



fragrant  
francis

beth burns

# Fragrant Francis

---



MOORE COLLEGE  
LIBRARY

MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIBRARY  
3 2042 10102062 0

1891. 9. 21. 41  
(By BETH BURNS.)

---

Dedicated to my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Skerman, whose Christian graces and patience in suffering are an inspiration and benediction to all who know them.

BETH BURNS.

---



IF all the fragrance that this world has known, there has been none sweeter or richer than that left by Francis R. Havergal in verse and prose. I always think of her as Fragrant Francis. She is to me as a bunch of lilac or a lovely rose. The secret of that beautiful fragrance is found in her God-inspired Consecration Hymn. The utter surrender displayed in every line gives the window to her soul.

"Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

"Take my life," sang Francis, and how many times have you and I and millions of others sung those same words?

"Take my life!" "My life!" Just what does that represent? You may be able to help me specify up to a certain point. I may be able to help you do the same, but only to a degree. There are sealed chambers in your life and mine; that is, sealed as far as any outsider is concerned, so it's a matter between the individual and God. There are no seals that can keep out HIS all-seeing eye. To HIM there are no doors nor bars. All the secret thoughts, desires and meanness; all the heartaches, loneliness and strivings; the vain ambitions, the secret disappointments, all that we so carefully tuck away in these hidden recesses of the soul, jealously

shielded and guarded from the eye of the world, that part of me known only to ME, is laid bare, in the open daylight as it were, before the all-seeing eye of God.

Though I may comfort myself with the fact that no one knows that part of my life that makes me ashamed, I cannot get away from the fact that God knows all about it.

You and I know that **other** side of life, that part we live with one another. True, we **may** display meanness and act sinfully before our fellows; but as a **general** rule we are more careful about the side of life that lies exposed.

What a lot of emotions or characteristics one life can contain in small or greater measure. There is sincerity, the urge to help and do good. There is ambition, that which drives with the desire to do and to be. There is the unbalanced condition, hot to-day and cold to-morrow, making our service purely spasmodic. Hate, jealousy, greed and pettiness.

All the joys of every day living, friendship, love, and all we hold dear; yes, everything that goes to make up this thing called "LIFE."

"Take it all," sang Francis, "and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee." When the screened chambers of the soul are emptied and dedicated to the Lord, the heartaches, loneliness and disappointments are comforted by Him. All the meanness is dispelled and vain ambition turned by His hand into happy useful channels.

When the life we live day by day is dedicated to Him it takes on new character; selfishness becomes selflessness; we then desire that He shall have pre-eminence. We do not seek to do, to be, apart from Him. What a contrast! Our service is a joy and a praise to his name, and the lamp of faith burns steadily. Into the friendships and everyday living we bring the sweet benediction of His love and grace.

Oh yes, Francis knew what she was talking about. The battle was fierce and long, before she came to this place of victory. Then she says:—

"Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow with ceaseless praise."

My first lesson on the value of time was given me by my teacher when I was quite a small girl at school in Townsville. One day she wrote on the blackboard:—

"Lost a Golden Hour, set with 60 diamond minutes  
No reward, for lost time can never be regained."

Of all the scores of lessons I had from that teacher, that one stands out in my memory. It is quite in the region of possibility that the majority of those thirty or forty girls still remember it.

Many times through the years that unique and arresting notice has come back to me. Come back to accuse and to shame, when I have selfishly squandered my minutes, the precious diamond minutes, that can never be relived or used again. What are moments? Even while we try to think of them or examine them they are gone! That which we call time is so hard to define and yet it is very important, for you, and I, will have to render to God an account of every **moment** of our time. The moments that so quickly slip into years, and soon are as a tale that is told. I said **our** time, but **is** it **our** time? I remember the word that says: "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." Possessed by Him who bought us. Therefore, not only myself; but all I have belongs to Him. Dare I ask myself what proportion of my time I will give to the Lord? Dare you ask that, my friend?

A calender year holds 8,760 hours. Quite a number when one considers. I would not care to

set out in the order of a balance sheet, as to how I use the MOMENTS of my years, for God, and for myself. Would you?

Notice Francis Havergal did not say years. The dedication of such units as moments makes it all so clear and definite. It seems to me that, in dedicating her "life," she purposely specified the "days" and "moments" that would go to make up that "life."

"Take my moments and my days, let them flow with ceaseless praise." That line expresses a quality and richness that can only come to a fully surrendered and yielded life. There is something so spontaneous and abandoned in that last phrase. The contact between F. Havergal and God was complete, there was no shadow, no blocking of the channel between her and God. Only a happy freedom of spirit. Her moments and her days flowing in ceaseless praise. What a life! What an experience!

