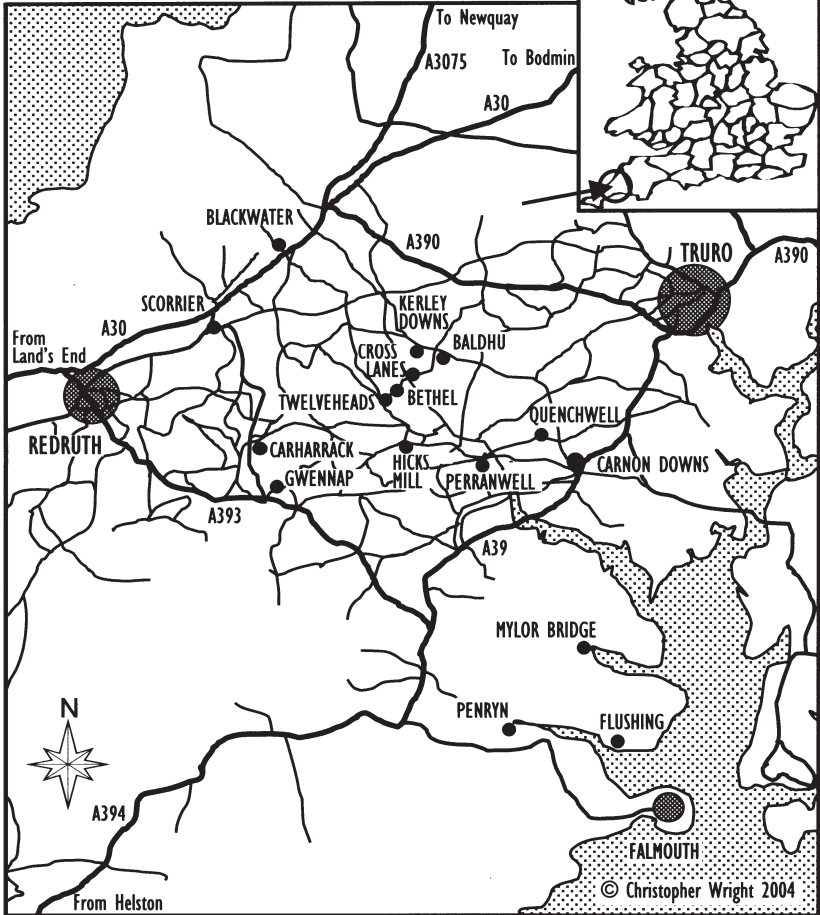
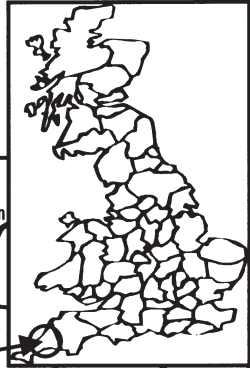


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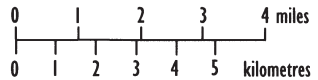
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Billy Bray Territory



Note that all road details and localities are for guidance only



FOREWORD

In 1864 Billy Bray, a remarkable man of God who impacted Cornwall for half a century, completed his memoirs. He wrote in one continuous sentence, including spelling errors, and excluding punctuation, and spoke of “the good brother that (would) translate this journal”! He was speaking of Chris Wright – little knowing that the task would take 140 years to fully come to fruition.

Chris Wright has done a work of great historical importance, as well as doing all of us an immense favour, in making the Journal of Billy Bray available for the first time.

Chris employs the accuracy of an historian, combined with the empathy of a biographer, to bring one of England’s greatest Evangelists alive to a whole new generation.

Read on and be challenged and inspired by a radical Christianity seldom seen today.

Chris Wright’s Billy Bray dances off every page! It could well be said of Billy: “By faith he still speaks even though he is dead” – in his own words!

Greg Downes

Former Tutor in Evangelism, London School of
Theology

Evangelist-in-Residence, St Andrew’s
Chorleywood

Chaplain, Pembroke College Oxford



Three Eyes Chapel at Kerley Downs
redrawn from an engraving in *The King's Son*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

MUCH OF THIS BOOK comes directly from Billy Bray's own *Journal*. In Appendix 1 on page 245 I have given details of the *Journal*, reproducing short passages exactly as Billy writes them, with his own spelling from the Cornish dialect and incorrect use of capital letters.

