

It is the fact that the theory of composite authorship leads to conclusions of this fundamental character which constitutes its "real difficulty." And as the theory is only a theory after all, it may not be amiss that the Higher Criticism should reconsider its position, and see whether the data upon which its theory is based may not be as adequately explained by considerations of another order. At least, let the difficulty be fully realized.

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ART. VII.—REMARKS UPON CANON GELL'S

"NOTES ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE AS AFFECTING THE  
RESURRECTION."

(THE CHURCHMAN, *September*, 1903.)

IT is impossible to deny that Canon Gell has presented a formidable array of Scriptural arguments against consciousness in the intermediate state, and it must be acknowledged that his reasoning is fatal to such developments as the Romish doctrine of purgatory, or the possibility of repentance and conversion in that condition. But we think that he goes too far in ignoring the interval between death and judgment altogether.

On p. 652 he assumes that all who do not accept what is really the popular idea of "sudden death, sudden glory" hold an "activity" of the soul in the intermediate state. But surely there may be a ripening of the sheaves already cut but not garnered, even though there can be no change of tares into wheat. The earliest Christians certainly prayed for the departed, though in a limited sense. This shows that, in spite of New Testament authority, according to Canon Gell, they did not regard the transition from death to judgment as instantaneous. I think Canon Gell does not attach sufficient weight to the fact that the Apostles anticipated a speedy second coming of our Lord, and therefore the intermediate period was not to them a "long period," as he infers on p. 657. He adduces the term "sleep," which is used so much for "death" in the Bible; but, at the same time, this image, it must be remembered, was also very common in heathen writers. In the mouth of the latter it did not always imply an awakening, if ever. In the mouth of Christians it appears to do so, and is surely used to signify a continued life. Sleep is not the same thing as unconsciousness. It has its dreams, more or less. As Hamlet says:

"To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come!"

We suffer in our dreams, and we enjoy ourselves in our dreams. Our dreams are reminiscent of our waking life, and also reflect our apprehension of what is to come.

Canon Gell speaks as if we who believe in intermediate consciousness considered each person judged at death (p. 638). This is just what we do not do, and his question asked on the same page, "What can be understood by this Judgment Day?" is to be answered thus: "The settlement of man's final destiny—the perfection of the blessed and the second death for the utterly lost."

His quotations from the Old Testament on p. 658 are beside the mark. It is through the Gospel that light is thrown upon life and immortality. Many consider that but few, if any, Old Testament saints had a sure hope of eternal life. Their despairing thoughts of death and Sheol are not for us to adopt; nor is the philosophy of Ecclesiastes to be our model. A progressive revelation is acknowledged by all intelligent students of Holy Writ, and implied in Heb. i. 1.

He refers to the Transfiguration. If this was a real appearance of Moses and Elijah, and not a mere vision, it surely teaches an intermediate state—at any rate, in their case—which was capable of activity, though not apparent to mankind save by the resumption of their bodies.

He uses our Lord's words to the dying robber for his purpose; but does he mean that "to-day" our Lord was to be in glory? The Apostles' Creed implies that he was in "Hades," and, *pace* Canon Gell, we adhere to this view. The robber was no doubt thinking of a future Messianic kingdom, such as those of which Jewish apocalyptic literature is full, and one, perhaps, not far distant. Our Lord does not grant his actual request, but, instead, the promise of immediate rest, where He too was going. Canon Gell appears to regard "paradise" in this passage as having nothing to do with the intermediate state, but, rather, as referring to the permanent future condition, contrasted with Hades. He quotes Ps. xvi. 11 so as to support this contrast, though it is quite unnecessary to make it do so. It is in the hope of speedy resurrection that the body falls asleep (ver. 10), taking the Psalm in its Messianic sense. There is no aversion expressed for Hades, unless as a permanent abode. In our Lord's mouth "paradise" is not synonymous with the "gloomy shade of Sheol," as Canon Gell thinks we suppose. It represents "Abraham's bosom," which in the parable of Luke xvi. is the portion of Hades enjoyed by the blessed. The writer in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible" alludes to the Rabbinic school, which regarded it as "a region of rest in the heart of the earth—the intermediate home of the blessed." The writer of the article himself is inclined to con-

nect the New Testament idea, rather, with the popular belief of the Essenes. As to its use by our Lord on the cross, he considers it as promising the robber what he needed—repose, shelter, and joy. But that it could be synonymous with Christ's glorious kingdom in the Christian sense, who ever imagined? That kingdom is usually described in Holy Writ as having its locality on earth—a new earth—not below or above.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus Canon Gell evades. In his note on p. 660 there is an error, making the word "paradise" occur in this connection, which it does not. The scenery of the parable may indeed be only by the way, but the use of the expressions "tongue" and "flame" would be merely figurative, and would not necessarily imply an embodied spirit. The whole story is inexplicable if, as Canon Gell says, the Bible does not sanction intermediate consciousness; in fact, if Canon Gell's methods are allowable, may not the Bible be made to prove anything?

I do not think Canon Gell will be disappointed when he says that "warm-hearted Christians will not readily yield to the cold arguments of the understanding"—*i.e.*, to his arguments. At any rate, only those who have built up a non-Scriptural and uncatholic fabric upon the basis of intermediate life and consciousness have anything to fear from his exposition. In the case of such persons it may do good, but it has not converted the present writer, for one, to the view of Archbishop Whateley and the creed of those who view death, resurrection, and judgment as simultaneous processes.

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### THE MONTH.

THE Church Congress will be held this month in circumstances by no means conducive to its securing due public attention. The beginning of October is to be marked by the formal initiation of a political movement, which is probably the most important, and is certainly the most exciting, that has occurred in our time. The whole Free Trade controversy has been reopened, and the Fiscal Policy which has prevailed in this country for the last sixty years is challenged by the leaders of the party in power. Mr. Balfour has published a pamphlet, entitled "Economic Notes on Insular Free Trade," previously circulated among his colleagues in the Cabinet, in which he formally declares himself in favour of "regaining our liberty" to protect ourselves against hostile tariffs in other countries by imposing retaliatory duties on imports from such countries into British ports, and he is to expound