

P. Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876)



Philip P. Bliss

i. His Life

1. Born in Clearfield County, PA on July 9, 1838, Philip Bliss received his first musical impressions early in life during daily family worship at home. Bliss was born into a family of devoted Methodists.³⁶ However, when Philip was eleven he left home to make a living for himself. He was to spend the next five years of his life working in sawmills and logging camps, this would grow the boy into a man. At the age of twelve Bliss united with the Baptist church of Cherry Hill Flats, Tioga County, PA upon a public confession of faith. Bliss would later state that he did not remember a time when he did not love Christ, but that this was the official time of his conversion.³⁷
2. In 1855, Bliss went to Bradford City, PA and finished the requirements for his teaching credentials. The next year Philip was the new school master at Hartsville, NY.
3. In 1858, Bliss was appointed a teacher at Rome, PA. Here he met his wife, Lucy Young, she was a poet from a musical family and greatly encouraged him in developing his musical talent. The next few years were spent teaching and working his father-in-law's farm. In 1860, his wife's grandmother provided him the opportunity to attend the Normal Academy of Music in NY by giving him \$30. This meant that he was away from home for six-weeks with hard study and inspiration. From this and other years

³⁶ *Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns*, by Henry S. Burrage, pg. 488, 1888.

³⁷ <https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biobliss.html>

of attending the academy Bliss grew into a music authority. His talent turned into music composition.

4. In 1864, Mr. Bliss and his wife moved to Chicago, where with George F. Root, he engaged in conducting musical institutes, conventions and etc. Bliss owed much of his instruction and inspiration to William B. Bradbury, and one of his first published songs was a tribute to the memory of Mr. Bradbury.³⁸
5. In 1869, while passing a revival meeting in a church where D. L. Moody was preaching, Mr. Bliss went inside to listen. That night Moody did not have any musical help. The singing was rather weak. From the audience, Philip attracted Mr. Moody's attention. At the door Mr. Moody got Bliss' information and asked him to come to his Sunday evening meetings to help in the singing any time that he could. He went on to urge him to give up his secular business dealings and to devote his time fully in full-time Christian work.
6. Bliss for a time continued his secular work but devoted his time to being the Sunday School superintendent of his church, writing music and aiding in evangelistic work with his music. In 1870, the Blisses moved into an apartment adjacent to the Whittle's home, and while living there, Bliss wrote two of his most popular hymns... "*Hold the Fort*" and "*Jesus Loves Even Me.*" Yearly, new songs were published with many of Bliss's songs included. His name continued to spread in popularity.
7. In 1873 Moody by letter again urged him to completely surrender to full-time service. At a prayer, Mr. Bliss finally surrendered himself wholly to the Lord. At the same time Whittle also dedicated himself to full-time evangelism. A team was born between these two men. It was spring of 1874, little did Bliss and Whittle know that Philip Bliss only had two and half short years to live.
8. Now, depending upon the Lord to take care of his wife and two children, he joined Whittle in a successful evangelistic career. Bliss compiled revival songbooks for use in their campaigns, one entitled *Gospel Songs*, was a tremendous success, bringing

³⁸ *Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns*, by Henry S. Burrage, pg. 489, 1888.

royalties of \$30,000 all of which he gave to the furtherance of the evangelistic efforts. Other sources mention that \$60,000 was given to other charities and gospel works. Later when Moody and Sankey returned from England, Bliss and Sankey combined their efforts in combining their respective books into *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, by Bliss and Sankey. Several editions were later published in collaboration with George C. Stebbins. Meanwhile Bliss and Whittle held some 25 campaigns between the mid-west and east coast. The 1875 Louisville, KY meeting was said to be especially good, Bliss enjoyed working with young people and would often conduct his own meetings where he would sing and preach.³⁹

