

DOES THE SOUL SLEEP BETWEEN DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY?

BY W. J. M.

A LETTER signed J. R. on this topic calls for an exposition of what the doctrine of the Church is as to the consciousness or otherwise of the departed soul. The idea of its being unconscious until the Resurrection, so far from being "Catholic truth," is rank heresy and nearly akin to materialism. Let us first examine a few passages in the Prayer Book bearing on this solemn question. First then, read, in the "Visitation of the sick," the prayer for a sick child, for whom we pray that in the event of its death it may be received into those heavenly habitations where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity.

The expression "sleep" here used belongs to the older and darker dispensation of grace among the Jews, and is derived from the appearance of the body when dead, and has the aspect of being asleep. But the word "sleep" cannot be applied to the soul which is no longer "here on earth," but has been "received into heavenly habitations, and dwells there in the enjoyment of rest and felicity." This enjoyment of rest and felicity implies, necessitates consciousness, without which there could be no such enjoyment. Is the grave a heavenly habitation? Who of us, in prospect of our death and burial, could possibly regard the grave with all its repulsive accompaniments as a place of rest and felicity for the enjoyment of our souls? The Church teaches no such horrible and absurd doctrine.

In the Burial of the Dead we have another prayer, which indicates the teaching of the Church in these words: "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity."

Can any sane mind imagine or conceive of a soul being in profound unconscious sleep, yet meanwhile in the experience of joy and felicity? Such an experience is impossible. The soul must be awake, must be conscious, and must be cognizant of the joys at God's right hand and the pleasures for evermore, to have any such experience. The Church therefore repudiates and condemns the doctrine of the sleep of the soul in the intervening time between the death of the body and the body's resurrection from the grave.

Allusion was made by J. R. to the blessed martyrs. These, according to his doctrine, must as yet be slumbering in their graves or somewhere else, until the resurrection of their bodies. Now, let us hear what the Church says of them in that grand ancient hymn called the *Te Deum*. It speaks of worship on earth and worship in heaven, its description of the heavenly worship and worshippers having evidently been derived from the Bible, chiefly the 6th chapter of Isaiah and certain passages in the Book of Revelation. The heavenly worshippers are the angels, cherubim, seraphim, apostles, prophets and martyrs. But, accord-

ing to J. R.'s teaching, the Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs ought to be now sound asleep and silent as the grave. The Church, however, on the contrary, maintains that they are neither asleep nor silent, for here is the Church's doctrine and belief concerning them enshrined in this triumphant hymn of adoration and praise to God: "The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee. The noble army of martyrs praise Thee."

These words are written and sung by the Church in the present tense, plainly intimating thereby that the praise referred to is celebrated in heaven now, and that the apostles, prophets, and martyrs are as much alive, conscious, and engaged in that heavenly worship as are the angels of God themselves.

The *Te Deum* was originally composed in the Latin language, and what we call the "noble army" is in the original the *candidatus exercitus*, that is, the white-robed army of martyrs, of whom we read in the Book of Revelation, especially in the 7th chapter, where it is thus written in the 9th verse: "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living beings, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? A I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Then in the 18th chapter, where we read of the fall of Babylon, an event which takes place between the Apostolic age and the resurrection of the dead, a voice from heaven is heard saying, (v. 18) "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." Doubtless there is much metaphor or symbolism in the Book of Revelation, which it would be folly to interpret literally, but no man of common sense and unprejudiced mind, can read such passages as these without coming to the conclusion that the intention is to teach us that the apostles, prophets and martyrs who died in the faith of Christ, are now living with Christ in the world of glory above, and are capable of joy and felicity. That is the doctrine implied in the Church's *Te Deum*.

(To be continued.)

BOOK NOTICES.

AN ECCLESIASTICAL, HISTORIC, CHART, of various dimensions from 40 x 24 inches, to the size of 16 mo., will shortly be published in Toronto. It is cleverly devised by the Rev Alfred Belt, M.A., of Arthur, in the Diocese of Niagara, and has met with much approval from several clergymen. It is chiefly intended for use in church schools and Bible class rooms, and will be of great assistance to the teacher and scholar. We hope shortly to describe it more fully.

CHURCH HISTORY FOR SCHOOLS. Shortly also will be published by Rowsell & Hutchinson, Toronto, a volume of about 200 pages on Church History of England, from the ready pen and thoughtful mind of the Rev. C. E. Whitcombe, Assistant Minister, of St. Luke's Church, Toronto. The chief effort of the writer and compiler is directed to an order or arrangement of periods easier to the observation of young scholars, than hitherto found in such books.

CATHOLIC VERSUS ROMAN.

On Sunday, the 11th inst, the Rev. John Langtry, M.A., delivered the following discourse at St. Luke's, Toronto, in reply to the B.C. Archbishop's sermon "On the differences between the Protestant sects and the Catholic (Roman) Church."

Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.
Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

The Rev. gentleman said: By Zion is meant the Church of the living God. The text calls God's people to examine her structure, to consider carefully her principles, to see that they have a right knowledge of her strength and spaciousness as a safe and ample dwelling place for His people, and to transmit to the generations to come a true conception and accurate knowledge of those characteristic features by which she may be known. I do not intend to say more in the way of exposition of the text or of its application to the subject I am about to treat. That will become apparent to your own minds as we proceed. The subject you will remember, as I announced last Sunday evening, is the difference between the Catholic Church and the Roman Church. I told you that I had been impelled to take up this subject by the covert and utterly misleading attack of Archbishop Lynch upon the Church of England in his letters lately published in the papers. I only wish to say, before proceeding, that in the now more than thirty years that I have been in the ministry, I have never, to the best of my recollection, directly or indirectly assailed, in the pulpit, the belief or practice of any body of professing Christians. And although I was very indignant when I read this fresh and unprovoked attack, I should not have gone into this discussion from any mere love of fight, or of my own accord, had I not been entreated by instructed and intelligent laymen not to allow what they characterized as this ignorant and insolent assault to pass unrebuked.

In the lecture to which I refer it is assumed as usual with Roman controversialists that the Roman Church is the Catholic Church; and all who do not obey the Church of Rome, that is the Pope of Rome, are huddled together under the general designation of Protestants, and sneeringly referred to as standing all upon precisely the same footing, as deriving their origin either from Henry VIII. or from some one who has lived since his time; though the Archbishop knows that this is an utter perversion of the truth. As a necessary result of this, the lecture is somewhat confused; and I shall not attempt to correct its misleading statements in the order in which they occur, though I shall reply to most of them as these lectures proceed. Following the Archbishop's lead, I shall take a wider scope, and call attention to some of the characteristic points of difference between the Catholic religion and the Roman religions—I say religions, for, in spite of the Archbishop's boasting about the peace and union of the Roman communion, I shall be able to show that there is more than one religion believed in and allowed in the Roman obedience. But some will say, Why bother about the Catholic Church? What we want to hear is the difference between the Protestant Church and the Roman Church, and the reason for that difference. We don't believe in the Catholic Church and we don't care what it teaches. All I can say is that we do. And we solemnly profess that belief every time we meet for public worship. We earnestly pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church every day. We hold ourselves bound by its faith and