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Lily Dale, N. Y.

HOME COURSE IN MENTAL SCIENCE.

BY HELEN WILMANS.

LESSON NINE.

PRAYER AND SELF-CULTURE.

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LESSON IX.

Lily Dale, N. Y.

Prayer is asking for more light. The upward struggle of the immortal mind is always from darkness to light; from ignorance to intelligence; from negative to positive. The animals have prayed for this light unconsciously, and their prayers have been answered, and gradually they have climbed to light, reaching it and holding it in the erect posture of manhood. Every advancing step upwards has increased the beauty and the utility of their organizations. Through prayer, they have recognized ever greater intelligence.

And here we are—we who have prayed, or aspired, ourselves into men—here we are already to pray, or aspire, ourselves into gods—by which I mean men who know their own power. But we are now where we will have to pray consciously. Having discovered the tree of knowledge of good and error in the midst of the garden (in humanhood, midway between animalhood and godhood, or midway between positive and negative), it is demanded of us, from this time on, that we know what we are doing.

Emerson says that it is the "oversoul" that kills.

We are manifested or made visible by limitation.

What does this mean? It means that as the expressed thought of a limitless intelligence we every moment come in contact with some obstacle we must overcome if we would keep on growing and developing. Certain of these obstacles which we do not overcome form our limitations, circumscribe or proscribe our shape, and render us visible externally. The cow and the horse and the tree could overcome no farther, and each preserves its own type. This type represents its energy. It shows the power of each object to overcome, so far as the object has developed it.

As the world grows older, and time ripens conditions, it is easier to overcome environment, because environment becomes less dense and we become more intense as individuals; and little by little the limitation yields and the more perfect creature shows himself.

And here he is in the form of man, but still limited. Limited by what?

We are limited by that which we do not know. As we are mental creatures, it therefore follows that the utmost verge of our intelligence is our limitation. Or, as Emerson implies, it is the higher life not yet understood by us that proves our barrier, that gives us our shape and renders us visible to each other. All things are rendered visible by limitation, and all things limit themselves by the extent of their intelligence.

We, as individuals, are individual expressions of the infinite whole.

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No two persons, or creatures, ever express precisely the same thing. Each of us expresses what he recognizes as good, and he expresses it in the measure of his power to recognize. The limit of his recognition makes the outer boundary of his personality and gives us the man in appearance, or as he appears to our sight.

If we should cease to recognize any good whatever we would cease to express anything. We would lose these organized forms and drift back or become dissolved, as it were, in the great universal fountain of Life. So the Life Principle is both individualized and unindividualized at once—unindividualized and unlimited in its possibilities, and individualized and limited in its organizations.

Who can fail to see the object of creation? Not that there is an outside creator who had an object in view by creating us, but because the Law of Life might as well not exist as to exist and have no individual recognition of itself; no power to make its vast possibilities manifest on the external plane. But then such a condition of one-sidedness is not possible, for the Law could not exist without the intelligence by which it could recognize its existence. All nature is the power of the Law made visible by recognition. That the Law is recognized in weakness is no indication that the Law is weak, but that it is faintly, or feebly, recognized. Error, sickness and death are weak manifestations of the Law, but they point to the fact that more powerful recognitions of it are to be attained. And there never was a prayer sent forth in the

world that was for any other purpose than to obtain a stronger manifestation of the power of the Law.

But what is prayer? First let us find out what is not prayer. Let me quote from A. P. Barton:

"Man has been called a praying animal. Feeling his inability to save himself, and his helplessness in the hands of destiny, or fate, or providence—terms he has used to designate the power without himself to which he has deemed himself subject—he has been prone, in times of danger or serious apprehension of the future, to cry out to an unseen power for guidance, deliverance and salvation. Sometimes he has made an image and set it up before him to illustrate his idea of a personal deity; and sometimes he has only imagined a form sitting far away upon a bright, mystic throne. But he has always supposed that the real power is an invisible presence sentient to the human cry and responsive to the human needs. But the formulated need, or desire, often uttered in vocal speech, and sometimes vociferated in screams, has been intended for an ear to hear, a mind to comprehend, and a heart that sympathizes, and has expected an intelligent response.

"This attitude of man is founded upon the assumption that he is in himself without power and subject to the caprices of conflicting, uncertain forces exterior to himself. He has been taught that the source of life and energy is located in a deity far away, and very much inclined to be hostile to his welfare, unless placated by servile humility and fulsome praise on his part.

