

## PREFACE.

In a beautiful letter that Frances Ridley Havergal wrote to John Curwen, in which she described a work to teach Tonic Sol-fa music to teenaged girls and young women as a means to reach them with the gospel of Christ, she ended with these words: “. . . bringing them within hearing of loving and sympathizing words, and of the One name which is sweeter than any music.” (This letter is found in *Letters by the Late Frances Ridley Havergal*, London: James Nisbet & Co, 1885, original book pages 68–69, page 165 of Volume IV of *The Complete Works of Frances Ridley Havergal*.)

In another statement posthumously quoted in the Prefatory Note to *Loyal Responses* with music (on page 1177 of Volume V of her *Complete Works*), her sister Maria V. G. Havergal quotes this statement by Frances concerning “Sacred Song”: “I am delighted to have an opportunity of adding to the very meagre supply of Sacred Songs, and I hope they will be sufficiently tuneful and sufficiently easy for drawing-room singing. Some of those extant are very pathetic and dismal affairs! Why put off joyous singing till we reach the happier shore? Let us sing words which we feel and love, with clearness of enunciation, and looking up to meet His smile all the while we are singing. So shall we loyally sing for our King, yes for Him, Whose voice is our truest music.”

Frances Ridley Havergal lived forty-two and a half years. She glowed the Lord Jesus Christ and His truth, and her life profoundly benefited many who knew her and many who later read her books or pamphlets or sang her hymns. Early in the 21st century, few recognize her name, and most of those who do only know of her as a hymn-writer. At the time of her death, she was very widely known and greatly valued on both sides of the Atlantic, and likely four million of her books were published between 1870 and 1900. There is true gold in her writings, help and enrichment to disciples.

She was born on December 14, 1836, the sixth and last child of Rev. William Henry and Jane Head Havergal. As a child she was called “little quicksilver,” because of her liveliness and speed. Her mother’s death, when Frances was 11, very deeply affected her. She fully surrendered her heart to Christ when she was 14, and though she had attended church and read the Bible for years, now she had the light and life of Christ she had not known before.

Though her formal education ended when Frances was 17 (concluding with one term at a girls’ school in Dusseldorf, Germany, where she was awarded top prize, never previously done at the school), she was a true scholar and student the rest of her life. She was remarkably gifted (at or near the level of John Milton), and she was diligent with her gifts as few others have been. She was utterly fluent in German and French, and nearly fluent in Italian. Her tutor (a pastor in Switzerland) said that she read and understood the German divines and reformers with marvelous speed and perception, swallowing whole whatever he gave her to read (in German or Latin). Today few—almost none—realize the rare gifts she had in music, and the importance of her music. Frances’ knowledge was only a means by which to know better her Saviour, and to glorify Him and

to bring His truth and love to others. She read the original Hebrew and Greek texts, not as a dilettante but with real proficiency, diligence, and love. Her sister Maria wrote in *Memorials of Frances Ridley Havergal* and in *Lilies and Shamrocks* that she memorized all of the New Testament except the Book of Acts, all of the Minor Prophets, Isaiah, and all the Psalms. (Maria was accurate, would not have overstated any more than Frances, and sooner understated by leaving out details—books not completed, and various chapters memorized.) She loved the Word of God, and was intimately familiar with every page, searching and underlining and glowing till the end.

Much of her life was very crowded with so much to do: various ministries and projects, the care of her step-mother, and very important things to complete, and she was many times “put on the shelf” by severe illness or weakness and recovery. The love of Christ was her life, and she lived as she wrote, “ever, *only*, ALL for Thee.” On June 3, 1879, she entered into His presence. Ten minutes before she died, she sang, faintly but clearly, the first verse of a hymn by Mary Jane Walker, set to music by Frances:

Jesus, I will trust Thee, trust Thee with my soul;  
Guilty, lost, and helpless, Thou canst make me whole.  
There is none in heaven or on earth like Thee:  
Thou hast died for sinners—therefore, Lord, for me.

Her works are a gold-mine of help and enrichment. This collection of poems, prose pieces, and music scores by F.R.H. is taken from the edition of *The Complete Works of Frances Ridley Havergal*, now near completion for publication. The items given here are not better than other items in the edition, and a book twenty times this size could be filled with things as good as these: her other works are as fine and valuable as this small collection. This really is a very small collection next to all that she wrote; there is so much more by her, and the reader is recommended to proceed after this to whole books by her, which, if the Lord wills, we want to begin publishing soon. These selections are neither exceptional nor unusual in her body of work, but very representative: virtually all of her works are notably consistent—consistently rich—in the fineness of both the ideas and the presentation of the ideas.

There is life in these pages, and the reality of Jesus Christ. These pages truly glorify the Lord, and truly help, encourage, and enrich His people. There are also parts that are very powerful to reach those who do not yet know Him with the truth. “If the Lord wills,” we desire soon to publish all of her *Complete Works*, and also many individual, smaller books taken from that edition.

David L. Chalkley

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This book is published together with the new biography “*Ever, only, ALL for Thee*” *Frances Ridley Havergal: Glimpses of Her Life and Writings* by Pamela D. Bugden, a sterling biography based on the new edition of *The Complete Works of Frances Ridley Havergal*.