The *Journal* is one long sentence of 49,000 words – with no punctuation. After chopping my transcription into sentences, I found that almost every one started with *and*, *so*, *for*, *then* and *but*. I have removed the majority of these words, corrected the spelling, and inserted simple missing words. An example of this is where Billy writes that someone should: *have been the disciples' side*, when he clearly means: *have been on the disciples' side*. Words like this were probably omitted through writing quickly.

I have very occasionally altered the structure of a sentence to make some accounts easier to read, always using the original words. Where a word must be missing, but its identity is not obvious, I have put my best guess in brackets. A question mark immediately before a word is a likely reading, but the word itself is either not known or I may not have deciphered it correctly. The occasional unexpectedly erudite words are always Billy's. Billy wrote his *Journal* in 1864, and apart from the story of his conversion he seems to tell the various incidents in his life as they occur to him. I have attempted to rearrange them into their most likely time sequence.

When Billy mentions the Lord, he often writes *the dear Lord*, including *bless and praise his holy name*, and then adds words like, *for his goodness to me*. He also

makes many references to how he would be down in hell by now if the Lord had not saved him. I realise this is indicative of Billy's deep faith, but when these expressions appear several times on a page they can be distracting. I have therefore tried to strike an editorial balance.

Of the 49,000 original words, I have omitted about one thousand. Apart from the changes mentioned above, most of these words are repetitions or occasional Bible passages given by Billy in full. Absolutely nothing has been left out that could cause embarrassment to readers who are fans of Billy. In other words, nothing has been censored.

For other accounts of Billy's life I am using various editions from the first to the last of *The King's Son* by FW Bourne (1871 to 1906); *The Story of Billy Bray from Short Stories And Other Papers* (early 1870s) and *The Ship Where Christ Was Captain* (1926), both titles by MG Pearse; *Strange Tales Volume 5* by John Ashworth (1879 edition); and *From Death Into Life* by William Haslam (1880). All references to Bourne's writing come from a variety of editions of *The King's Son*, and are not in Billy's *Journal*. I will make clear throughout the book the source of the material. Further details on these books can be found in Appendix 5.

I have attempted to be scrupulously careful to get my facts right. Where I have carried out minor editing on some of the original accounts by Bourne and others it has been done simply to make them more digestible, and never to change the intentions of their authors, or give a different meaning to the words. Anyone wanting to study these authors' accounts of the life of Billy Bray may like to read the originals.

When trying to put a little more flesh on what are sometimes just surnames or initials in *The King's Son*, I have used the word *probably* or *possibly* if I need to indicate that it is not a definite identification.

It is not possible to tell the story of Billy Bray without inserting occasional notes and explanations. These sometimes involve background information that will already be known to some readers, so I am putting them in boxes. In this way they won't interfere with the amazing story of one of Cornwall's most famous sons.

Finally, I must make it clear that I have written this book for a general readership, although I hope it will lead scholars of church history and early Methodism down previously unexplored paths.

Chris Wright
Bristol, 2004

Publisher's note

In order to distinguish between source material and authorial comment, we have set the work as follows: Authorial comment is set (like this paragraph) with a justified right margin and a wider line length.

All quoted source material (like this paragraph) is set with a shorter line length and with a ragged right margin. All, and only, entries from Billy Bray's Journal are set in this font.

CHAPTER 1

A FORTUNATE ESCAPE

IN HIS OWN WORDS, Billy Bray lived “a bad life”, and it nearly ends inside a copper mine when the roof crashes to the ground.

William Trewartha Bray, the man who has the fortunate escape, was born in the summer of 1794 at Twelveheads, a village near Truro in Cornwall. At this time the village consisted of a few thatched cottages inhabited by tin miners, and a small Methodist chapel that Billy’s grandfather helped build.

Billy tells the story of his early life in the opening pages of his *Journal*, and no one can tell it better than Billy himself. FW Bourne says Billy spoke with a great sense of humour. I believe he wrote in the same way. Many readers will find Billy’s down-to-earth grammar, which I have not corrected, adds to the fascination.

Billy writes:

My grandfather was one of the old Methodists, for he joined them when Mister Wesley first came to Cornwall. He was my father’s father. My father died when we was young, and left my mother with five small children. After father died, grandfather took us to rear. He could not read a letter in the book, but I have heard him say, “We must be born again, and I was born again up in our croft among the furze.¹ I was so happy I could tell the bushes to praise God. I thought I was in a new world.”