"So he has thought that prayer consisted in crying and begging, like a cringing slave under the lash, and imploring this deity whom he addressed with many flattering adjectives to send him from afar a pittance of good as a matter of grace, or favor.

"The effect of this attitude—which is a direct nullification of life's kingdom in the human soul and a denial of spiritual heredity—is to externalize, or manifest in the personality, the fruits of weakness and the symbol of death. In thus imagining and declaring separateness between himself and the fountain of light and power, the human child has failed to manifest them in his person and has so driven back the body until it habitually drops away and returns unto the elements from which he took it.

"So long as man craves to be heard by an intelligence without him, and to be aided by a power separate from himself, he continues to endow that which he addresses with ears and eyes and arms and human attributes and caprices. He shrinks from the idea that there is no personality in the heavens to turn a listening ear and extend a helping hand to his petitions. It is consoling and relaxing to the self-abnegated weakling to imagine that an anthropomorphous Father hears and helps, though he be invisible and silent and uncertain in his responses. He feeds his fancy on bread from an imaginary master's table and dreams that his strength is revived by the powers that be—somewhere, somewhere.

"Some have said, 'To think of God as principle seems too cold and cheerless. I love to imagine arms that embrace me and protect me, a bosom upon which I may rest, and a heart that throbs in sympathy with my longings and tears.' But we know that even this view of God must be taken in a metaphorical sense, for we must all agree that a God with actual form and outline and human propensities would of necessity be confined in space and capricious in his conduct; and that he could not, therefore, hear and heed and help all at once and alike, nor take all the crying children into his arms and bosom at one time. When he would attend the prayer of one, he must turn his back upon millions of other suppliants.

"Then the metaphor really means, that the arms are spiritual, or inspirational beams of power upon which the soul may lay hold; the bosom is the great presence of hope and rest in which we bask when we are trusting and pure in heart; the heart is the warm, loving, throbbing soul of the universe in which we have our being; and the ear that hears is the spiritual sentience and sympathy of the father-essence arising out of our kinship with it, and which responds to our longing desires as the air rushes in to fill a vacuum.

"Which is warmer or more comforting, the ideal image of a separate, uncertain, personal God, to whom we must feebly cry for help, or the knowledge that the very essence of our being emanates from and lives in love as the omnipresent, glowing, healing, life-giving power and

presence, supplying every need, and always active in redeeming and saving? Which is the more comforting, the idea of a hand that may or may not be extended at our call, or that of omnipresent omnipotence being the God whose individual image and likeness we are, and the recognition of which manifests applied potency and execution of design and purpose according to human-directed thought? Which view gives us most freedom and security, and which renders intelligent prayer most effectual?"

What is called prayer is, nine times out of ten, the puling cry of weakness, the ignorant demand of an insatiable selfishness, or the frantic exhibition of indefinable fear based on ignorance of the Law and of man's relation to it.

True prayer is that desire for a knowledge of our relations with the Law so intense as to lift us by slow, or perhaps rapid, degrees into a realization of such knowledge. In proportion as knowledge comes on this subject our limitations widen about us. We become greater and more powerful creatures, and are able to express or make visible more of the possibilities of the Law.

It is no use to go down on our knees and try to magnify "God" (the Law). No one can magnify it. It is already all there is. But we can magnify the manifestations of the Law by magnifying ourselves. To do this is the result of more intelligence. Therefore intelligence is the one thing needed. It is life—more life added to us, more vitality, greater

power to conquer obstacles, and infinitely greater freedom and happiness.

The moment prayer, or aspiration, ceases to be unconscious, as in the animal, and becomes conscious, as it is now beginning to be in man, the man's destiny is in his own hands. I see that it is in our hands to shape ourselves and our surroundings by prayer, and yet it is not the kind of prayer that commonly goes under this name. It is not supplication at all. There is no element of humility in it. It does not say, "Thy will be done, while I lose myself in nothingness." It says, "Let me seek to understand the Law, and then let me work in co-operation with that Law, which will be the expression of my own will no less than that of the universal Life; for I am one with the universal Life; identical with it; inseparable from it. It is the power, the Life, and the way; and I am the expression as well as the organ for further expression of the power, the life, and the way. The more I identify with the Law the more unerring I become and the more harmonious and strong my life will be."

