

## Abracadabra

(All Legal Responsibility Assumed by the Author)

*The Wayside Philosopher*

IN Sir Wilfrid Laurier's death Canada, more especially the French portion of its population, has suffered a severe loss. An orator, a great political leader, a loyal Canadian, his memory will be long cherished. Regret that he lacked devotion to Imperial ideas; that he had no grand conception of Canada's destiny as an integral portion of the British Empire, will be felt by many Canadians who otherwise honoured his name. The French-Canadians will not long lack a distinguished leader. Let us hope that to Laurier's gifts and graces his successor will add a due sense of the glorious Imperialistic future of Canada.

Apropos of his death comes the question of the general attitude of the clergy to Death and the "future" Life—to speak of the latter in usual phrase. How strangely uncertain and gloomy the ordinary funeral discourse when touching on this future life! How many preachers in their lack of clear, definite convictions remind one of Whittier's somewhat attractive but utterly mistaken lines:

"When on my day of life the night is falling,  
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces  
blown,  
I hear far voices, out of darkness, calling  
My feet to paths unknown."

What is wrong? Not their Christianity! In most cases that is as undoubted as Whittier's own. Can the error lie otherwise, then, than in their Science and Philosophy?

I remember hearing a prominent preacher, Rev. Leslie Pidgeon, asserting that you could not by Science prove the existence of a future life. Many others would, no doubt, make similar statements. With such a view in the pulpit can we expect to find cheery assurance in the pew as to what awaits us when for us  
"The veil is parted and we look on God"?

Since then I have been a decided supporter of the view that all clergymen should be compelled to take several years' Science and Philosophy before ordination.

As it is, the pulpit "halting on palsied feet" before a mysterious unknown, joins with Whittier in painting the cold, gray hour of earliest dawn mist-enshrouded and, almost, mist-embedded—this short, fleeting, human hour wherein we "see through a glass darkly," as the "day" of life.

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Eternity, God illumined, God permeated, where we see "face to face" painted as "unsunned spaces," a "darkness" threaded by "paths unknown," is the companion picture we are asked to gaze upon.

Are such pictures calculated to make one enthusiastic for the hour of departure from this vale of tears? Hardly! Let us have a healthier viewpoint; delivery from "the body of this death" as it now hangs before our eyes. Let us be reminded that God is near—

"Closer is He than breathing  
And nearer than hands and feet";  
that  
"Heaven is all around."

Let us hear more of "Before the world was I am," and "from everlasting unto everlasting I am God."

When we lie down to sleep, not to "die," let us, at least, be able to comfort ourselves with the thought that the Eternal Love, that has made earth and earth ties so bright and beautiful, has not shown us its richest splendour, but has something better in store, and at once, freed from disability and pain, removed from human limitations, finite existence, let us expect to pass "from glory unto glory" upon the eternal hills whereto our God alone is sun.

Many will recall that beautiful description of Life wherein man is pictured as lying asleep in a beautiful temple of perfect proportions, adorned in purest taste with truest art in every portion. Throughout its vastness peals in its all-embracing charms the perfect music of a perfect world. Through slumber's encompassing folds it thrills the sleeper and he smiles. . . . All at once a radiant figure kisses the sleeper's lips and he awakes to the glory, beauty and melody around him. That is Death.

For once a poet has failed. Whittier's picture must be veiled in the presence of the one painted by the prose poet whose beautiful lines I have been compelled to abbreviate, thus robbing them in a measure, but not, I trust, altogether, of their beauty and their wonderful meaning.

In closing these notes, let me thank the author of "The Golden Road to Nowhere" for the pleasure his lines have given.