



*A Gift of Faith Book* 25

Part 1

# Morning Bells

A Gift of Faith Book

25

# Morning Bells

—Waking Thoughts—

By Frances Ridley Havergal

(Lived: 1836-1879)

Photos by Jon Berg

Part 1

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**I**n the morning we want something  
to arouse us, and to help us to go brightly and  
bravely through the day.

**S**o here are "Morning Bells" to waken up the  
little hearts, and to remind them that we must not  
only rest in Jesus, but walk in Him.

**T**he motto of "Morning Bells" might be  
"Follow Jesus."

*May He who loves the little ones bless this tiny  
effort to help them to follow Him day by day.*

—Frances Ridley Havergal



# First Day

# 1—Christ's Childhood

"Thy holy child Jesus." --Acts iv. 30.

If I asked, "How old are you?" you would give an exact answer. "Eight and a half;" "Just turned ten;" "Eleven next month." Now you have thought of God's "holy child Jesus" as a little baby, and as twelve years old in the temple, but did you ever think of Him as being exactly your own age? that He was once really just as old as you are this very day?

He knows what it is to be eight, and nine, and ten years old, or whatever you may be. God's word has only told us this one thing about those years, that He was a holy child.

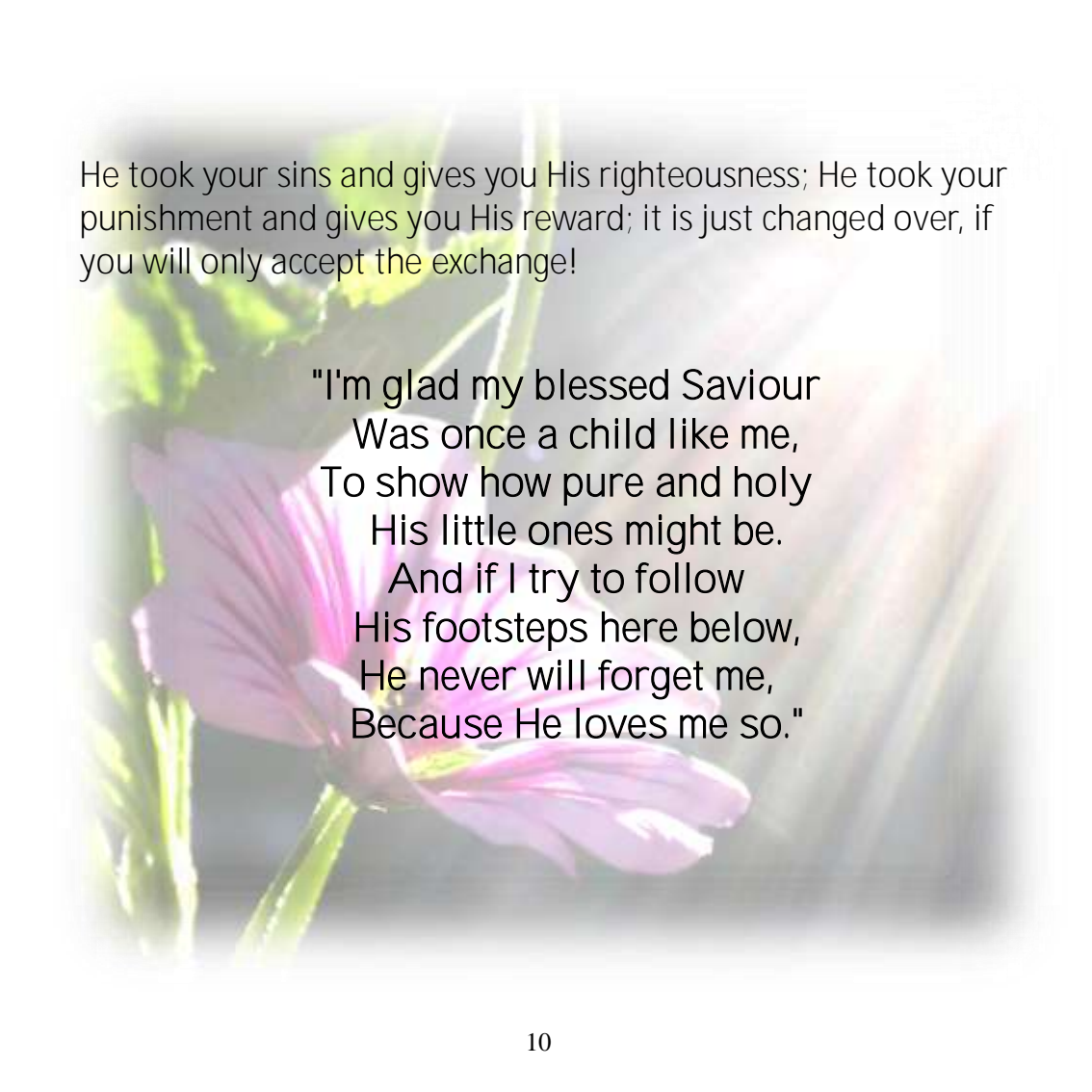
What is "holy"? It is everything that is perfectly beautiful and good and lovable, without anything to spoil it. This is just what He was when He was your age.



He was gentle and brave, and considerate and unselfish, noble and truthful, obedient and loving, kind and forgiving,-- everything you can think of that you ever admired or loved in any one else was all found together in Him, and all this not only outside, but inside, for He was "holy."

Why did He live all these holy child-years on earth instead of staying in heaven till it was time to come and die for you? One reason was, that He might leave you a beautiful example, so that you might wish to be like Him, and ask for the Holy Spirit to make you like Him.

But the other was even more gracious and wonderful, it was "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." That is, that all this goodness and holiness might be reckoned to you, because you had not any of your own, and that God might smile on you for His sake, just as if you had been perfectly obedient, and truthful, and unselfish, and good, and give you Jesus Christ's reward, which you never deserved at all, but which He deserved for you.