"When ye pray believe that ye receive and ye have." He who spoke these words knew what they meant. He knew that the feeble wail of weakness and the frantic supplication of ignorance were not prayer. The words, "When ye pray believe that ye receive and ye have," bespeak the knowledge of the thorough metaphysician. Their very nature shows them to be the ripe ejaculation of mighty strength. When a man can fill this injunction concerning prayer, he prays no longer; he appropri-

tes by recognition and affirmation. Heaven is open to him, and the world is beneath his feet.

When he reaches this position he sees that prayer means work. He sees that it means a ceaseless effort of self-culture, and straightway he becomes embarrassed and wonders what he must do. He cannot lean on his personal God any longer. He has grown past all hope of help from him, and he feels his own powers so weak from lack of use that he does not know what to do.

Self-culture is the acquisition of that which adds to our happiness by enlarging our environments. It is the acquisition of that knowledge which leads in the direction of freedom—freedom from everything that hinders and binds, but above all, freedom from disease, old age and death.

We love to learn. Even the garnering of the world's past knowledge has seemed a beautiful thing to us. We took delight in it, feeling that it added to our mental stature. But the self-culture of which I am writing is infinitely above this. It not only adds to our cherished mental acquisitions, but it becomes flesh and blood to us, and is manifested in our personalities in unfading beauty and undying health.

This self-culture is the real and only prayer. It goes forth in effort and is expressed in results. It is not to be gained by the study of books, for they do not contain it. Nor by listening to sermons, for they teach the opposite of it; thus darkening still more the minds of those who go to them for saving knowledge.

We gain it by putting firm faith in our own desires and aspirations; by turning away from the fears we have always trusted, and placing our trust in that which seems good to us. It requires an effort to do this. Indeed, the doing of this is a matter of constant and unwearying effort; but this effort is a part of self-culture and leads to its highest form. It is the establishment of self in the thought, and the justification of self, which is the first step in self-culture. It leads by imperceptible degrees to a knowledge of the rights of self. And in time it will lead to a knowledge of the power of self. When this time comes good-bye to disease, poverty, and every form of weakness.

Self-culture is the acquisition of that form of knowledge which shows the man how great he is; shows him his own unlimited possibilities, and suggests to him their proper mode of development.

No man knows what he may become. Therefore the first thing in self-culture is to learn that there is no limit to what he is capable of learning. This one item of knowledge pulls down every bar to his progress and turns him loose—a free citizen of an unlimited universe. It places him upon his own metal, making him dependent upon his own effort, and independent of the opinions of others regarding himself and his intellectual capacity.

This, too, is a great thing, for the majority of men and women are sadly hampered at the very outset of their attempts in self-culture by the opinions of their friends concerning their intellectual ability. But

when one knows that all acquisition depends on personal effort, and not on superlative genius, he will take courage and begin to treasure the fact that whatever he is he can become more; that he has one hope that nothing can shake, and that hope founded in the tremendous fact that he is the seed germ of all possible growth.

Thus he becomes established in himself. He has found the foundation soil of himself, and out of this soil he may produce just what he wishes.

And so the man begins to make himself from his own conscious intelligence. He begins to answer his own prayer as all prayer is answered—by personal investigation in the pursuit of truth. A man may build himself as he builds a house when he knows how—when he knows how to trust his desire; when he knows that perfect trust brings the perfect answer.

Acquired knowledge is not self-culture. I am not going to disparage it, but it is an accumulation, and though it may beautify and embellish, it bears no vital fruit. It may aid in the advancement of the man's life-work on the present plane of the world's thought, but it is not the unfoldment of the man himself; it is not the growth of the Life Principle within the seed. It is true that inasmuch as it draws from the man his own native thought, it may become an aid in his self-culture, for everything that is thought-compelling is an aid to natural growth, and natural growth is the direct aim of all self-culture, though not necessa-

rily the aim of what is termed education—which is the acquisition of ideas.

Self-culture, then, is not dependent upon the study of books of any character whatever. And it is a fact that up to the present time the study of books has rather retarded than assisted race efforts at self-culture. And this because an almost universal respect for authority has overshadowed the individual's respect for his own spontaneous thought. And so the thoughts of others have taken the place of original thought by being accepted as unquestionable; and they have thus become as dead lumber in the mind, whose effect has been to deaden native thought and to deaden the individual with it.