9. On Friday, November 24, 1876, Bliss sang at a preachers' meeting conducted by D. L. Moody in Chicago's Farwell Hall. Over 1,000 preachers were present. Bliss had the honour to sing and speak at the meeting. A favourite sung at the meeting was *Are Your Windows Open Toward Jerusalem*. Bliss also introduced to the gathered a new song that he had just written the music for, the song was... *It is Well with My Soul*. Little did everyone gather know that he had approx. one month to live.
10. The Blisses spent the Christmas holiday in Rome, PA, and made plans to return to Chicago for work with Moody in January. However, a telegram arrived asking him to return sooner, in order to take part in meetings scheduled for the Sunday following Christmas. It was decided to leave their two children (Philip Paul [age 1] and George [age 4]) with his mother in Rome and for he and Mrs. Bliss to return. He wired back "tickets for Chicago, via Buffalo and Lake Shore Railroad. Baggage checked through. Shall be in Chicago Friday night. God bless you all forever."
11. On December 29, 1876, Bliss and his wife left Rome, PA for Chicago, IL. They would never arrive in Chicago. The train was struggling through a blinding snowstorm and was now three hours late. Eleven coaches pulled by two engines were creeping along through the huge drifts, near Ashtabula, OH, a bridge over which the train was passing gave way, due to flood waters that had weakened the bridge, the whole train, with the exception of the

³⁹ <https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biobliss.html>

first engine plummeted some 75 feet into a ravine below into the icy water. A few minutes after the train fell, fire broke out. Fanned by wind from the snowstorm, the wooden coaches were ablaze. Mr. Bliss succeeded in pulling himself free of the wreck, however, upon realizing that Mrs. Bliss was still inside he went back in to rescue her, finding her pinned under the wreck, he tried in vain to free her, however, by this time the car was so engulfed that any more attempts were futile, he remained by her side to the end. It was later determined that out of 160 passengers there were only 14 survivors.^{40 41}

12. At a memorial meeting held in Chicago at which D. L. Moody spoke, the fact was recalled that at the last meeting which Bliss attended in that city, he remarked, "I don't know as I shall ever sing here again, and I want to sing this hymn as the language of my heart;" and he sang most impressively his own hymn,

"I know not hour when my Lord shall come."

13. The song "*Almost persuaded now to believe*" has aided many a soul take a stand for, or accept Christ as Saviour. History tells us that Bliss wrote this song after hearing a sermon by preacher friend, Mr. Brundage. Brundage concluded his sermon with the statement, "he who is almost persuaded is almost saved, but to be almost saved is to be entirely lost."
14. Bliss published his first musical work, "*The Charm*," in 1871. This was followed by the "*Song Tree*" in 1872, "*Joy*," and "*Sunshine for Sunday Schools*" in 1873, "*Gospel Songs for Gospel Meetings*" in 1874, and "*Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*" in 1875. In preparation of this last book he was associated with Ira D. Sankey.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns*, by Henry S. Burrage, pg. 489, 1888.

⁴¹ <https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biobliss.html>

⁴² *Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns*, by Henry S. Burrage, pg. 489, 1888.

- ii. His Hymns and Songs
 - 1. His Tunes
 - a. The New Song – #6 in PHSS
 - b. Why Do You Wait? – #351 in PHSS
 - c. Precious Promise – #498 in PHSS
 - d. It is Well with My Soul – #516 in PHSS
 - e. My Heart, My Life, My All I Bring – #561 in PHSS
 - f. He Knows – #650 in PHSS
 - g. I Gave My Life for Thee – #737 in PHSS
 - 2. His Lyrics
 - a. Are Your Windows Open To Jerusalem – #694 in PHSS
 - b. Ask, Seek, Knock
 - c. At the Feet of Jesus
 - d. Almost Persuaded
 - e. By and By
 - f. Dare to Be a Daniel – #747 in PHSS
 - g. Free from the Law
 - h. Hallelujah, He is Risen! – #280 in PHSS
 - i. Hallelujah, 'Tis Done! – #965 in PHSS
 - j. Hallelujah! What a Saviour – #42 in PHSS (See history below song)
 - k. He Knows – #650 in PHSS
 - l. He That Believeth
 - m. Hold the Fort – #721 in PHSS
 - n. I Know He is Mine – #427 in PHSS
 - o. I Will Sing of My Redeemer – #429 in PHSS (See history below song)