On she goes:—

"Take my hands and let them move,  
At the impulse of Thy love."

What a different world it would be if the hands of all Dictators, of all Statesmen, Emperors and

Prime Ministers and all in high places, moved only at "the impulse of His love." One man's hand can, by virtue of his office, sign away the freedom of nations, and the death warrant of millions. WHY? All because the hand or hands move at the impulse of some human ambition. There is, then, a desperate need for the consecration of hands, since the misuse of those same hands can bring such untold misery to countless numbers.

Hands can be a very important factor in our daily life for good or ill. Do you remember the many beautiful records of the hands of Jesus? Do you remember the day when the two blind men followed Him, crying: "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us," and He stretched forth his hands and gave them the blessing they craved? How often He stretched those same dear hands to heal, to raise the dead, to feed the hungry, and to break the bread at the Last Supper. One other time, when the hearts of the disciples were heavy and sad, those same beautiful hands broke the bread again, and their eyes were opened and they knew Him.

We do not expect to be able to use our hands in the same way that the Lord used His. Though your life and mine may lead along obscure path-

ways, the pattern we are called upon to weave will be a perfect one, though woven in obscurity, if the hands that do the weaving move at the "impulse of His love." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with all thy might." Then the most hum-drum task will be glorified.

When you have been moved by the story of some great life, which has been used of God in some wonderful way, have you not felt so useless in comparison? Have you not just longed to be able to do something great and big? You felt the small insignificant service you could render was not worth anything. All service, spectacular or otherwise, dedicated to the Lord is acceptable and pleasing to Him. There is a ministry for all of us. Some of God's children are blessed in being able to minister in more ways than one; but we can all have a part in the ministry of hands. One of my favourite texts presents a phrase, "Let my prayer be set before Thee as incense and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." Psalm 141, 2. Dedicated hands will do much for this weary old world.

"Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee."

One of the dearest sounds of home life to the parent is the pitter patter of little feet, in and out and round about. If, through sickness or death, those little feet are stilled, what heartache it brings.

In the great family of God there are so many pairs of feet, coming and going, and just as the earthly parent loves to hear the busy little footsteps of children round about the home, so, too, the Heavenly Father loves to hear the steps of the willing feet of His children in His vineyard here below.

Often we think we have so little to offer to the Lord, no talents and not much of this world's goods, and so we hold back, thinking our little bit, given, or withheld, will not make any difference. No matter how small the offering may seem to us, if it is all we have, when blessed by His dear hands, it grows and multiplies just as the loaves and fishes did.

These feet of mine if consecrated to the Lord, no matter how ugly or shapeless, will become beautiful. In Romans 10:15 we read: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

The pulpit is not the only place where sermons are preached. My feet, dedicated to the Lord,

can go places where no pulpit can be taken, and can minister to many who otherwise would have no contact with spiritual things. When one thinks of the work done by the many Christian Missions in the slums of the world, one realises that there must be many, many pairs of feet, maybe tired and weary, treading the dark, loathsome alleys, bearing "glad tidings of good things." Those feet in the eyes of the Master are indeed beautiful. Miss Havergal prayed that hers might become SWIFT and beautiful.

Your life and mine soon slip away. There is need then for SWIFT feet, if we would make the most of our sojourn here. Feet swift to go on errands for Him. There is some place where your feet and mine may carry "the glad tidings of good things." In a hundred and one ways we can demonstrate the consecration of our feet to the Lord, thus preaching sermons that could never be delivered from a pulpit.

Beautiful Feet! Beautiful Feet!  
That swiftly fly with the message grand;  
That weary not as from land to land  
They scatter the tidings of Hope and Joy,  
Of love that nothing can destroy,  
Of life in Christ alone complete,  
Beautiful Feet! Beautiful Feet!

Beautiful Feet! Beautiful Feet!  
In busy mart or open street,  
With hurried tread pursue their way,  
From early morn till close of day;  
That know no dread, fear no defeat;  
Beautiful Feet! Beautiful Feet!

G. BURNS.

Then she says:—

"Take my voice and let me sing,  
Always only for my King.  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee."

The voice and the lips must, of course, coordinate, and yet the lips may have a ministry all their own. We can call to mind folk we have known whose faces have reflected the love of the Lord Jesus. It may have been because of a sympathetic smile, or because of a tender softness of the lips in repose. No words need be spoken and yet the expression of someone's lips can make or mar the day for another. Yes, they can bear **silent** messages for Him. The most retiring child of God can have a part in this ministry and only God knows its real value.

