
and with Difficulty, yet it never ceas'd really.

They were Married in the Year 1765. in Trelney, and had
a 11 Children. 6 of whom are in the Burying Ground in Trelney,
one in Rarbled Church yard, one Daughter, a Dutchess, and one
at Oakbrook, Brit House. and another three. i. e. one Son, and
two Daughters, don't belong to us. they had one a little Economy
of Single 15th at their House in Rarbled. but this was not their own
but they projecting, but as it did not answer our S^{rs}, & the B^{rs} purpose
it was soon given up again.

He has been for some years, a pretty good Steward
and Servant of the little Cong^y in Mr. Field, and so has also
his present Widow, and therefore his Memory must rest him
Dear to us. He was a Child of Grace in dead, yet: his life
was the quarrel'd o'er with grief and need.

His Domestic ~~affairs~~ affairs have bore a very indifferent
Face these many years, by which means his credit was
reduced considerably, and this not only with Strangers,
but particularly so among our own People, therefore,
I am rather inclin'd to draw a veil over the most part
of his Life: than to expose it to Publick view.

However, all is Well, what End Well. altho' the beginning
and Middle had some thing deplorable: yet the End was
admirable. I have labour'd upon it from the beginning
of his Sickness, to get his Mind off from all External
Concerns, as he could have nothing in it, & entreated him

To fix his heart and Eyes on our Sav^r, and on his ^{all} atoning
Sacrifice, which advice he took P^{ro}-bly, and became quite comforted
and cheerful in his Mind. we visited him pretty often in order
to keep this Matter alive in his heart, which has happily succeeded.
on Easter day he sent for me, and as I went with 2 more Brethren
pray'd heartily by him; kept a little Liturgy by his Bed side, &
gave him my last Blessing, thinking: he could not live till I could
come again. this little visit was attended with a most blessed feeling,
so that I left him with a heart quite satisfied.

on Easter-Tuesday, I and my Wife went to see him one more:
I was quite surpris'd with his Look & spoke tenderly to him, and
sung some suitable verses for him, in which he join'd with us,
which we could see by the moving of his Lips. this was the last
happy little visit, for: the next Morning Early, he fell softly
and happily asleep in his 58th year.