- p. Jesus Loves Even Me – #593 in PHSS
- q. Let the Lower Lights Be Burning – #618 in PHSS
- r. Lord, Save Me – #460 in PHSS
- s. My High Tower – #665 in PHSS (See history below song)
- t. My Redeemer
- u. My Prayer – #542 in PHSS
- v. More Holiness Give Me
- w. No Other Name – #456 in PHSS (See history below song)
- x. Once for All – #395 in PHSS
- y. Only an Armour Bearer – #734 in PHSS
- z. The Four Rulers – #821 in PHSS
- aa. The Light of the World is Jesus – #308 in PHSS
- bb. The Sword of the Lord – #633 in PHSS
- cc. What Wilt Thou Have Me to Do? – #741 in PHSS
- dd. When Jesus Comes – #907 in PHSS
- ee. Where are the Nine? – #812 in PHSS
- ff. Whosoever Will – #365 in PHSS
- gg. Wonderful Words of Life – #168 in PHSS

Q. Frances R. Havergal (1836-1879)



Frances R. Havergal

i. Her Life

1. The daughter of William Havergal (also a song and hymn writer and minister in the Church of England) was born December 14, 1836, in Astley, Worcestershire, England. She was a bright but short-lived candle in English hymnody, dying at the age of 42.
2. It is said that Havergal was reading by age four and began writing verse at age seven. When she was five, her father removed to Worcester. In August of 1850, she entered Mrs. Teed's school, whose influence over her was most beneficial. The following year she says, "I committed my soul to the Saviour, and earth and heaven seemed brighter from that moment." She then spent a short travel in Europe (specifically Germany), where she studied. Havergal's scholastic acquirements were extensive, embracing modern languages, together with Greek and Hebrew.
3. According to James Davidson, Havergal's "poems permeated with the fragrance of her passionate love of Jesus."
4. While Fanny Crosby and Frances Havergal never met, they admired one another from afar, one example of this is the poem that Havergal wrote to Crosby: ⁴³
 - a. Sweet blind singer over the sea,
Tuneful and jubilant, how can it be
That the songs of gladness, which float so far,

⁴³ http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/h/a/v/havergal_fr.htm

As if they fell from the evening star,
Are the notes of one who never may see
Visible music of flower and tree,
Purple of mountains, or glitter of snow,
Ruby and gold of the sunset glow,
And never the light of a loving face?
Must not the world be a desolate place
For eyes that are sealed with the seal of years,
Eyes that are open only for tears?
How can she sing in the dark like this?
What is her fountain of light and bliss?

- b. O, her heart can see, her heart can see!
And its sight is strong, and swift and free;
Never the ken of mortal eye
Could pierce so deep, and far, and high
As the eagle vision of hearts that dwell
In the lofty, sunlit citadel
Of Faith that overcomes the world.
With banners of Hope and Joy unfurled,
Garrisoned with God's perfect Peace,
Ringed with paeans that never cease,
Flooded with splendor bright and broad,
The glorious light of the Love of God.
- c. Her heart can see, her heart can see!
Well may she sing so joyously!
For the King Himself, in His tender grace,
Hath shown her the brightness of His face;
And who shall pine for a glowworm light
When the sun goes forth in His radiant might?
She can read His law, as a shining chart,
For His finger hath written it on her heart;
She can read His love, for on all her way
His hand is writing it every day
Bright cloud indeed must that darkness be
Where Jesus only the heart can see.
- d. Her heart can see! her heart can see,
Beyond the glooms and the mystery,
Glimpses of glory not far away,
Nearing and brightening day by day;
Golden crystal and emerald bow,
Luster of pearl and sapphire glow,

Sparkling river and healing tree,
Evergreen palms of victory,
Harp and crown and raiment white,
Holy and beautiful dwellers in light;
A throne, and One thereon, whose face
Is the glory of that glorious place.

- e. Dear blind sister over the sea,
An English heart goes forth to thee.
We are linked by a cable of faith and song,
Flashing bright sympathy swift along;
One in the East and one in the West,
Singing for Him whom our souls love best,
Singing for Jesus, telling His love,
All the way to our home above.
Where the severing sea, with its restless tide,
Never shall hinder, and never divide.
Sister! what will our meeting be,
When our hearts shall sing and our eyes shall see?

ii. Her Hymns and Songs

1. Like a River Glorious – #514 in PHSS
2. My Heart, My Life, My All I Bring – #561 in PHSS
3. Take My Life, and Let it Be – #572 in PHSS
4. I Gave My Life for Thee – #737 in PHSS (See history below song)
5. Who Is on the Lord's Side? – #754 in PHSS
6. Light After Darkness – #772 in PHSS