

Feb 13/19

The Life of the mar<sup>d</sup>. Brother John Bentham who  
was called Home the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1772.

He has dictated the following concerning himself.

"I was born at Black Hay in Sudbury Townshipp 1713  
& baptised in the Church of England. My Mother being poor &  
not able to care for me I was put out as a Towns-apprentice to  
a Presbyterian. I had no Mind to go on Sundays with my  
Master to his place of Worship, & having no Concern on my Mind  
about my Salvation I went no where. My Master observing this  
told <sup>me</sup> I should be lost if I continued in the way I then was, & should go  
to a place of Torment when I died. This had the Effect upon me  
that I went to Church, & then I thought my Case was safe; but even  
this proved the Occasion to hurtful Entanglements, & also to my  
marrying unhappily which was attended with many painful Con-  
sequences. By this Marriage I had 2 Daughters. When Mr. Ingham  
began to preach in these parts ~~in 1744~~ I went to hear him, & the Word had  
some Effect upon me for some Time, but aloft, I soon got into my  
old wretched Course again. Being one Sunday at Tong Church I was  
asked by the late Mr. Jonathan Heartley to go with him to hear the  
Brethren at Bankhouse; At first I told him I would not, but he  
however prevailed upon us to do, & I have abundant Reason to  
thank my dear Sav<sup>r</sup> that He inclined me to go. What I there heard  
of the Love of our Sav<sup>r</sup> melted my Heart, & had the Effect upon  
me that I returned home in a very different Mind to what I  
had before, being now determined to seek in earnest after  
the Salvation of my Soul, nor could I afterwards have kept  
or satisfaction till I found Mercy & Peace in Jesus Christ.  
Soon after this I was rec. into the Society, & March 25<sup>th</sup> 1758 I was  
rec. into the Cong<sup>g</sup>, & the same Year was admitted to the holy Com-  
munion & spent my Time in a truly happy Manner in sweet  
Fellowship with my kind Lord & Redeemer. This was a most



blest season to my poor heart, & happy would it have been  
for me if I had remained in this Communion with my Sav<sup>r</sup>,  
but turning aside from him & not prizing this grace rightly  
I gave opportunity to the Enemy to blind my eyes again, to  
lay hold of me as his Captive & to lead me according to his will,  
& thus was brought into most shameful & scandalous things,  
to the unpeakable grief of the whole Cong<sup>n</sup>, & still more to  
the grief & reproach of my merciful Sav<sup>r</sup>, & which was  
afterwards attended ~~up~~ with such loss, distress & anguish  
to my own soul as no one but myself can have a true con-  
ception of. I brought myself into Hell Torment indeed,  
for I forfeited my place & privileges in the Cong<sup>n</sup>, I lost  
all sight & feeling of my Sav<sup>r</sup>, & my sins lay so heavy upon  
me that I knew no possible way of living in this Condition,  
all which misery was occasioned by the well known circum-  
stances of my second Marriage. I & my wife being both  
guilty & also both miserable & unhappy beyond description,  
we knew not what to do but to weep & cry to Jesus that if  
possible he might look on us in our ~~deplorable~~ deplorable Condition  
& ~~show~~ shew Mercy unto us. He was also entreated of us &  
had Mercy upon such abominable sinners as we were,  
that we could believe & feel that he had pardoned our many  
& heinous Transgressions. We then prayed the whole Cong<sup>n</sup>  
to forgive us & receive us once more into her Fellowship,  
& which in time was granted unto us to our abiding Conso-  
lation. This was a grace which I shall thank my sweet Sav<sup>r</sup>  
for throughout my whole Life & also in Eternity. From this  
time I have been enabled to live under a burning sense of  
my sweet Sav<sup>r</sup>'s Love, & the blessings I have enjoyed in the  
Cong<sup>n</sup> have been highly prized by me; yea every the least

Courtesy of Mary ~~Mary~~ ~~Mary~~ ~~Mary~~ I enjoyed, I nei-  
sant of Mary as a Favour I was undepriving of. ~~Myself~~  
I shall never be able to thank <sup>truly</sup> for what he has done for me  
poor unfaithful sinner, but shall eternally sing of his Love &  
Mercy & Faithfulness." is far out of his Account.

Since his Re-admission to the Cong<sup>n</sup> he has spent his Time  
as a sinner who <sup>had</sup> received grace, & ~~Myself~~ acknowledged him-  
self very undepriving of what he enjoyed. Some Time ago  
his Constitution began to break & he declined gradually, but  
was cheerful in his Heart & confident to our Sav<sup>r</sup>, & thus  
continued till he obtained permission to enter into the  
Joy of his Lord