1 This is the grandfather’s conversion, not Billy’s. Furze is the local name for gorse. This was probably an open-air meeting out on the Cornish croft – the rough hill-

My grandfather, and a few more that was converted when he was, built a little chapel in a place called Twelveheads. There was a special little class, and they had a leader called Sando.²

I write to honour my God. You will not wonder how I praise him when you read what he has done for me, bless his holy name.

I was born in the parish of Kea in the county of Cornwall in June 1794. My father died when I was about eight years old and, as I have already said, my grandfather reared me. I lived in Cornwall until I was seventeen years old, and then I went up to Devonshire and there I lived a bad life.

I got in with a bad company of drunkards. I remember one time getting drunk in the town of Tavistock. When going to our home we met with a very large horse in the way. It was late in the night and two of us drunk men got up on the horse. We had not rode far before the horse struck his foot against a stone and fell down. It turned right over, and it was very near he had killed us both. But the Lord spared us, bad as we was, thanks be to his holy name.

Another time I got drunk, and while sitting with a man my hat fell off from my head. It fell into the fire and was burnt. I stole a hat to wear home and I was very near to be sent to jail for that, but the man had the hat again.

Another time we were a company of drunkards coming home from the alehouse all drunk, and we unhung all the gates from the fields as we came by. We was near to be sent to jail for that. So you that read this will see that I have great reason to praise the Lord for

side – for Billy’s grandfather goes on to say that several people were converted at the same time. Although Twelveheads is not far from Gwennap – a place famous for both John and Charles Wesley’s preaching – it is interesting to note that Billy quotes his grandfather as saying *our croft*, implying the meeting was local.

2 Here, and later, this is Billy’s spelling. The surnames *Sando* and *Sandoe* are both known in Cornwall.

what he have done for me, bless his holy name. These is but a few of my bad deeds out of many.

Although Billy puts just these three rather mild instances of his “bad life” in his *Journal*, Bourne refers to Billy as, “a drunken and lascivious miner filled with bitter hatred;” adding, “Billy’s soul was stained with viler sins than any that have been mentioned.”

As we shall see, Billy feels unable to elaborate on his past life. But all this is about to change:

While I was working underground in Wheal Friendship mine in Devonshire I heard a scat³ over my head. I ran out from where I was working, and I think forty tons fell down where I came out from. I was spared, so did I not ought to praise the Lord?

I was pert⁴ to the captain that I worked under in the mine, and got turned away. I went to another part of Devonshire and got work, and went to live at a beer shop. There with another drunkard we were drinking all the night long, but I had a sore head and a sick stomach. And that was not all, for I had horrors of mind. No one knows what I felt. I have been afraid many times – afraid to sleep for fear I should wake in hell. I made many promises to the Lord to be better, and have been as bad or worse again. You see how the Lord beared with me. Well may his people say, “He would not the death of a sinner, but wish all to come to him and be saved.” I believed it to be true, praise his holy name.

After being in Devonshire for seven years I came home to Cornwall again, a drunkard.

It is 1818 when Billy returns to Cornwall. On July 16 1821, at the age of twenty-seven, he marries Johanna Bray - a common surname at this time - in Kea Church. His wife Joey (Johanna, although sometimes spelt without the h in

3 A sudden cracking

4 Insolent

official records) is heading for trouble. She is marrying a drunkard, and she has drifted from the Christian faith.

Billy continues:

I was not only a drunkard but bad in other ways, and it is too bad to put down here. Great was the mercy of God towards me or I should not be here, bless and praise his holy name for what he done for me in delivering my soul from the pit.

Young women, be sure you go not with a drunkard. If you do, and he marry you, he will not care for you nor the children. My dear wife have a great reason to praise the Lord that I was converted.

One time I remember I went for some coal that my wife sent me for. I got the coal, and there was a beer shop in the way, and there I stayed. I got drunk, and my poor wife was forced to come for me and wheel home the coal herself.

So you see that a drunkard is a bad husband. When the Lord bless him with money he will give it for drink to the landlord sooner than to his wife and children. I know at one time the Lord blessed me and gave me two good months' wages at one time. I paid the landlord five pounds for drink,⁵ and all I had was a sore head and a sick stomach – and a tormented mind.

