

## Obituary Notices

of several persons, who had died at Baileys in the  
year 1837, communicated by Mr. Libby, who had  
visited them during their last illness.

## Mr. Joseph Bentley

After the afternoon service on Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup>  
I was informed, that a poor man, labouring under a  
mortal disease, wished to see me. My informant  
added; "He is very ignorant, having never in his  
life attended any place of worship; but spent it  
in sin and wickedness. At the last 40<sup>th</sup> Livery  
he was tried for felony, but not convicted, the  
prosecutor, from motives of compassion, with-  
holding the requisite evidence. He is now suffe-  
ring from a blow, received in an affray with  
the gamekeeper's on Mr. T. S. estate, when detected  
with some of his companion in peaching. —  
Having ascertained, that it was not merely the  
fear of death, which induced him to seek for me,  
but that he showed some symptoms of penitence  
and contrition of spirit; I went to see him, as soon  
as my official duties allowed it.

When I entered his house and began to speak  
to him I perceived that the weight in his head had  
quite exhausted his strength, and that his mind had  
been bewildered by the presence of so many visitors,  
who in the course of the day had come to grieve. After

2.  
a few words I asked, if he wished me to pray. But even this he declined, saying, "So many have been here today and yesterday with me, that my head is quite confused." I, therefore, left him, promising to call again the following day. Feeling an increasing interest in his case, I visited my brother almost daily, and some days saw him more than once.

The work of the Holy Spirit on his heart was strikingly evident, and being of an open-hearted mind his candid confession of himself, and the simplicity of his declarations, made his conversation with him most interesting. On the following, brief notes of my interview with him will follow.

3. May 1<sup>st</sup>. He was sitting by the fire, and I took my seat by the side of him. I had scarcely sat down when he began very freely to disclose his feelings, and the state of his mind, expressing very strong fear of death and the judgment. He trembled when speaking of the crimes he had committed, and of his approaching death. I felt much for him, and in silent prayer brought the Lord so to direct my words, as to suit his case. Turning to him, said, "I am come to tell you good news." Instantly he exclaimed, "What is that?" I continued, "The Lord loves you." I shall not easily forget his look, while he rejoined, that is impossible! He cannot love much a wretch as I am! "Listen"

"Come," said I, "while I tell you what the hardness  
for you. He came down from heaven, because  
a poor man, out of love to you and me and  
all sinners, was nailed to the cross, and it cost his  
blood to purchase for us happiness for ever."

The man appeared very straight-faced, while I  
quoted several texts of scripture on this subject,  
illustrating it by allusions to common things.  
Mr. Libby coming in out conversation was  
interrupted, and I turned it prudent to with-  
draw. He pressed my hand and, with tears in his  
eyes, said, "Please, sir, come again, for you have  
done me good." It proved a great encoura-  
gment to me when informed by Mr. Petty, that  
on my leaving the house, the sick man sat silent  
for some time and then, turning to Mr. T. said, "What  
do you think Mr. Libby has told me? He told  
me that God loves me; yes, and he has proved  
it too. The Lord did just me out of the cross. Is not  
that good news, John?"

Dr. Coffey. I found him in indwelling on the subject  
of the love of God; but still perplexed with doubts  
and fears, being not yet abh unreservedly to be-  
lieve the gospel. A divine ray of light had indeed  
beamed into his soul, but at times unbelief had  
him in bondage. His countenance glowed with

to his feeling by short sentences. "O that I could  
believe that mercy can be shown to such a wretched  
man! I cannot pray aright; I cannot pray  
enough." I repeated to him the beautiful per-  
oration of our Saviour, "As Moses lifted up the  
serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man  
be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him  
should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3.14.  
And having explained it to him by referring  
to the case of the wounded Israelite, <sup>he</sup> exclaimed  
in the simplicity of his heart, "Am I only to  
look up?" I replied, "To look up means  
to believe, and this is all our Saviour requires  
you to do." "But," said he, "my heart is very  
wretched; O, you do not know what a wicked  
man I have been. Since our conversation  
yesterday I have thought more of my sin, than  
I did before, and when I think how good God  
has been to me, to do so much for me, and that  
He has not cut me off in my sin, I see that I  
have been sinning against love; This makes  
me afraid. If I feel as good men feel, then I  
would believe there was mercy for me; but,  
Oh! I have committed so many sins." To  
this I replied, "If you had committed as many  
sins as all the men in the village, I would yet

encourage you to come to Jesus, for it is written,  
in the Bible, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses  
us from all sin.' I guess that showed him, that  
the Israelites were commanded to look to the  
brazen serpent because they were wounded, and  
that they were healed when they did look, 'So  
must we,' said I; 'we must go to our Saviors,  
because we do not feel happy well and happy in  
our minds, because we are sinners; and then God  
will have mercy upon us.' 'Then,' said he,  
'we must first look to Jesus, or believe in Him;  
and we shall be pardoned.' I replied, 'Believe  
on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'  
The word was blessed to his soul.