He took your sins and gives you His righteousness; He took your punishment and gives you His reward; it is just changed over, if you will only accept the exchange!

"I'm glad my blessed Saviour  
Was once a child like me,  
To show how pure and holy  
His little ones might be.  
And if I try to follow  
His footsteps here below,  
He never will forget me,  
Because He loves me so."



# Second Day

## 2—Our Great Example

"Even Christ pleased not Himself." --Romans xv. 3.

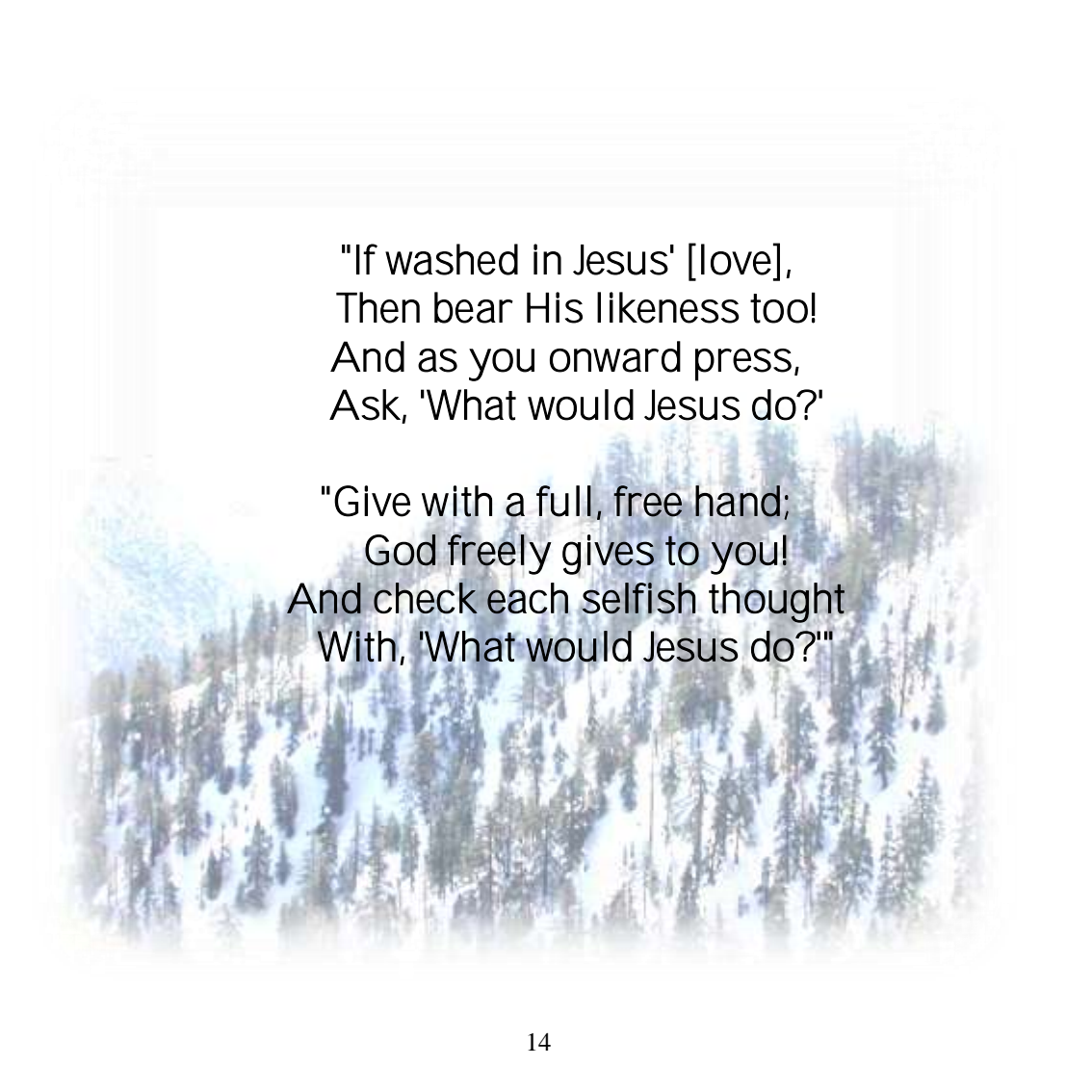
Do you really wish to follow the footsteps of the Holy Child Jesus? Have you asked God to make you more like Him? Are you ready to begin today? Then here is a motto for today, "Even Christ pleased not Himself." Will you take it, and try to imitate Him? You are sure to have plenty of opportunities of acting upon it, and thus proving not only to others, but to your dear Saviour Himself, that you mean what you say, and mean what you pray.

Perhaps it seems a rather melancholy "morning bell" to you, tolling instead of chiming! But if you really wish to be like Christ, you will soon find that its music is as sweet as any, and that its quiet chime will come to you again and again with a wonderful sweetness and power, helping you over all sorts of difficulties, and saving you from all sorts of sins and troubles.

You can not tell, till you have fairly tried, how happy a little girl can feel, who has cheerfully given up to another, for Jesus' sake, something which she would have liked for herself; nor how happy a boy can be when of his own free will, and by God's grace, he has chosen to do what his conscience tells him would please the Lord Jesus instead of what would have pleased himself.

If you have never tried it yet, begin today, and you will find it is quite a new happiness.

Ah, what would have become of us if Christ had only "pleased Himself," and had stayed in His own glorious home instead of coming down to save us! Think of that when you are tempted to please yourself instead of pleasing Him, and the remembrance that even He pleased not Himself because He so loved you, will help you to try and please Him, and to please others for His sake.