The landlords and landladies in general are very greedy. Just after I paid him the five pounds, me and my wife and child came one day when the landlord and his wife was to dinner. They had a leg of mutton, but did not ask us to have one bit. My wife thought much about it and she asked me whether I would do so again.⁶

There is bad houses and they are bad people that keep them. I learnt the greatest part of my wickedness in them houses, for I sinned against light and law. I never got drunk without being

5 This would have been at least half of Billy's "two good months' wages".

6 Presumably: whether he would continue drinking.



Billy Bray's cottage

redrawn from an engraving in *The King's Son*.

condemned for it, and by night I often dreamed wisht⁷ dreams. It was my fault. The Lord was willing to make me happy, but I was not. This is the great wonder how he spared me, and I so great a sinner against the Lord.

Billy's account of his conversion is vivid. It is the late autumn of 1823. He has been married for five years, and is now a family man aged twenty-nine. In the cottage Billy finds a copy of John Bunyan's book *Visions of Heaven and Hell*.

- 7 Billy uses the word 'wisht' several times. It is a catch-all Cornish word meaning something like *pale*, *unwell*, *poorly* and *bad*, depending on the context. Thus Billy's *wisht* dream is a bad one. When Billy says later that his comrades are *wisht* to see him praying, he means they are upset. Billy also talks about a miser's table looking *wisht*, meaning it looks a poor one.

Billy writes:

John Bunyan, when he was in the prison writing the *Visions of Heaven and Hell*, he did not know the Lord would make him instrumental in converting my soul. But he was, and I bless the Lord that ever John Bunyan was put in prison. Bless his holy name that little book called Bunyan's *Visions of Heaven and Hell* was brought into our house. Who brought it there I do not know. Bless the Lord for sending of it there. I took it in my hand and began to read it.⁸

I read the *Visions of Heaven* first, and then *Visions of Hell*. Bunyan said he saw two lost souls down in hell cursing one another for being the author of one another's misery. He said though they love one another here, they will hate one another in hell.

There was a man at that time that I kept company with, and we was fond of one another. We worked at the mine together, for we was miners, and we went to the alehouse and got drunk together. When I read in Bunyan's *Visions of Heaven and Hell* about the two down in hell, I thought shall S Coad⁹ and me be like that, that is that so fond of each other? I felt from that very time to be a better man.

When I was sitting down to the end of the table reading the book, my wife was sitting by the fire. She had been converted when young but she went back before we went together, so she was a backslider. I asked her what it was to be happy.

She said, "No tongue can tell what they enjoy that serve the Lord."

8 Since Billy has already said that his Methodist grandfather could not read a word, the Bible and hymnbook may have been his father's, who we learn later was also a Methodist. Where Bunyan's *Visions of Heaven and Hell* came from is more puzzling. Surely Billy would have known if it was his father's, for it is unlikely that a miner's home at that time would have many books. Maybe it came from Joey's family, for certainly Joey's mother was alive, as was Billy's mother.

9 No other name is given for S Coad.

Then I said, "Why don't you begin again? I may begin too."

I thought if she was to begin it would be better for me, for I was ashamed to go to my knees to pray before her that very night. I felt in my mind that I ought to fall on my knees and ask God for mercy, but the devil had such a hold in me that he made me ashamed of my wife.¹⁰

I went into bed without prayer, and it was about ten o'clock at night. At three in the morning, I think, I awaked and thought about what I read the night before. I thought, if I stay until my wife is converted I may never be saved.

Then I rose out of the bed and went to my knees for the first time. My wife heard me but she could not see me for it was dark. Bless and praise the Lord, I have never been ashamed of my wife since that night, and there is forty years gone since that time.

That very day I made up my mind to serve the Lord by his help, and I began to pray. It was on a Friday, but what day of November it was I do not know. The more I prayed, the more I felt to pray. It was our payday or setting day that day, I hardly know which, for it is a long time ago.

I stayed upstairs all the forenoon asking the Lord to have mercy upon me, and in the afternoon I went to the alehouse to meet with my comrades, the men I work with. We always went, we miners, on setting days and paydays to the alehouse to eat and to drink, and to get drunk and to tell lies. I was the worse liar of the whole, and their chairman among them.¹¹

10 When Billy says here and later that he is ashamed of his wife, he must mean he is ashamed to *pray* in front of her, not that he is ashamed *of* her. Billy has already said he was ashamed to go on his knees before Joey, and this and the following statement seem to be badly worded repetitions of his feelings.

11 From later references by Billy, *to tell lies* must mean to tell dirty jokes, as he is now ashamed of telling them to make the men laugh. Billy admits to being the chief teller.

