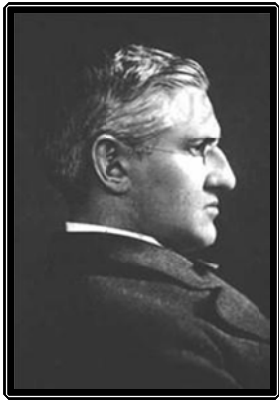


IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

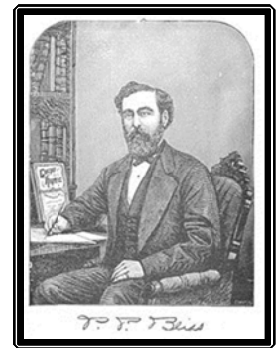
Horatio G. Spafford, Lyrics, 1873; Ville du Havre, Philip P. Bliss, Music, 1876

This is a hymn penned by hymnist Horatio Spafford and composed by Philip Bliss. It is possibly the most influential and enduring in the Bliss repertoire and is often taken as a choral model, appearing in hymnals of a wide variety of Christian fellowships.



This hymn was written by Spafford (1828 - 1888) after the great Chicago Fire of October 1871 and significant financial loss of property investments. In 1873, he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the SS Ville du Havre. In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed on business concerning zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire. While crossing the Atlantic, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a sea vessel, the Loch Earn, and all four of Spafford's daughters died. His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "*Saved alone . . .*" Shortly afterwards, as Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died. Spafford and his wife had a consistent history of acting on their faith. After the great Chicago fire of 1871, they devoted countless hours to helping the survivors. In 1881, they moved to Jerusalem (taking two daughters born after the shipwreck tragedy) and helped found a group called the American Colony; its mission was to serve the poor.

The music for this hymn was written by Phillip P. Bliss (1838 - 1876), who called the tune, "*Ville du Havre*", from the name of the stricken vessel. His story is also tragic; Bliss and his wife died in a tragic train wreck caused by a bridge collapse. He survived the initial impact, but went back into the flames in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue his wife. The night before that terrible railroad accident at Ashtabula, he said to his audience, "I may not pass this way again"; then he sang a solo, "I'm Going Home Tomorrow". This indeed proved prophetic of his own home going.



~ Tull