"If washed in Jesus' [love],  
Then bear His likeness too!  
And as you onward press,  
Ask, 'What would Jesus do?'

"Give with a full, free hand;  
God freely gives to you!  
And check each selfish thought  
With, 'What would Jesus do?'"



# Third Day

### 3—Upholding

"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." --Psalms cxix. 117.

The path is not easy. There are rough stones over which we may stumble, if we are not walking very carefully. There are places which look quite smooth, but they are more dangerous than the rough ones, for they are slippery. There are little holes hidden under flowers, which may catch our feet and give us a bad fall. There are muddy ditches, into which we may slip and get sadly wet and dirty.

How are we to walk safely along such a path? We want a strong, kind hand to hold us up, and to hold us always; a hand that will hold ours so tightly and lovingly, that it will be as the old Scotchwoman said, "Not my grip of Christ, but Christ's grip of me!" Yes, Christ's loving hand is "able to keep you from falling;" only "let your hand be restfully in the hand of Jesus,"

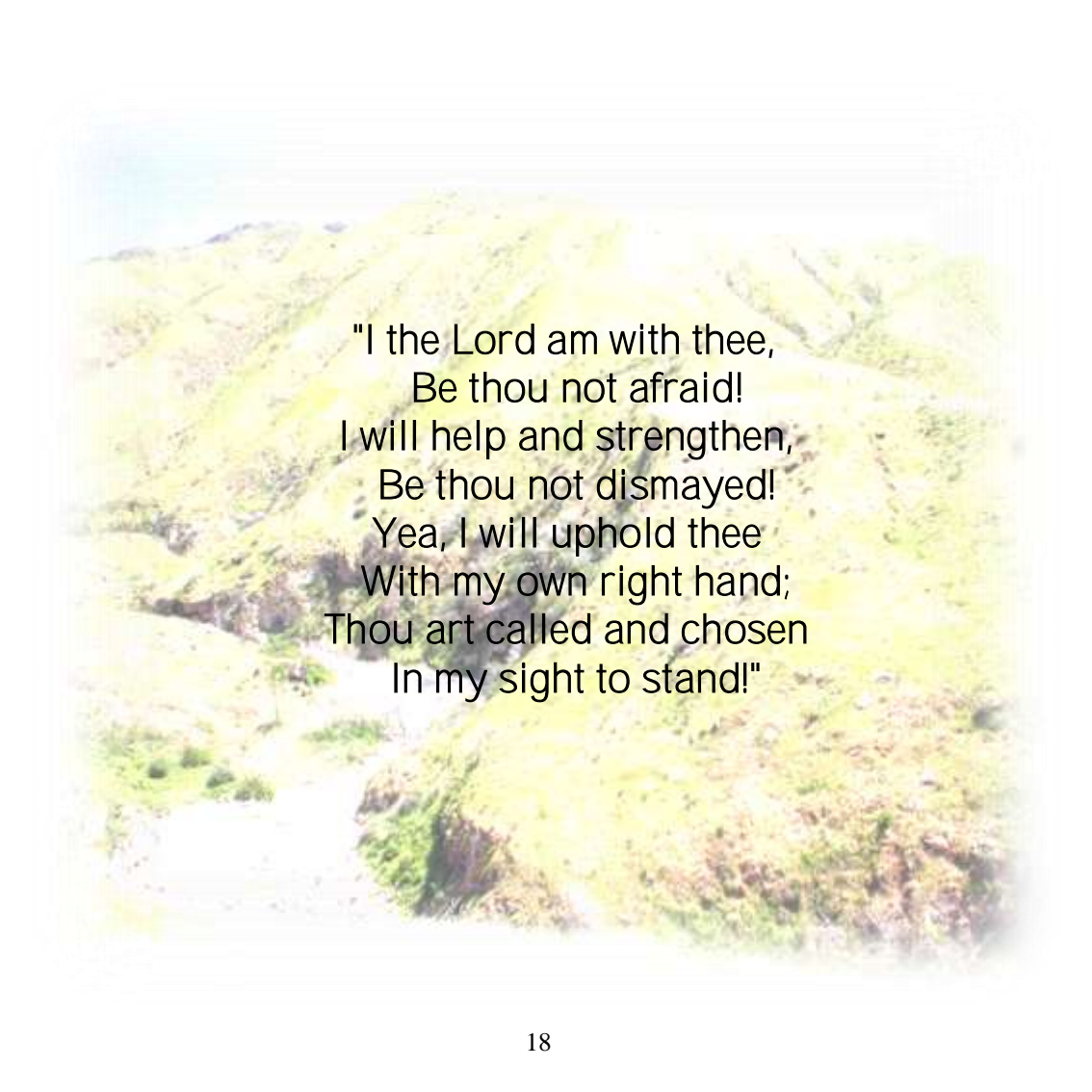


and "then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble." But do not spoil the chime of this morning's bells by ringing only half a peal!

Do not say, "Hold Thou me up," and stop there, or add, "But, all the same, I shall stumble and fall!" Finish the peal with God's own music, the bright words of faith that He puts into your mouth, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe!" So you will if you do not distrust Him, if you will but trust Him to do just what you ask, and let Him hold you up.

It would be hard to find a prayer in the Bible without a promise to match it; so David says, "Uphold me, according to Thy word."

What has He said about it? More than there is room for on this page. "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand." "Yea, I will uphold thee." "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." "When thou runnest thou shalt not stumble." "Yea, he shall be holden up." "He shall keep thy foot from being taken." "He will keep the feet of His saints." Seven promises in answer to your one little prayer!



"I the Lord am with thee,  
Be thou not afraid!  
I will help and strengthen,  
Be thou not dismayed!  
Yea, I will uphold thee  
With my own right hand;  
Thou art called and chosen  
In my sight to stand!"



