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awe-inspiring. In Iain Murray's words, "preaching . . . alive, a union of truth and fire, and both humbling and uplifting to the sublime in its effects."

It is this kind of preaching that I aspire to every time I seek God for His message, every time I seek to give that message form, and every time I go into a Christian pulpit to preach. Like "the Doctor" I am seldom if ever happy with my own efforts. But with this standard I prod myself and comfort myself. I urge the exercise upon each of you. It will surely do us all great good.

End Notes

1 Iain Murray, *The First Forty Years*, p. 101.
2 Karl Barth, *The Preaching of the Gospel*, p. 34
3 *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.
4 Iain Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 261.
5 D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preachers and Preaching*, p. 76.
6 *Op. cit.*, p. 92.
7 Murray, *The First Forty Years*, pp. 146-47.
8 Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 777.
9 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
10 Murray, *The First Forty Years*, p. 56.
11 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, p. 93.
12 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, p. 109.
13 Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 739.
14 Lloyd-Jones, *Op. cit.*, p. 325.

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May It Be Well with Your Soul

Perry G. Brackin

In this world it may not take one long to realize that problems and tragedies can appear on the scene rather unexpectedly. Suddenly and often surprisingly, serious questions about God's loving care can plague the mind. A Christian character is not revealed necessarily by the lack of nor quantity of problems or unfortunate circumstances which come one's way (historical example and present experience illustrate that Christians are not immune).

One's faith is definitely challenged when terrible things happen to innocent people. When one's world is shattered by sickness, death, broken relationships, or persecutions, the absence of answers can shake the foundations of the soul, and the magnificent motifs of divine protection which once adorned the corridors of the mind can suddenly appear defaced. Where is God? Where is His glory? Where is the good in all of this?

During this writer's personal struggle for answers and the return of the joyful heart, the silence became more endurable by listening to the saints behind and around him; by looking to the Son above him; and by learning from the Scroll before him. Some of the most wonderful inspiration came from hearing echoes of distant voices over their own unfortunate tragedies and rehearsing their reverberations in the mind. The following was written for all those who similarly have unanswered questions and unspeakable pain, as a result of life's inexplicable tragedies.

Horatio Gates Spafford was the writer of the Christian hymn "When Peace Like a River Attendeth My Way," better known as "It Is Well with My Soul." His experience illustrates very well the sublime character of Christian faith among the most tragic of circumstances. Horatio Gates Spafford was born in 1828. After spending his early life in New York, he later moved to Chicago where he became a successful lawyer. Spafford was also a very religious man. He was a Presbyterian layman, a Sunday school teacher, and an

active worker in the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association).

Beginning in the 1870s, Spafford experienced a series of events which came with devastating force. In 1871, some months prior to the Great Chicago Fire, real estate along the shores of Lake Michigan (in which Spafford had heavily invested) was destroyed by fire. In 1873, a physician counseled the Spaffords to travel to Europe in order to improve Mrs. Spafford's health. Subsequently, Spafford's wife, Anna Lawson Spafford, and four daughters boarded an American ship named the S. S. *Ville du Havre* sailing for Europe. Business required that Mr. Spafford remain behind but he was to follow his family in a few days.

On November 22, 1873, the S. S. *Ville du Havre*, sailing off the coast of Newfoundland, was struck by an English ship named *The Lochearn*. The *Ville du Havre* sank in 12 minutes. Spafford's four daughters drowned. Savage waves swept the small infant girl from Mrs. Spafford's arms. After hours of floating in the water, Mrs. Spafford was rescued. Arriving in Wales, she cabled her husband with these words: "Saved alone!"

Upon receiving the horrifying news, Spafford left immediately to join his wife. He asked the captain of the ship on which he was sailing to notify him when they approached the approximate area where the *Ville du Havre* went down. Notified that the area was near, Spafford went down into his cabin, and near the scene of his daughters' tragic deaths he penned the words of "It Is Well with My Soul."

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

Though Satan should buffet, tho' trials should come, Let this

blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—O, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin—not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, "Even so"—it is well with my soul.

Chorus: It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

The Spaffords returned to the United States and resumed their lives only to suffer further sorrow in 1880. Scarlet fever took the life of their only son. Receiving little sympathy from their friends upon his death, Mr. and Mrs. Spafford decided to move to Israel. There they were involved in an American colony which offered medical and spiritual help to the inhabitants of the land. Their ministry was fruitful, especially among the Arab communities. They moved to Jerusalem in 1881 with two other young daughters. Bertha, a child of three at this time, was particularly creative and courageous; she lived a long and active life in Israel, being known as a gifted writer and artist. She recorded the story of her father's trials and triumphs in a book titled *Our Jerusalem*.

Horatio Gates Spafford died in 1888 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery on Mt. Zion, Jerusalem, Israel. His soul was now at rest with the Lord, yet his misfortune had not ended. In one of the later wars between Israel and her Arab neighbors, angry Arab soldiers who were occupying Mt. Zion emptied some of the graves of the Protestant Cemetery.

Thinking that the graves were Jewish, they threw the remains into the Hinnom Valley below (New Testament Gehenna Valley). One of those graves belonged to Mr. Spafford. Ironically, thousands of Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas had been helped by the Spaffords and the Spafford Memorial Children's Hospital throughout the years.

When the war was over, the skeletal remains were placed back into the cemetery. An inability to identify the remains, however, resulted in a common grave for approximately six people. Today, if one walks outside the old city walls to the right of the Joppa Gate, to the entrance of the American Institute, then proceeds upon admittance through its courtyard to the Protestant Cemetery, a tall granite gravestone containing several names can be seen on the right just inside the cemetery. Horatio Gates Spafford's name is at the top of the list. This writer knows personally that many inspirational poems and songs have been composed within this garden cemetery, while remembering the faith of one who suffered such disastrous circumstances, and who obviously did not have all his questions answered, but whose life counted for God and others in spite of it all.

Horatio Spafford's words still ring out to encourage troubled hearts. He being dead yet speaketh. Indeed, the Christian heart receives new strength as it meditates upon the Lord of glory and the tragic story of "It Is Well with My Soul."

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