2. May 2<sup>nd</sup>. He expressed some doubt as to his  
acceptance at last, and tho' he was evidently  
enjoying a day or two of rest & peace, yet gloomy  
apprehensions of death were ever then shot across  
his mind. I repeated the words, "Jesus has opened  
the Kingdom of heaven to all believers", adding,  
"He is the Master of the house and the Lord of  
the Kingdom, and says, 'I have the key of David,  
I open the door and no man can shut it, and I shut  
and no man can <sup>open</sup> it.' I continued, "You  
are the master of your own house, if I came  
to see you and found the door fastened I should

knock; and if you open it I should come  
in we go by faith to and believe and not to be  
admitted into His kingdom; and He says, 'I  
have not before thee an open door and no  
man can shut it.' Then hath He said, 'The  
kingdom of heaven to all believers.' Then  
mained thoughtfully, but appeared much more  
composed in his mind.

5. May 9<sup>th</sup>. I found him in a most delightful  
state of mind. Among other things he said; "When you  
came to see me last Sunday I was an ignorant creature.  
Some persons told me to pray to God Almighty ~~but~~  
~~I~~ used to forgive me, but I did not know how to pray  
any more than the cock in the fife. But now when  
I sit alone, or lie sleepless in my bed, and think  
of Jesus, how He was a poor man and suffered  
for us sinners, and how kindly He spoke to the people—  
the tears run down my face and I can pray to Him  
in my heart; and I feel something that tells me, He  
loves me, and will not leave me to perish at last."  
Asked him, "If the Lord should be pleased to call you  
soon out of the world, can you be ratiſed, and can you  
rest on what you have heard?" Looking at me  
with a cheerful mien he replied, "To be sure I can;  
what can I want more? Did He not die for me,  
and does He not love me. I am a great sinner; but  
I shall go to heaven."

7. May 8<sup>th</sup>. I saw him for the last time; tho'

I had then no idea that he was so near eternity. His expression was not so clear and encouraging as the preceding Sabbath. This I could easily account for when he told me, that a great many people had called on him the day before, and many had prayed with him and spoken so long, which had so much affected his head, that (to use his own expression) "I was so weak you might have knocked me down with a feather." However, what he said to us of the state of his mind showed, that he still depended for salvation solely on the merits of Jesus. — He departed about 2 o'clock the following morning. From the testimony of those, who were with him at the time I have reason to believe, that the Lord graciously supported him in that dying hour, enabling him to make a good confession of faith in the God of his salvation. About ten minutes before he left this world, he exhorted those present to seek the Lord, adding, "I shall soon die; but, oh! how bright, how blessed will the last minutes of my life be, when I am leaving this world of sin and misery, and going to see my Saviour!"

My visit to this poor man excited many serious reflections. In his case I saw in vivid colours the unhappiness and folly of sin. — My blood has chilled at the recital of this man, when relating the awful curse of sin he had <sup>had</sup> his hair breadth crept from cruel death, and the unhappy state of his mind during all this time, and, as he himself

expected it, the heavy load he had had to carry.  
Verily, the Devil is a hard taskmaster.

2. The Mercy of God in plucking sinners from everlasting bushwicks. As the good Shepherd He has followed this wayward sheep that ate his wandering; for it was evident from what he told me, that he had not been without convictions and remorse of conscience while pursuing his wicked ways, and before his last change. On such occasions his remorse of conscience was so strong, that tho' he set out one Sunday morning to join this wicked company, the sight accidentally of a good man, whom he accidentally met, so chastened him, that he turned and leaped over a wall, crying like a child. He actually turned back, and tried to pray to God, promising to lead a different life. — Senses of folly again diverted his mind, and obliterated serious thoughts.

3. The power of the Word of the Lord, when accompanied by the influence of the Holy Ghost, whose spirit is to glorify Jesus, by leading poor sinners to faith in the savorment.

4. How the fruits of the Spirit appear in them, who have faith in Jesus, by resignation to the will of God, love and thankfulness for His mercy - patience under affliction - meekness and a forgiving spirit, and a desire that others should enjoy the same happiness, and attain to eternal life.