# Fourth Day

## 4—What can I do?

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." --Galatians vi. 2.

Perhaps you never thought that any one around you had any! Then if you want to fulfill this law of Christ, the first thing will be to find out who has any burdens, and which of them you could bear instead. You will not have to watch long!

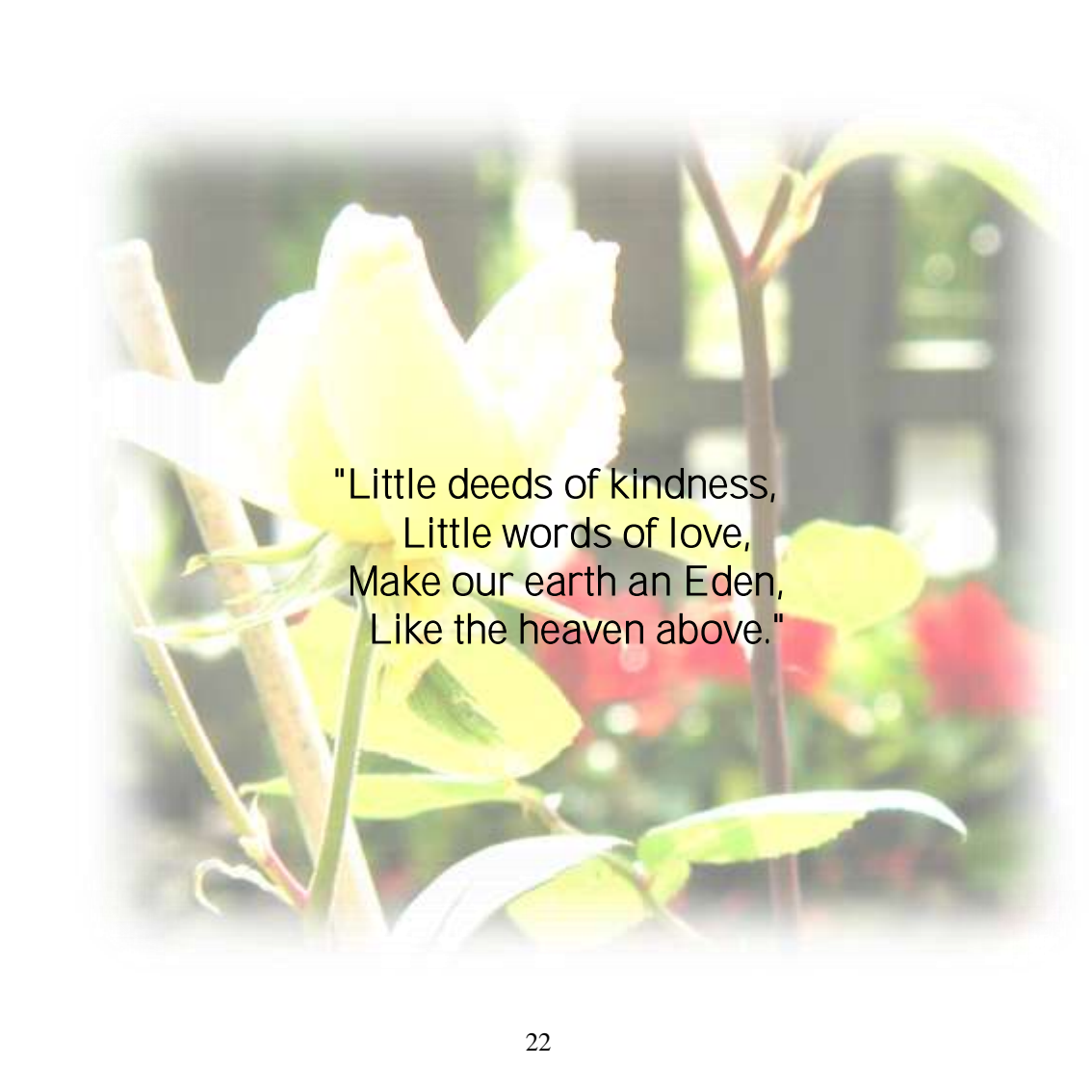
There are very few without any. Little backs can not bear great burdens, but sometimes those who have great burdens have little ones too, and it makes such a difference if some loving little hand will take one or two of these.

If your mother was carrying a great heavy parcel, would it not help her if you took two or three little ones out of her hand and carried them for her? So perhaps she has troubles that you do not even know about, and you see she looks tired and anxious.

And it tires her a little more, because a little brother or sister wants to be nursed or amused. Now if you put your own affairs by, and call the little ones away, and amuse them quietly so that mamma may not be disturbed, this is bearing one of her burdens. Never mind if it is really a little burden to you too; is it not worth it, when it is fulfilling the law of Christ?

If for a moment a burden that you have taken up does seem rather hard, and you are tempted to drop it again, think of what the Lord Jesus bore for you! Think how He took up the heaviest burden of all for you, when He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree!" He did not drop that burden, but bore it till He died under it. Think of that, and it will be easy then to bear something for His sake.

Now be on the watch all today for little burdens to bear for others. See how many you can find out, and pick up, and carry away! Depend upon it, you will not only make it a brighter day for others, but for yourself too!



"Little deeds of kindness,  
Little words of love,  
Make our earth an Eden,  
Like the heaven above."



# Fifth Day

# 5—Instruments

"Yield .... your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." --Romans vi. 13.

This does not sound so easy and tuneful as most of your other "morning bells," you think! But listen for a few minutes and you will hear the music.

What are your members? Hands, feet, lips, eyes, ears, and so on. What are you to do with them? "Yield" them, that is, give them up altogether, hand them over to God.

What for? That He may use them as instruments of righteousness. That is, just as we should take an instrument of music, to make music with it, so He may take your hands and feet and all your members, and use them to do right and good things with.