I wonder if we do realise how important a factor the voice is. What a lot of things we would leave

unsaid if we stopped to consider that word which says, "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Though the repercussions **may** not be felt here, yet some day those idle words will rise up to accuse.

There is this thought, too, words can never be recalled. My feet may take me places I have no right to go; but I can retrace my steps. My hands may undo something I have done, but my voice can never recall the harsh or unkind words I have spoken. All the good things, the kind things, the cruel and hard things I have spoken, go out over the ether, on and on. Hearts may have been wounded, lives blighted by the misusing of my voice, and remember, these words **cannot** be recalled.

It matters not how beautiful one may be, if she faces the world with a scowling mouth, and a sharp, angry word, her beauty will be obliterated. On the other hand, one may be plain and nondescript and yet the lips can pass on a cheering smile of welcome or adieu. If the voice is used to encourage, the lack of facial beauty will be lost sight of in the charm which no "Beauty Salon" can supply.

I once read of a woman who gossiped so much about her minister, that broken heartedly he was

forced to resign. On the eve of his leaving she came to him in tears, and asked his forgiveness. It was granted. Then she said she would like to atone for all the worry she had caused, saying she would like him to set her a task as a penance. He asked her to go to the top of the church belfry with him. There he handed her a cushion and told her to empty the feathers from the cushion out through the window. This she did and together they watched them, like tiny snow flakes, flying hither and thither, over the tree tops, and on and on, where they were soon lost to sight. When there were no more to be seen she turned to him and said: "What does it mean?" Said he: "You would retrieve the past?" "Yes," she replied. "Then go and gather those feathers again," said he. "Impossible!" cried the poor woman. Then the minister kindly and lovingly showed her that the cruel words she had spoken were just as those feathers, drifting out into the night, never to be recaptured.

God grant that your voice and mine, your lips and mine, singing, smiling, or speaking, will always bring honour and glory to His blessed name.

Then—

"Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold.

The outlook from one of my windows reveals to me a beautiful gorge; a gorge full of the handiwork of a loving Creator. As I gaze on the trees waving in the breeze I think of the wise deductions of one who wrote:—

"Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree."

I love trees, any trees, no matter how common. There is something so majestic in a tree, something so stable, growing year in and year out. Seasons come and go; storms and winds lash it with their fury. Year in and year out it goes on growing, one often wonders how, looking at the rough stones and dry soil surrounding it. It does its part to remind us of the first beauty of creation. Rocks are there, too. Rocks large and small. They remind me of that thought of David's, "The Lord is my Rock." And of the story Jesus told of the wise man who built his house on a rock.

Built high above, and sometimes in among all this loveliness, are many marvellous homes overlooking beautiful Middle Harbour. Often, as I gaze on this scene of exquisite beauty, I think of the occupants of those homes. I wonder who they are. That question I cannot answer. What they are? Here at least I can speculate, and make, no

doubt, a very near guess. They are those who traverse the more fortunate ways of life, and are able to satisfy the desire to look for as long and as often as they wish on this really lovely scene. Money seems to be of little account to the owners of some of these almost palatial homes. How often I have thought, I, too, would love a cottage, planted on the side of that lovely tree-filled gorge, from which I could look out on Middle Harbour in all its peaceful beauty. But I remember the good old Book says, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." David said: "If riches increase **set not your heart** on them." I wonder if, after all, those beautiful homes hold more happiness, because of freedom from care for material things of life, than the humble home, where Jesus Christ is loved and honoured, and where the household budget causes many furrowed lines in the brow. I have been in homes filled with every luxury and comfort man could desire, but empty as far as soul comfort and satisfaction are concerned. No love for the Lord, and no love for each other. Just a lust for possessions, a greed for money and yet more money.

Strange, isn't it, how most of us feel that, if we only had plenty of money, we would be happy?

It does not always work out, though. The word of God warns us against riches. James says: "The love of money is the root of all evil." Not, of course, that it is a sin to possess much of this world's goods. **Sin** comes into it when we put those things on the **THRONE** of our lives.

