

## From Revd Bernard Hughes

An Appreciation of the Hymn: 'He Will Hold Me Fast.'  
(When I Fear My Faith Will Fail)

When I fear my faith will fail,  
Christ will hold me fast!  
When the tempter would prevail,  
He will hold me fast.  
I could never keep my hold  
Through life's fearful path;  
For my love is often cold;  
He must hold me fast.

Refrain.  
He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;  
For my Saviour loves me so, He will hold me fast.

Those He saves are his delight,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
Precious in his holy sight,  
He will hold me fast,  
He'll not let my soul be lost;  
His promises shall last;  
Bought by Him at such a cost,  
He will hold me fast.

Refrain.

For my life He bled and died,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
Justice has been satisfied;  
He will hold me fast.  
Raised with Him to endless life,  
He will hold me fast  
'Till our faith is turned to sight,  
When He comes at last!

Refrain.

This hymn was sung some weeks ago at a BBC Sunday morning Worship Service, broadcast from Holy Trinity Church, Manchester.

The original hymn was written by Ada R. Habershon who lived from 1861-1918. She was known as a hymn writer and theologian. As a theologian her books included 'How the New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament', also 'The study of Types', 'Outline Studies on the Tabernacle' and 'Studies in the Parables'.

Ada Habershon enjoyed the ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. She helped in the work of Moody and Sankey, and Charles Alexander of hymn book fame considered her to be the best Gospel song-writer in the world. As a hymn writer she wrote over two thousand Gospel hymns.

Having searched through a number of hymn books, including Moody and Sankey's 'Sacred Songs and Solos', this particular hymn has not been found but with one exception and that is the 1925 edition of the Scripture Union 'Golden Bells'. The tune is different from the one that was sung in the BBC Service. In fact the hymn, both words and music have been changed by Matt Merker. There are altered words in vv1-2 and a new verse for v 3. No doubt this new arrangement has kept the true sentiment and meaning that Ada Habershon intended. More information can be obtained on Wikipedia.

Matt Merker is a member of a Church in America and his pastor sent the original words 'He will hold me fast' suggesting it would be a good song for the congregation to learn. Matt Merker forgot about the song until going through a time of personal doubt and uncertainty thought about the text from Jude vv20-25 "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy..." He tells us that the Church learnt the hymn with the new tune and began singing it with joy .

At this time when our Services in our Churches are curtailed and we feel perhaps the effects of lockdown fatigue we are reminded of the words of this hymn "Christ Will Hold Me Fast". The new tune is called 'Full of Hope'.

The hymn can be heard sung on Wikipedia.