If a little one gives himself or herself to God, every part of that little body is to be God's little servant, a little instrument for Him to use.

The little hands will no longer serve Satan by striking or pinching; the little feet will not kick or stamp, nor drag and dawdle, when they ought to run briskly on some errand; the little lips will not pout; the little tongue will not move to say a naughty thing. All the little members will leave off serving Satan, and find something to do for God; for if you "yield" them to God, He will really take them and use them.

He will tell the hands to pick up what a tired mamma has dropped, and to fetch her a footstool; and the fingers to sew patiently at a warm petticoat for a poor child, or to make warm cuffs for a poor old man. He will tell the feet to run on errands of kindness and help. He will set the lips to sing happy hymns, which will cheer and comfort somebody, even if you never know of it. He will use the eyes for reading to some poor sick or blind woman, or to some fretful little one in your own home.

You will be quite surprised to find in how many ways He will really use even your little members, if you give them and your whole self to Him. It will be so nice! You will never be miserable again with "nothing to do!"



"Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful' for Thee."



# Sixth Day

## 6—Willing and Glad

"Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly."

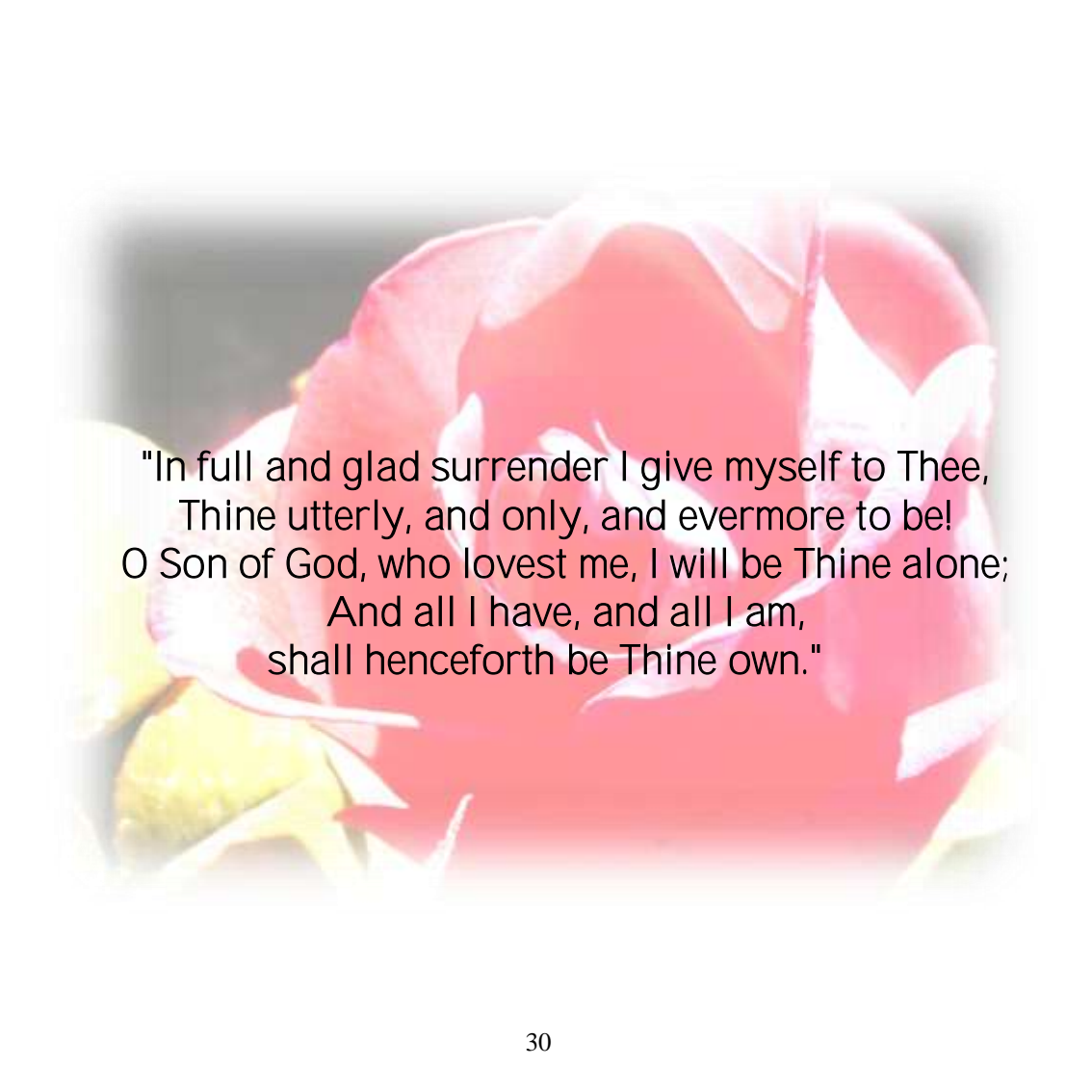
--I Chronicles xxix. 9

We thought yesterday morning about giving our members up to God for Him to use. Did you think you would like to give them up to Him? did you yield them to Him? If you did, you will understand this morning's text!

David the King asked his people to help in bringing offerings for God's house and service. He said, "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" And God made them all willing to bring what they could. And what then? "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord." "And did eat and drink on that day before the Lord with great gladness."

See what came of offering willingly to the Lord--they "rejoiced," and everything they did, even eating and drinking, was "with great gladness." Never is any one so happy as those who offer their own selves willingly to the Lord. He gives them a thousandfold return for the worthless little self and weak little members which they have offered to Him. He gives them peace, and gladness, and blessing, beyond what they ever expected to have.