What does it matter if I can walk on rich carpets and can hang the works of the world's best artists on my walls, or if I surround myself with all the luxury that money can buy. If there comes in the silent hours of darkness the still small voice of conscience warning me that, though I have made ample provision for this life, I have made no preparation for my soul when it sets sail into eternity. In that last hour, what will it matter if, during the time I spent here in the flesh, I lived in luxury and loveliness? The only thing that **will** matter is, how I've used that which God has been pleased to bestow on me. If I've dedicated my silver and my gold to Him and His service and kept that contract, all will be well when I have to say "good bye" to all the things that contributed to my earthly comfort and happiness. Money can really absorb a man's life to such an extent that he has no concern for anything else. It is not difficult to understand that a rich man has a hard "row to

hoe." After all, my earthly possessions will be of no account when my door closes on this life. All that will matter will be whether I've kept my sacrifice on the Altar. My silver and my gold can do much for His glory if given to Him. If kept for myself alone I rob myself of much blessing that could be mine.

"Take my intellect and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose."

says Francis Havergal.

What an enjoyment a sound intellect can be to the owner. How much more can be got out of life if one has intellect; that strange attribute that can shape or mar the destiny of nations; if rightly used and directed not only can much be got **out** of life, but much can be put **into** it.

We are living in days when there is a premium put on intelligence. We cultivate the intellect of the normal boy and girl, setting a standard of efficiency that will qualify that child to take his or her place in the world of work. Speaking now not in a collective sense, but in a very personal way, let me say that the way you and I use this very precious gift of God can make or spoil your life or mine. Francis R. Havergal rang a personal note when she

laid her intellect on the Altar. Because of that dedication she gave to the world her beautiful Consecration Hymn. Only in heaven will we know the countless numbers blest by this one hymn. She might have used her intellect, as others have done, for material gain. She chose to use this gift of God for His glory. Intellect misused has been the gateway to hell for thousands. Consider the books that have been written, and the sermons that have been preached, by men whose intellects have been sold to Satan. Men who have told us we are divine, men who would take from us the beautiful story of creation, men who would do away with the atonement and the punishment of the guilty sinner. Thank God for the consecrated intellect of Miss Havergal. Will you, with me, pledge the gift of intellect to the Lord, Who loved us and gave Himself for us; that we together might give to the world something true and fine—something that will be a praise to His name?

Solomon realised the true worth of intellect. Of all the things he could have asked of God he desired most of all that God would bless his intellect. You know how God blest and favoured that request.

Yes, a consecrated intellect gives scope for beautiful service for Him.

On she goes:—

"Take my will and make it Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine."

Will is the dominant force in one's life—it is the driving element. It is will that carries one to the highest pinnacle of success. Will is the executive power in one's life. It governs all conduct. Some wise person has said: "Where there's a will there's a way." There is wisdom in that old saying; but the real question is whether the will serves the owner or the Lord Jesus.

The thoroughness of Miss Havergal's consecration of each member of her body, and of every faculty, suggests the spirit of thoroughness and abandonment so characteristic of Paul. In writing to the Philippians, he said: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord." All the natural ambitions and attainments of a cultured gentleman were as nothing to Paul. His reference to himself as the prisoner of the Lord Jesus denotes just how little he valued the advantages that could have been his as a man of the world. He and all he had and was were laid on the Altar. A sacrifice that meant a rough and hard life for Paul; but he gloried in it. For his

whole-hearted consecration to the Lord he was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, persecuted and thrown into prison. None of these things moved him; he came out of them all undaunted because his will was yielded and given over to the Lord Whom he loved.

It is not always easy to surrender one's will. The good old Book tells of "a night in a garden," when One confided to those He loved most of all, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." It tells how the dear Son of God wrestled that night in prayer until He was able to say, "Thy will, not mine, be done." You and I have never agonised in prayer, until we have sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. I do think that if we were more prayerful about this very thing (the exercising of our wills) we would be more likely to reach the place where God's will would be operating in our lives. Where we would not be "conformed to this world, but transformed, by the renewing of the mind, that we may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

It seems to me that the handing over of the will to God requires the greatest effort of all. The will to do, or not to do, given to our first parents and handed down to us, manifests itself right from

the cradle. Under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, whether the will be strong or weak, matters not; the sure result will be a happy, victorious experience.

May your will and mine, dear reader, be so yielded to Him that He will be able to use us in His own way.

"Renew my will from day to day,  
Blend it with Thine and take away  
All that now makes it hard to say,  
'THY WILL BE DONE.'"

When Francis Havergal approached the Altar of Sacrifice she held nothing back. One feels that she took complete stock of her assets, and deliberately laid them, one by one, at the feet of the Lord. Maybe a little stocktaking now and then would be good for us all.

"Take my heart, it is Thine own,  
It shall be Thy royal throne."