The deadeast people I am acquainted with are those whose native intelligences are overlaid by the learning of others; persons who meet the fresh, original, vigorous and life-giving thought of the present day with their heavy, dusty tomes of long-accumulated and now obsolete wisdom. It is literally impossible to make these people understand or feel the vital power of the thought you give them, because their power to respond is quite gone. The very fountain-head of their own original thought is filled up by the rubbish of dead ideas and has gone dry.

These men are dead and do not know it. And being dead they are obstructions in the way of the living; all the more so because the greater part of the race, being unawakened to a knowledge of its own power of thought still regards them as authority. And thus is death perpetuated,

and the vitalizing, life-giving power of true self-culture retarded.

And therefore it is, as I said before, the very beginning of self-culture is grounded in the fact that a man must know himself to be a germinating seed of all possible development. This is the first step; and it is a necessity on which his whole future depends. To start out in the pursuit of self-culture is an idiotic performance, for self-culture is not a pursuit at all. It is not following after the ideas of other people, no matter how brilliant those ideas may be. It is a staying at home, and delving deep down among the original thoughts that well up from native intuition. It is an analysis of these native thoughts after they make their appearance; and a submission of them to the most crucial tests of experiment, by which a selection is made, retaining those which are practical and rejecting the others.

And the doing this day by day, totally uninfluenced by the beliefs of other people, is self-culture.

Of course it takes a courageous man to bring out his native ideas and to stand by them in the face of misrepresentation, abuse and ridicule, but the courage is supposed in advance, for no person but a courageous one has emancipated himself from the crushing weight of that old-time authority that makes original thought impossible.

Are the thoughts of others, then, of no use to us at all? Yes, they are of great use, if taken as they should be. And this is not by a blind acceptance of them, but as a stimulant to self-thought. Here comes the

Law of action and interaction—the true Law of external growth. You balk this Law when you yield yourself, or your belief (for it is the same thing), blindly to the belief of another. But when you maintain your own belief in the spirit of an honest searcher for truth, and the other does so too, then out of the very firmness of the position of each, overruled and controlled in both of you by the greatest desire of all desires—that of knowing truth for truth's sake—there comes a candid and beautiful interchange of ideas out of which both are deeply benefited.

In this way the ideas of one stimulate and create ideas in the other, perhaps totally at variance with the ideas that created them.

The hermits that go alone to think do not accomplish much for themselves or others. It is better to do one's thinking in communities where thought is challenged, and the generator of it is compelled to give a reason for it. In giving the reason for it, the thought becomes fixed in belief if it is correct, or is annihilated if false. And so growth proceeds.

There is nothing better for the growing man than the disclosure of his thought. There is no such thing as casting pearls before swine in the mental realm now. Every pearl cast forth is picked up by some hungry soul, though the swine may have declined it.

What is more, these pearls of thought are veritable seed. They will enter some mind where they take root—being uttered—and they spring up in wonderful things, and bring forth fruit heretofore unknown in the world.

The mere speaking one's highest thought is beneficial in more ways than one. Thought smothered in the brain dies inoperative. The power to create is vested in the spoken word, and not in the one that perished before it was born. Thought is the beginning of effort. If effort dies before its beginning no one is benefited. The speaking it forth is a step toward its actualization in practical form.

But the speaking of our highest thought is, above all things, beneficial to ourselves. In speaking the new, strong thought we speak ourselves into new strength. We take a step forward that establishes us in our own opinion, ahead of where we were, and calls upon us for a fresh accession of courage in maintaining the advanced position. It leaves no chance for shirking the consequences of our new ideas. They are spoken, and being spoken we know that their effect is inevitable, and we grow bolder in standing for their defense.

Our ideas may be wrong. Very well. When they are spoken we shall soon see whether they are wrong or right. They can only be truly judged when seen, and why should our foolish, personal pride stand between a knowledge of the truth and us? He who is not willing to become a fool for truth's sake has not yet entered the sacred precinct where true self-culture begins.