We was eight men that worked together. When I came in among them they looked at me, and they knew that I was not like I was some time before. Yes, they had lost their chairman, and one of them swore.

THE BRYANITES AND BIBLE CHRISTIANS

Cornish-born William O'Bryan (1778-1868) was a dissident Wesleyan Methodist preacher who felt called to evangelism in Cornwall, but was unsupported by the Methodist leaders over the way he wanted to go about it. O'Bryan founded the Bryanites in 1815 at Lake Farm, in the Devonshire village of Shebbear. The Connexion – the religious body – functioned in a way that was similar to the Primitive Methodists. To a certain extent the early Bible Christians and the Methodists were rivals (there were several divisions of Methodists), a cause of ill feeling between some of the members, as we will see from some of Billy's accounts.

Within a year the Bryanites became known as the Bible Christians, although the original name stuck for a long time among the public. Following an internal disagreement, O'Bryan left for America in 1836. FW Bourne was elected president in 1867. Eventually the membership numbered over 30,000. Following Bourne's death in 1905, the Bible Christians merged with the Methodist New Connexion and the United Methodist Free Church in 1907. In 1932 all the Methodist bodies except the Wesleyan Reform and Independent Methodists united to become the Methodist Church of today. An impartial reference to the Bible Christians, from the Encyclopaedia Britannica dated 1911, can be found on:

http://21.1911encyclopedia.org/B/BI/BIBLE_CHRISTIANS.htm.

There is a link to this document on:

www.billybray.com.

I said to him, "We must give account of that one day."¹²

Mocking me, he said, "Shall us go to the Bryanites meeting?"

I said, "It is better to go there than go to hell."

I came home that night sober the first time for many years, for we always got drunk on our setting day and payday. My wife was greatly surprised to see me come home so soon, and sober too. She said, "How are you home so soon today?"

I said unto her, "You will never see me drunk no more, by the help of the Lord."

And she never have since, praise the Lord. The Lord can, and do, cure drunken wicked men, praise his holy name. That night I went upstairs and prayed until we went to bed.

The next day I did not go to work. I took the Bible and Wesley's hymnbook and went up the stairs into the bedroom. This was the Saturday, and there I read and prayed all the day. Sometimes I read the Bible and then the hymnbook, and then asked the Lord for mercy.

When Sunday morning came it was very wet. There was a class meeting a mile from our house, called Bible Christians. I went to the house where the meeting was held, but because it was wet none of them came. I had a mind to meet with them, but when I saw a little rain would keep them from the house of God, I said, "I shall not meet here if a drop of rain will keep them home."

I went home from the meeting house, went up to our bedroom, and took the Bible and hymnbook again. Sometimes I read, and then prayed, and asked the Lord to have mercy on me. I felt the devil very busy with me, and he tempted me that I should never find

12 This seems to be good-hearted banter between work colleagues, with Billy giving as good as he got and making a serious point at the same time. But Bourne changes the word *we* to *you* in *The King's Son*, and makes Billy sound holier-than-thou.

mercy. But I never believed him, for I knew that the Lord said. "All that seek shall find." And that is true, bless his holy name for ever and ever.

CLASS MEETINGS

Developed by John Wesley from a meeting in 1739, Wesley declared that Class Meetings were for, "A company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." There were several rules, of which the main ones were: To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; To advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; To receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor." (General Rules of the Methodist Class Meetings, 1808.)

The Bible Christians adopted a very similar type of meeting. When Billy says they meet in a house or dwelling house, he means a family home. The model is used throughout the world today by all denominations in home groups. For more information make an internet search for "*class meeting*" + *Methodist*.

On the Monday I was all the forepart of the day in my bedroom, some of the time reading, and then asking the Lord for mercy. Then I had to go to the mine, for we was afternoon core.¹³ We went down underground, four of us, and went to work. While working, I was always asking the Lord to have mercy on me.

The men that I worked with me was wisht to see me so, for I used to tell lies to make them laugh. But now I was not like Billy Bray, for

last week I was a servant of the devil, and now I was determined to serve the Lord, by his help. And I believed he would help me.

So that stem, or core as we miners call, passed away and we came up. I went home asking for mercy all the way, and the devil was often putting in my mind that I shall never find it. But bless God, I never believed him, for the Lord gave me strength against him. When I came home after that night core it was eleven o'clock, for we left work about ten o'clock.