It has been said that the heart is the seat of all human emotions, good and bad. God's word has quite a lot to say about the heart. You remember when Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint a king for Israel, he thought to choose Eliab. He was

tall, good-looking and strong. Samuel thought, "He's the man." But God said: "No, Samuel! man looketh on the outward appearance; but God looketh on the heart." In 2 Chron. 16:9 we read: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him." Yes, the eyes of God had been looking upon a shepherd boy out on the hills minding his father's sheep. Into the heart of that humble boy the Lord looked and saw the making of a man after His own heart. The Lord chose the youngest son of Jesse and anointed him king over Israel. The eyes of the Lord are searching the earth to-day, looking into the hearts of men and women, into yours and mine, searching us through. Do we hang our heads in shame? What does He see? How very much we gather to our hearts, throughout the years! Let us clean up and make a "Royal Throne for Him." Have you heard the story of how Francis Havergal reached the place where she gave her heart to the Lord for a Royal Throne? Here it is in her own words:—

"Did you ever hear of any one being much used for Christ, who did not have some special waiting, some complete upset of his or her plans first. When

I thought the door was flung open for me to go with a bound into literary work, it was opposed and the doctor stepped in and said, 'NEVER!' She must choose between writing and living. She can't do both.'

"That was in 1860. Then I came out of the shell with my 'Ministry of Song,' in 1869, and saw the evident wisdom of waiting in the shade nine years. God's love being unchangeable, He is just as loving when we do not see or feel His love. Also His love and sovereignty are co-equal and universal; so He withholds the enjoyment and conscious progress because He knows best what will really ripen and further His work in us."

The eyes of the Lord looked into the heart of Francis Havergal, filled with ambition and the desire for fame; and He knew it could be a beautiful chalice for Him when emptied of all its dreams. So He caused the shadows to fall on her life, that He might draw her closer to Himself. Are you called to sit in the shadows? Then know that God is preparing for Himself a Throne in your heart. May He give to each of us a humble, tender heart so that His will may be perfected in us.

"I made of my heart a temple, but the Saviour came not in,  
For its aisles were cloyed with malice, and its bells were choked with sin,  
And its air was heavy with incense, and its priests were sandal shod,  
I made of my heart a temple, but its light revealed no God.  
I made of my heart a stable, and the Saviour came and smiled,  
Where the cattle of human kindness browsed in the evening mild.  
And its air was pure and pungent with grass of the rain-swept sod.  
I made of my heart a stable and sheltered the Living God."

Step by step we have gone with Francis Havergal, analysing one by one her different acts of consecration. Now we have come to the end. God grant that our study has deepened and enriched us spiritually and brought us to a more definite surrender of every talent, great or small, and of every member of the body. I love the utter abandonment of the last verse:—

"Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store."

Don't you think it would cost Francis Havergal something to say that? To unreservedly hand over to the Lord her love? Or rather, to use her own words, to pour it at His feet. Was it worth anything to her? Of course it was. She herself called it her treasure store.

How would you define love? I think I would say: "Love is that strange attribute whereby, in giving or sharing, we can have the greatest of all human companionships, joys and blessings." Love is beautiful whether found in garret or palace, because love serves and gives. Like all things human, our love can be selfish, possessive and demanding. We have all observed that. The only perfect love is that of God for a lost world.

To Francis Havergal her love was a treasure that she would gladly give to her Lord. Our observations of human relationships prove that love really makes life worth living. Can you imagine a world without love? Because love is so essential, Jesus made it the Seal of Discipleship. He said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples; ye have love, one for another." In I John 2, we read that we cannot walk in the light without love. And yet another warning: It would almost seem that she had this in mind when she poured all her love's treasure at His feet. John in this same chapter admon-

ishes us not to give our love to the things in the world that appeal to the senses. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, all the things that capture and hold our love, are of the world and, like the world, will pass away.

The love that is truly consecrated to the Lord goes on living in the lives of those whom it touches long after these houses of clay are crumbling in the dust.

Francis Havergal held nothing back. Her talents, ambitions, possessions and every member of her body was down on the Altar. Her's was no half-hearted surrender. Because of that the beauty and fragrance of her life steals through this weary world, and will go on doing so, reaching into the lives of those who truly seek Him, as long and wherever that lovely hymn of hers is sung.

Dear reader, is your ALL laid on the Altar? The world is richer because of Fragrant Francis having rassed through it. Is it any better because you and I have passed this way?

"Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee."

H. C. Gowans, Printer  
286 Sussex St.  
Sydney