But this was not all; it was not only the people who had such a glad day, but "David the king also rejoiced with great joy." Those who loved their king, and recollected how much sorrow he had gone through, and how many battles he had fought for them, must have been glad indeed to see Him rejoicing because they had offered willingly. And I think our King, your King Jesus, rejoices over us when He has made us able (ver. 14) to offer ourselves willingly to Him. Is not this best of all? Jesus, who suffered for us, and who fought the great battle of our salvation for us, He, our own beloved King, "will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing."



"In full and glad surrender I give myself to Thee,  
Thine utterly, and only, and evermore to be!  
O Son of God, who lovest me, I will be Thine alone;  
And all I have, and all I am,  
shall henceforth be Thine own."



# Seventh Day

## 7—Faithfulness

"Faithful over a few things." --Matthew xxv. 21, 23.


The servant who had only two talents to trade with, but traded faithfully with them, had just the same glorious words spoken to him as the servant who had five talents: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Think what it would be to hear the Lord Jesus saying that to you, really to you! Oh how sweet! how blessed! how you would listen to that gracious voice saying those wonderfully gracious words to you!

But could He say them to you? Are you "faithful over a few things"? He has given every one, even the youngest, a few things to be faithful over, and so He has to you. Your "few things" may be very few, and very small things, but He expects you to be faithful over them.



What is being faithful over them? It means doing the very best you can with them; doing as much for Jesus as you can with your money, even if you have very little; doing as much for Him as you can with your time; doing whatever duties He gives you as well as ever you can,--your lessons, your work, the little things that you are bidden or asked to do every day, the little things that you have promised or undertaken to do for others. It means doing all these just the same whether others see you or know about it or not.

You sigh over all this; you recollect many things in which you have not been quite faithful; you know you do not deserve for Him to call you "good and faithful servant."  
But come at once to your gracious Lord, and ask Him to forgive all the unfaithfulness, and to make you faithful today. And then, even if it is only a matter of a French verb or a Latin noun, you will find it a help to recollect, "Faithful over a few things!"



"Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love  
Fit us for perfect rest above;  
And help us, this and every day,  
To live more nearly as we pray."



# Eighth Day

## 8—On Mine Account

"Put that on mine account." --Philemon 18.

When St. Paul asked Philemon, in a most beautiful letter, to take back Onesimus, who had run away from him, he said, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account." Onesimus had been a bad servant to Philemon; and being willing to come back and do better, would not pay for what he had wronged him in before, and would not pay his old debts. And he evidently had nothing himself to pay them with. But St. Paul offered to pay all, so that Onesimus might be received, "not now as a servant," but as a "brother beloved."

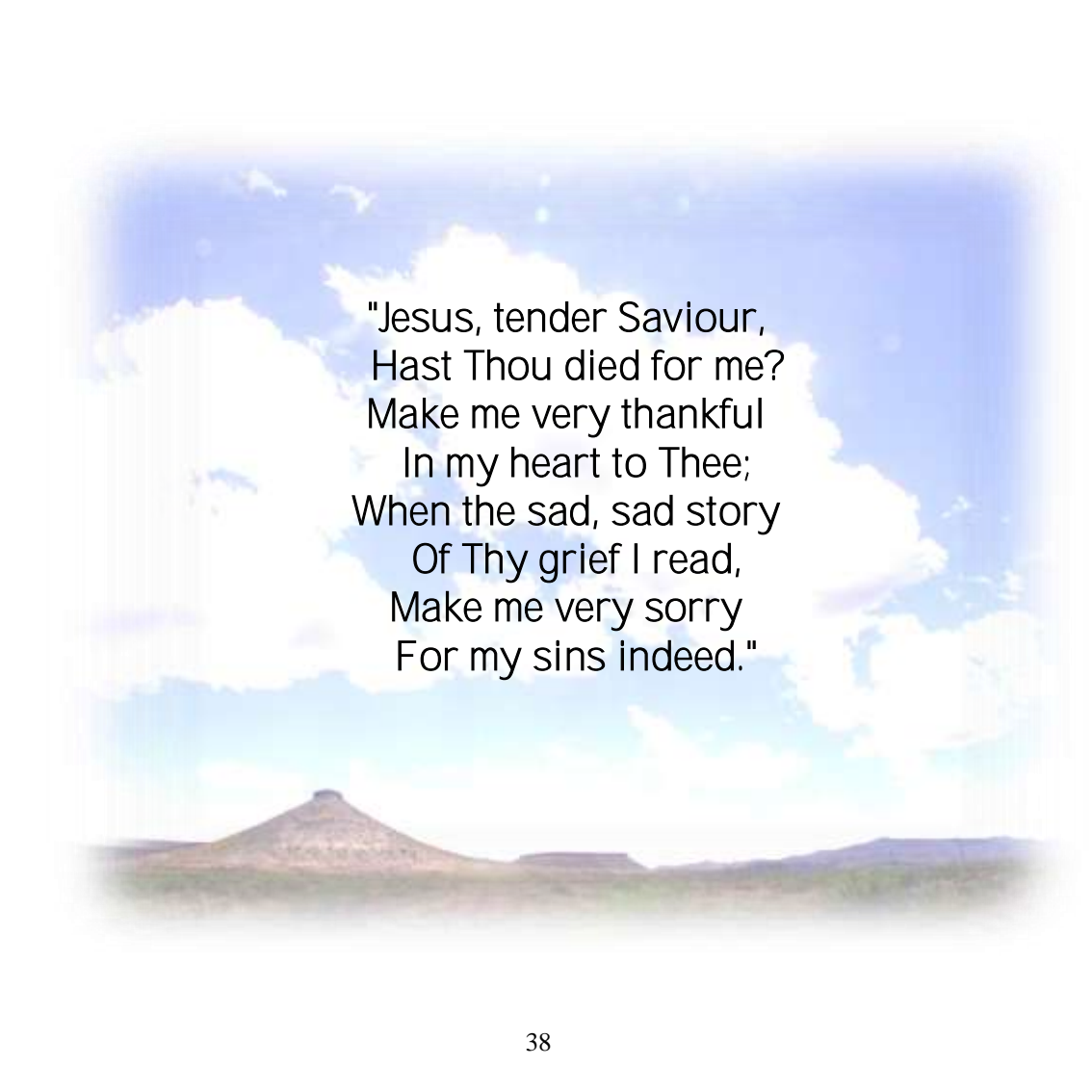
This is an exquisite picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ does. He not only intercedes for us with Him from whom we have departed, and against whom we have sinned; but, knowing to the full how much we have wronged God, and how much we owe Him, He says, "Put that on mine account."