I used to ask my wife, "What is for supper?" But that night I did not, for I had something else to look for: the Lord to speak peace to my soul. I went upstairs into my room asking the Lord for mercy, but I had it not that night. So I had a little supper and we went to bed.

That night I dreamed a very wicked dream, and when I waked in the morning, I said, "Because I have dreamed this wicked dream, I will not go to bed to sleep this night."

I went to the mine, and we went down to work at our two o'clock core. I was always asking the Lord for mercy. I never spoke to my partner that worked with me, except when he asked a question. This was Tuesday. So this core passed away, and we came up and went home.

My wife's mother told me I must not be out of heart if I did not find God's mercy in twelve months. I told her I should not be so long as that, though the devil tempted me hard that I should never find it. Thanks be to the Lord I found him a liar. I was glad that I had begun to seek the Lord, for I would rather be crying for mercy than living in sin.

By the help of the Lord I shall write my Journal, simple as it is, for I am a simple man as a great many people know. At that time we had a little pig, and this was the Wednesday. While in the bedroom looking to heaven with all the powers of my soul, it appeared to me I had almost laid hold of the blessing. But the pig came up to our door and I thought I never heard a pig cry so in all my life. I should have been very glad if some person had drive him away, if I never saw him no more.

I did not get the blessing then, though it seem so nigh me. By the devil and the pig, I got it not then: with the pig downstairs crying and the devil tempting. For want of a little more faith I got not the blessing, and it was come time for me to go work to the mine.

I went asking the Lord for mercy all the way. We changed our clothes and went down in the mine underground. My partner was in the end breaking the stuff,¹⁴ and I was wheeling it away to a place we call a pleat or shaft. There was at that day a horse whim¹⁵ that drew up the stuff to the surface that we men broke.

As I was wheeling out the barrow the devil tempted me that I shall never find mercy. When the devil tempted me, I said to myself, for my partners did not hear me, "Thee art a liar, devil." As soon as I said so, I felt all the weight go off my mind. Glory be to God, I could praise the Lord, but not with that liberty I could afterwards.

I called out to my three comrades, or partners, for there was two men in the eastern end, and my partner in the western end, and said to them, "I am not so happy as some is, but sooner than I would go back to sin again I would be put in that plat¹⁶ there and be burnt to death with faggots."

When I came home I went upstairs, not staying for supper, for I wanted something better. And bless God I soon had it. I stayed up in my bedroom with my face to the west, and I said to the dear Lord, "Thou hast said they that ask shall receive, and they that seek shall find, and they that knock it shall be opened unto them."¹⁷ Open unto me, my dear Lord. I have faith to believe it."

14 A miners' term for the rock and ore.

15 A horse-drawn windlass.

16 A plat is a flat area, either inside or outside a mine, for storing rock and ore. It seems that heat is being used here to break the rock within the mine.

17 Luke 11:9

When I said so, the dear Lord made me so happy that I cannot express what I felt. I shouted for joy and praised God for what he had done for me a poor sinner, for I could say my happy heart felt experience that the Lord had pardoned all my sins. And it seem to me I was in a new world. I think it was in November 1823. What day of the month I do not know, but everything looked new to me: the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a man in a new world.

Glory be to God, I was so happy that I was the greatest part of my time praising the Lord. I could say, "O Lord, I will praise thee, for thou wast angry with me but thine anger is turned away, and thou comforts me."¹⁸ Or like David, "The Lord brought me out of the horrible pit and mire and clay, and set my feet on the rock, established my goings, and put a new song in my mouth of praise and thanks given to God."¹⁹

I was a new man altogether. All that I met I told what the Lord had done for my soul. I heard some say that they have hard work to get away from their old companions, but I had hard work to find them, for I was glad to meet them to tell them what the Lord had done for me.

Some said I was mad, and some said, "We shall have him again next payday."

I always got drunk on our mine payday, and they thought I should go back again. But praise the Lord, there is more than forty years gone and they have not got me yet. They said I was a mad man, but they meant I was a glad man, and I have been glad ever since. Bless and praise his holy name for what he have done for we poor sinners that was once servants of the devil and now are the servants of the Lord; once in the road to hell but now in the road to heaven.

18 Isaiah 12:1

19 Psalm 40:1-3

Bless and praise his holy name, I never shall forget the day when
Jesus took my sins away.

