

ISSUE

21.16

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

April 21,
2019

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Holding onto “God’s Unchanging Hand”

By Kyle Pope

Mary Jane (Jennie) Bain Wilson was born in Cleveland, Indiana in 1857. Her father, Robert died when she was an infant and at the age of four she was stricken with a spinal illness that left her in bed or a wheelchair for the remainder of her fifty-six year life. Unable to attend school, all of her education took place in the home, where she developed a love for music and poetry. At the age of twenty-four she was baptized by being carried on a chair to a stream. In spite of her restricted condition, Miss Wilson became a prolific writer. She composed around 2200 poems and hymns. Since 1940, one of her most well-known hymns has been published in at least twenty-one hymnals produced by members of churches of Christ—the moving song of praise, “Hold to God’s



Unchanging Hand.” It was likely penned in 1904, when she sent it to Franklin Eiland, who reportedly conceived of the music to it the following year, while sitting under a tree in the backyard of his Texas home. It was first published in 1906 in the *New Hosannas* hymnal produced by the Quartet Music Company of Fort Worth, TX, and edited by John E. Thomas. Knowing Miss Wilson’s background, one can easily see this song, as David Cain suggests, as “a paraphrase of how she felt about her life up until that point.”

“Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand”

By Jennie B. Wilson

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God’s unchanging hand.

Trust in Him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring,
If by earthly friends forsaken
Still more closely to Him cling.

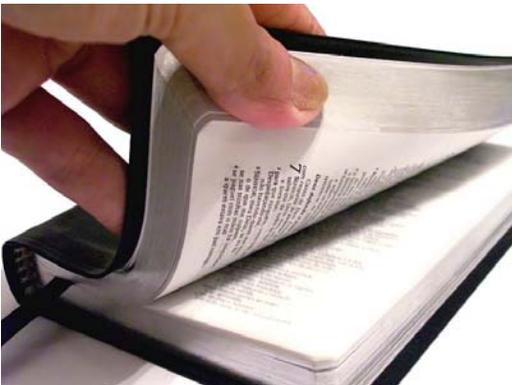
When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view.

Chorus:

Hold to God’s unchanging hand,
Hold to God’s unchanging hand;
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God’s unchanging hand.

Our lives on earth were never intended to be lived alone. This is true of human companionship. After the creation of man, the Lord observed, **“It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him”** (Gen. 2:18b, NKJV). Centuries later, the Holy Spirit led Solomon to the practical realization, **“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor”** (Eccl. 4:9). But, this fact is also true of our relationship to God. We were not made to live independent and isolated from God—we were created to seek Him. Paul told the Athenians that God put people in their places and times upon the earth, **“so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us”** (Acts 17:26-27). We are insufficient within ourselves to guide our own way. The Lord revealed through Jeremiah, **“O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”** (Jer. 10:23).

This need for a connection with God and others can create some challenging choices. Not all com-



panions we may choose are helpful to us. We remember the sad words in Israel's history, **"For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been"** (1 Kings 11:4, NASB). The Holy Spirit warns, **"Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devises violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking"** (Prov. 24:1-2, NKJV). So too, not all approaches to seeking God are of equal validity or value. Some seek God within their own heart and imagination, but Ezekiel was warned, **"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!'"** (Ezek. 13:3). Paul bemoaned, **"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things"** (Phil. 3:18-19).

Where then, can we turn for companionship that is truly helpful? How can we reach out to God in the assurance that we are actually taking hold of His hand of guidance?

The Psalmist appealed, **"Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me"** (Psa. 119:133). Paul told Timothy, **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If God's word is that which can *direct* our steps, it is the source to which we can look for His

guidance. If Scripture is *profitable* to equip us for **"every good work,"** we can be certain that in following its direction we are seeking God in truth. When our homes, our churches, our friends, our families, our husbands, our wives, our children allow their lives to be governed by what God teaches, the companionship of those of common faith can strengthen us toward the goal of eternal life. These are the relationships we should seek, and these are the companions that prove to be truly helpful to our souls.

Following God, through the guidance and revelation of His word has always been the way by which His people can have the confidence of the Lord's presence in our lives. Through Isaiah, God assured the Israelites, **"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand"** (Isa.



41:10). Like a small child holding firmly to the hand of his father, the Lord declared, **“I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’”** (Isa. 41:13). Through His word, His people, and His providence, God stands ever ready to help us, if only we will choose to “hold to God’s unchanging hand.”

Sources

Adams, Richard W. “Jennie Bain Wilson” *Hymntime.com*. http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/w/i/l/s/wilson_j.htm.

Cain, David. “Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand—Jennie Wilson.” *Song Scoops*. <http://songscoops.blogspot.com/2015/09/hold-to-gods-changing-hand-jennie.html>.

Hall, Jacob Henry. *Biography of Gospel Song and Hymn Writers*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. 1914, 372-375.

“Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand.” *Hymnstudiesblog.wordpress.com*. <https://hymnstudiesblog.wordpress.com/2014/05/21/hold-to-gods-unchanging-hand/>.



Faithful Sayings Issue 21.16 April 21, 2019

4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com

Welcome Visitors

**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**