

I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY

Tune: KINGSFOLD, Trad. English Melody, arr. Ralph V. William, 1906;
Horatio Bonar, Lyrics, 1846

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" was written by Horatius Bonar while at Kelso, and published in his *"Hymns Original and Selected"*, 1846, and in the 1st series of his *"Hymns of Faith & Hope"*, 1857. It was written in 3 stanzas of 8 lines, and headed, originally, *"The Voice from Galilee."* Despite his intimidating name and physical appearance, Horatius Bonar was a great lover of children and was concerned about how little the children understood of the metrical Psalms that were sung in the Scottish church of his day. *"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"* was one of the over 600 hymns he wrote to address the needs of the churches he served. It has come into extensive use, and is one of the most popular of the author's hymns. It is often used in Home Mission Services, and is suited thereto. It has been rendered into Latin by Dr. Macgill in his *"Songs of the Christian Creed and Life"* (1876) as *"Loquentem exaudivi."*

The hymn was later paired with the tune: KINGSFOLD, a folk tune thought to date back to the middle ages. The tune was published in *"English Country Songs"* (1893), an anthology compiled by Lucy E. Broadwood and J. A. Fuller Maitland. After having heard the tune in Kingsfold, Sussex, England (thus its name), English composer, symphony writer, and collector of English folk tunes, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) introduced it as a hymn tune in *"The English Hymnal"* (1906) as a setting for this hymn.

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was born and educated at Edinburgh, Scotland. He was ordained to the ministry, in 1837, and since then has been pastor at Kelso. In 1843, he joined the Free Church of Scotland. The University of Aberdeen conferred on him the doctorate of divinity in 1853. In 1866 he was translated to the Chalmers Memorial Church, the Grange, Edinburgh; and in 1883 he was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of of the Free Church of Scotland. His reputation as a religious writer was first gained on the publication of the *"Kelso Tracts"* of which he was the author. He has also written many works of prose, poetry, and popular hymns. The three series of *"Hymns of Faith and Hope"* have passed through several editions.

~Tull