And God has put it all on His account and the account has been paid, paid in blood. When "the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all," Jesus saw and knew all your sins; and He said, "Put that on mine account."

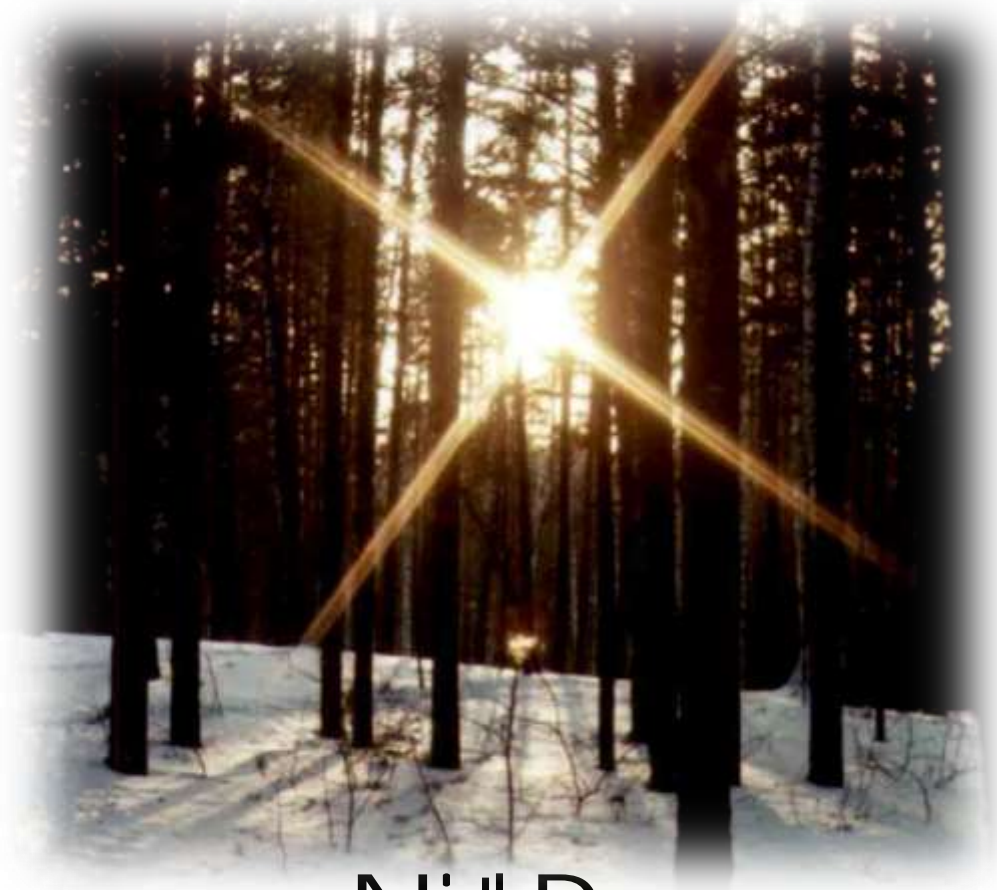
Oh, what wonderful "kindness and love of God our Saviour!" Let the remembrance of it be like a silver bell, ringing softly and clearly whenever you are going to do, or letting yourself feel or think, something that is not right. "Put that on mine account!"

Yes, that sin that you were on the very edge of committing! that angry word, and the angry feeling that makes you want to say it; that untrue word, and the cowardliness which makes you afraid to speak the exact truth; that proud look and the naughty pride of heart that made it come into your eyes; Jesus stands by and says, patiently and lovingly, "Put that on mine account!"

Can you bear that? does it not make you wish, ten times more than ever, to be kept from sinning against such a Saviour?

A landscape photograph with a blue sky, white clouds, and a brown mountain range in the foreground. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

"Jesus, tender Saviour,  
Hast Thou died for me?  
Make me very thankful  
In my heart to Thee;  
When the sad, sad story  
Of Thy grief I read,  
Make me very sorry  
For my sins indeed."



# Ninth Day

## 9—White Garments

"Let thy garments be always white."--Ecclesiastes ix. 8.

"Always?" Oh, how can that be? They are soiled again directly after they have been washed clean! Yet God says, "Let them be always white;" and He would not tell you to do what was impossible. Then how are you to help soiling them? Only in one way. Jesus washes us "whiter than snow" in His own precious blood, that cleanseth from all sin. But will He only cleanse His little one just for the moment? is that all He is able and willing to do for you?

