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"Somehow, something always happens just before things get to the very worst": Frances Hodgson Burnett's Religious Beliefs as Seen in *A Little Princess* and *The Secret Garden*

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“Somehow, something always happens just before things get to the very worst”:

Frances Hodgson Burnett’s Religious Evolution as Seen in *A Little Princess* and *The Secret*

*Garden* Abstract

Frances Hodgson Burnett, author of the children’s classics *A Little Princess* and *The Secret Garden*, was known to use her spiritual ideals in many of her works. The connection to Christian Science, a religion that interested Burnett late in her life, is very obvious in *The Secret Garden*, a story about the healing power of nature, because it was written after her discovery of the religion. The themes in *A Little Princess*, however, are very similar to those in *The Secret Garden* even though Burnett was not aware of the religion until after the novel was written. The power of positive thinking is the dominant theme in *A Little Princess* and that theme goes hand in hand with the beliefs behind Christian Science; the main belief being that prayer heals instead of medical science. In this paper, the growth of Burnett from positive thinker to Christian Scientist will be illustrated through examples from *A Little Princess*. Sara, the main character in *A Little Princess*, has all the qualities of a Christian Scientist without the label: she copes with stressful situations by pretending that good things will happen no matter what, she always tries to see the good in the world, and she never let her bad situation change the belief that she was a princess. Through the personal growth of Sara, the reader will see the religious growth of Burnett.