Billy quickly begs his wife Joey to return to the faith she once knew. Bourne tells us that about a week later, in Hicks Mill Chapel, Joey “regained the blessing she had lost.” But not all Billy’s friends are pleased to hear what has happened.

Billy continues:

We used to go to Capson²⁰ a great many of us. Before I was converted I was their chairman, for I was most of my time telling of lies to make them laugh, and make fun as we called it. But now I could tell them a new tale about heaven and heavenly things, and what the Lord had done for many, and what the Lord would do for them, and what he had done for me.

But all this did not please them. They was better pleased with me when I told them lies, when I was in the road to hell with them. Because I told them about the Lord and heaven and heavenly things, they called me a mad man. But I was only then in my right mind, praise the Lord. Here we may see what blind men is that live in sin, to call a man or woman that is born again mad. In the day of Pentecost, they that was not converted said the Lord’s children was drunk with new wine.

It was not long before some of the men was as mad as me. There were men that professed to be converted before I was, but did not love their Lord well enough to honour him in the mine, and did not love we well enough to tell us that the Lord would make us happy. They never prayed with me, nor told me that I must pray or go to

20 Billy twice mentions going to Capson and at the top of this section in the *Journal* he has written *chairman at Capson* referring to himself. Clearly the men are going there to drink. Perhaps it should be spelt *Capstan*, which is part of the winding gear in a mine, and may have been the name of a local alehouse. Another possibility is *Capstone*.



Hick's Mill chapel
redrawn from an engraving in *The Kings's Son*.

hell.²¹ But when I was converted, the Lord gave me power to tell all that I met with that I was happy and was going to heaven. I told them that what the Lord had done for me, he would do for everyone that ask him.

There was no one that prayed in our mine where I worked, but when the Lord converted my soul I used to pray underground with the men before we go to our different places to work. Sometimes I felt it a heavy cross, but the cross is the way to the crown. Sometimes I have had as many as six to ten men down with me, and I have said to them, "Now if you will hearken to me, I will pray for you before we go to work. For," I said, "if I do not pray for you before we go to work, and anyone be killed, I should think it was my fault."

Some of them would say, "You pray and we will hear you."

21 The word *hell* is lightly crossed out.

Then I should pray in what the people call simple words, and in the way that I hope the Lord would have me. I used say when praising God, "If anyone must be killed or die today, let me. Do not let no one of them die, for they are not happy, but I am. And I shall be in heaven if I die today."

When I did rise from my knees I should see the tears running down their faces. Soon after, some of them became praying men themselves.

There was a man that was up in Devonshire with me. He was called Justin Thomas, and he and me was two drunkards up there together. We came home to Cornwall together and I was converted before he was. When I used to tell the wicked men what a bad state they was in, and where they must go if they die, he was one of them. They would persecute me and call me a fool, but Justin Thomas would say, "You shall leave that man alone and say nothing to him, for the Lord hast done great things for him. I knew him when he was a bad man, and now he is a good man, and I wish I was like him."

When Justin said so, I felt great love to him and felt to pray for him. I was out one day in the field turning dressing to teal my 'taters.²² I kneeled down in the field and prayed for Justin, and while I was praying the Lord spoke to me in my mind, and said, "I will save him very soon."

I believed it was from the Lord, and so it was. That day I was afternoon core and went to the mine at two o'clock. I was going down and Justin was coming up. He had a pick in his hand coming

22 *To teal, or teal, is old Cornish meaning to plant, similar to the expression to till which in most of England means to prepare the ground for planting. In parts of Cornwall to till is still understood to mean to plant. 'Taters are potatoes.*

up the ladder and it was knocking against the staves and making a noise, and I heard him before I saw him.

It was said to me in my mind, "Justin is coming. Tell him of it."

So when he came up, I said to him, "I have good news to tell you. While I was out in the field praying for you, the Lord told me you should be converted soon."

And so he was, for he was converted, and taken sick. I saw him many times when he was ill, and he told me he was happy and going to heaven to praise God in glory. So Brother Thomas is now with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven praising God, and will praise him for ever and ever. The Lord Jesus said in the days of his flesh, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."²³

Reader, you may say, "How do you know that the Lord spoke to you?" Very well, the blessed Bible and New Testament tell us that the Lord spoke in the days of old by the mouth of his servants the prophets, but now he speaks in our hearts by the Spirit of his Son. And I know that is the truth, for the Lord never told one lie, bless his holy name, nor made one mistake. What I have heard and felt and seen, with confidence I can tell.