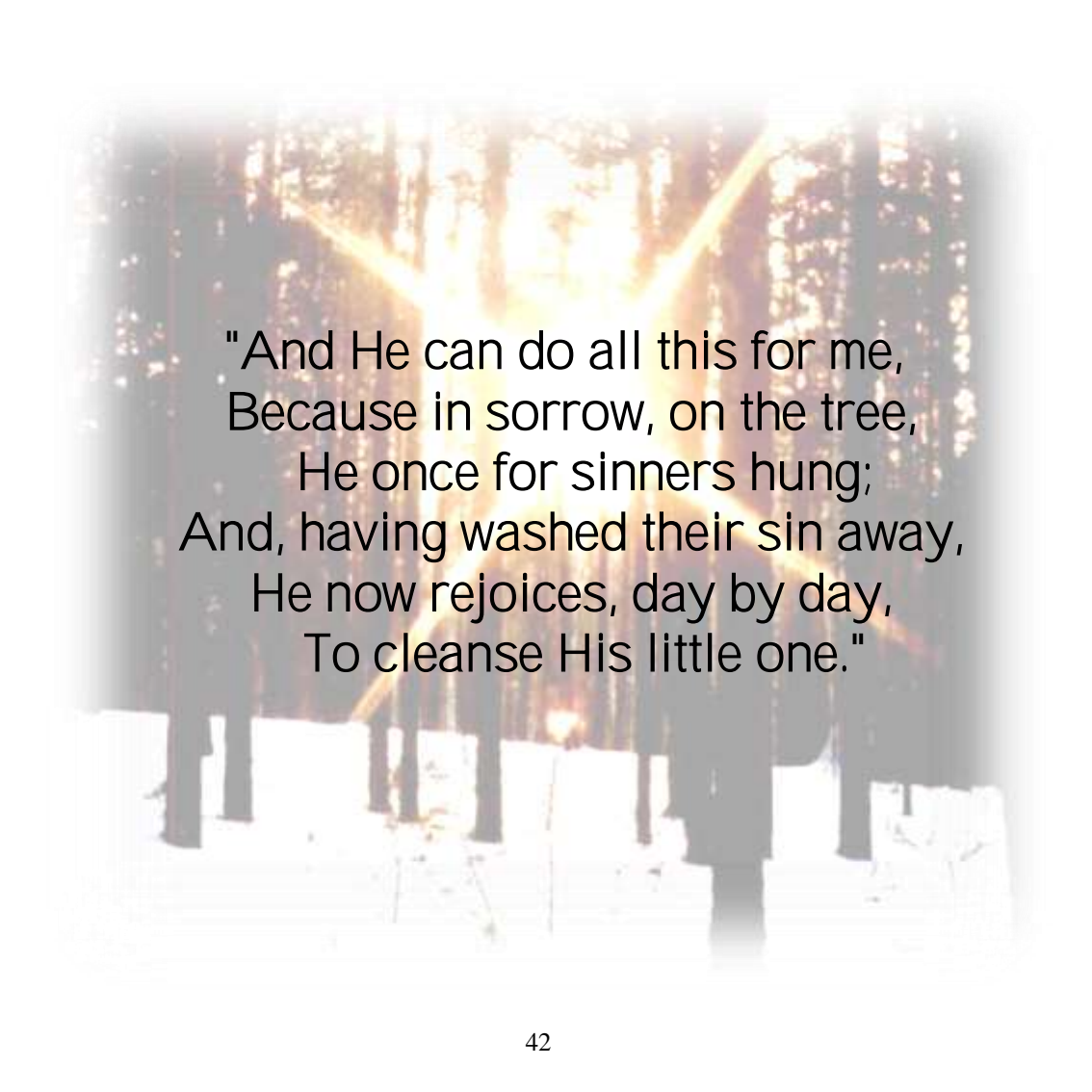
No; if you will only keep on trusting Him, and not turn away, He goes on cleansing. You could not keep your garments white for five minutes; careless thoughts would come like dust upon them, and wrong words would make great dark stains and before long some naughty deed would be like a sad fall in the mud, and you would feel sad and ashamed before the kind Saviour who still stands ready to cleanse you again.



But why should all this happen over and over again, till anybody but our own loving, long-suffering Saviour would be tired of us, and give up doing any more for us?

Why should it be, when His precious [love and sacrifice] is meant to "go on cleansing," so that our garments may be always white?

Perhaps you never thought of this; ask Him now this morning not only to wash you, but to keep you in it, to go on cleansing you all day long. Trust Him to do this, and see if it is not the happiest day you ever spent!



"And He can do all this for me,  
Because in sorrow, on the tree,  
He once for sinners hung;  
And, having washed their sin away,  
He now rejoices, day by day,  
To cleanse His little one."



# Tenth Day

# 10—Made Beautiful

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

--Psalms xc. 17.


"How great is His beauty!" said Zechariah. How can His beauty be upon us? In two ways; try to understand them, and then ask that in both ways the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon you.

One way is by His covering you with the robe of Jesus Christ's righteousness, looking upon you not as you are in yourself, all sinful and unholy, but as if all the Saviour's beautiful and holy life were yours, reckoning it to you for His sake. In this way He can call us "perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee." The other way is by giving you the beauty of holiness, for that is His own beauty; and though we never can be quite like Him till we see Him as He is, He can begin to make us like Him even now.

Look at a poor little colorless drop of water, hanging weakly on a blade of grass. It is not beautiful at all; why should you stop to look at it? Stay till the sun has risen, and now look. It is sparkling like a diamond; and if you look at it from another side, it will be glowing like a ruby, and presently gleaming like an emerald.

The poor little drop has become one of the brightest and loveliest things you ever saw. But is it its own brightness and beauty? No; if it slipped down to the ground out of the sunshine, it would be only a poor little dirty drop of water.

So, if the Sun of Righteousness, the glorious and lovely Saviour, shines upon you, a little ray of His own brightness and beauty will be seen upon you. Sometimes we can see by the happy light on a face that the Sun is shining there; but if the Sun is really shining, there are sure to be some of the beautiful rays of holiness, love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, making the life even of a little child very lovely.



"Jesus, Lord, I come to Thee,  
Thou hast said I may;  
Tell me what my life should be,  
Take my sins away.

"Jesus, Lord, I learn of Thee,  
In Thy word divine;  
Every promise there I see,  
May I call it mine!"