If truth were already understood and demonstrated, all we would have to do would be to learn it as children learn their school lessons. But it is an unknown thing in its higher character, and there is no way

to get it but by listening to its suggestions as they arise within ourselves, projecting themselves in strange thoughts and ideas, not unmixed with our former beliefs, and therefore not altogether reliable. But such as they are we must be true to them. We must stand by them unflinchingly. We must give them utterance. We must allow them to speak themselves into observation, even though to do so is to bring upon ourselves the misconception of those who will not learn, the jealousy of others who have opinions of their own for sale, and the scorn of the fossilized rulers of public opinion who hold the unthinking majority in their deadly clutches.

There is a law involved in this. It is a part of the Law of Growth. To him who is faithful to the best he knows, whether that best is of great value or not, the Law guarantees a fuller and better and a constantly increasing revelation of truth.

And so it pays to be a fool for truth's sake. He who is a fool for truth's sake manifests a fidelity that shows him related through desire to the all of good there is in the whole universe. His very foolishness is a draft on an unfailing bank of indescribable riches, which, as he goes on will crown him in the eyes of the whole world a god in stature and power.

To be true to your own native thought, and to speak it freely, and to weigh it well, and hold it in calm, dispassionate comparison with your previous thought, and with the thoughts of others; this is self-culture. It is self-development; it is growth.

It is natural growth. It is growing out of yourself as the tree and the bulb grow. It is the only saving growth. Would the bulb grow by supinely observing the growth of the tree? No; it must pull out of itself the Life Principle latent in it. The Life Principle latent in the tree is for the tree. The tree cannot grow for the bulb, nor the bulb for the tree. Individualization is the intent of the Law. Each thing stands for itself, and grows out of itself. To know how to grow out of one's self is self-culture. And this is what the new thought called Mental Science teaches.

To grow out of ourselves gives us new strength daily. It banishes disease; it strengthens every mental faculty; it makes the memory over new; it doubles many times over one's power of concentration.

And the power of concentration is actually life. It is the opposite of diffusiveness. Diffusiveness is death.

Is it any wonder, then, that the self-culture I have described should heal the sick, and strengthen the individual in all the relations of life?

"Seek first the kingdom of heaven and all other things shall be added unto you." But where is the kingdom of heaven? The same voice has told us that it is within.

It is within. And there is a door in every human organism that opens up to its outflow.

It is original thought—at present so broken and perplexed and unsatisfactory in our perception of it. But it is the precious stuff out of

s further development—we will build the heaven we long
or.

Heaven, like every other thing, is a growth. Native thought is to-day feeding and shaping it even here on the earth, and will go on feeding and shaping it all through the ages. Genuine self-culture is the main factor in the evolution of every ideal.

A FEW WORDS MORE.

"He who continues to be passively molded prolongs his infancy to the tomb." He who molds himself can avoid the tomb.

Self-culture is the making of men.

And the first step in the direction of self-culture is to resolve to follow truth, no matter where it leads.

Channing says: "Self-culture begins in the deliberate and solemn resolution to make the best of our own powers." He also says: "The first grand condition of success is a willingness to receive the truth, no matter how hard it bears on one's self."

To sever our connection most absolutely and positively with every form of the world's present belief is the only hope of the race to-day.

This will be the beginning of that form of self-culture that means nothing less than the utmost salvation of the man, soul and body.

I strike for the highest in sight. I will be satisfied with nothing short of the very best my mind suggests.

Partial salvation is no salvation. Give me the knowledge that saves utterly. I want it even though its acquisition shatters every idol I ever cherished.

And, indeed, this is precisely what it will do, for it is our old beliefs

that are our idols. It is they that hold us bound to the dead past. It is they that rivet our eyes in the back of our heads. It is they that keep us turned toward the darkness and away from the light. It is they that must be abandoned forever.

These beliefs were born in the infancy of the race; and that they should hold us now when it is time, and more than time, that we should outgrow them, is a disgrace to our intelligence, and to the barbarism we call our civilization.

Therefore, I say, let them all go. Cease to hold them in your mind with that brute force, that muscular tension, born of fear.

For the tenacity with which you hold these old beliefs comes from the fear that in all the universe there is nothing better, or nobler, or higher than they. You do not know that, in a broad sense, there is no evil; that the universe is a universe, or a whole, of unbroken and absolute good; that when you have outgrown one good, another and better awaits your acceptance.

You cling to the old until it becomes dead lumber in your hands, and you are dead lumber with it.

And all because you are afraid. Afraid of what? Afraid of the mighty opulence of good that is omnipresent; that simply waits your renunciation of the old beliefs—founded on fear—to fill you with health, strength, power and beauty?

"Knowledge is power," said the old writers. Knowledge is the rec-

ognition of truth; the seeing of truth; and to see truth is to be truth. To be truth is to be saved to the utmost, body and soul, for truth is imperishable. It never dies.

Have we truth now? Are we harmonious and happy now? I say no! Much less are we so now than even one hundred years ago. One hundred years ago the race was in a measure one with its beliefs. At least its beliefs were less antagonistic with its surroundings than now, and its condition was more harmonious. Therefore it was less diseased and less sinful.

By "less sinful" I mean that it violated the set beliefs of the race less. So that in looking back, it is a common cry that that time was better than this.

But this is not so. The present time is best. The present time is more intellectual; but the more intellectual we become the more out of harmony are we with the old beliefs that refuse to change on account of a certain set order of things, held in place by a set order of professions for which there is no earthly and no heavenly use, and which will all disappear as soon as the people have learned to trust the unknown, instead of fearing and dreading it as they now do.

For the unknown—so dreaded now—is our savior.

Are the theories—the beliefs—of the present day saving us?

Disease and death are our only foes. Are present beliefs saving us from them?

Evidently Jesus taught the salvation of the body. And when the Jews met him in argument with an attempt to refute the glorious ideal-ity that marked every utterance that he made, and cited the fathers of the old dispensation as their authority, his answer, so short, so simple, so masterly and effective was only: "Your fathers are dead."

And these words I repeat to the advocates of the old beliefs. There is no salvation in them. The very promulgators of them are dead. And those who now contend for them—not because they seem any longer true, but because their ancestors believed them—are dying rapidly and horribly. Diseases are multiplying instead of diminishing.

A man's knowledge is not a distinct possession. It is the man himself. And because this is so, it was said in the old time that a man is what his belief makes him.

But really there are no beliefs now. We do not truly believe the old beliefs now. We are in a transitional place between the reign of the old beliefs and the formulation of better beliefs; more humane beliefs; beliefs that trust the good more, and fear the evil less; beliefs, in fact, that will surely discard all evil as a governing power, and put faith only in the soul's most cherished ideal that already proclaims the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of good.

Self-culture to-day is founded in the deliberate intention of the individual to move forward in the direction pointed out by his noblest desires; dropping, in the meantime, every one of the old, established

beliefs—long enough, at least, to prove their fitness or unfitness to serve him on the steady road to progression he proposes to tread.

To acquire the new truths, the old ones, which have served their purpose in race growth and have now become errors, must be unloaded from the mind. The pilgrim in search of truth must start out unhampered and free.

The very beginning of self-culture is to get rid of the old. We must not hesitate to cast every particle of the long accumulation of dead lumber overboard, and take for our compass the soul's noble and supreme desire that points always in the direction of the highest happiness.

We do not know, and cannot even imagine the incidents leading to it. We may go through dark experiences to find it, but faith in it will always guide us aright, and it will be ours.

To believe in your desire—which forever points onward and upward; from grosser to finer; from ignoble to noble; from poverty to opulence; from disease to health; from the repulsive to the beautiful; from death to life—this will lead you aright; this is the prayer of faith. The simple belief in your own desire—firm, unquestioned, undoubted—this will lead your steps up out of the wretched conditions that surround you into those ideal conditions of which you are constantly dreaming.

What have you been believing in heretofore? Stop a moment and reflect.

Do you not see that you have been believing in your fears—the fears

that quite obscured and made light of your desires? I am sure you have been doing this the larger part of your life.

I want to tell you that there is a well defined line between the positive and negative poles of your being, and it is found right in the place where you cease to believe in your fears and begin to believe in your desires, or hopes.

A belief in your fears keeps you on the death side of this line where every form of sickness and poverty and helplessness will be your lot.

A belief in your desires, or aspirations, will place you on the other side of this line—the upward side of it—where you will realize that there is nothing but good, and where there is no disease, no poverty, no pain and no death.

This is a tremendous thing that I am writing; but there is no truer truth than it.

The difference between trusting our fears and trusting our desires, or putting faith in our prayers, is the difference between poverty and opulence; between sickness and health; between old age and immortal and ever progressing youth; between life and death.