

*When Our Lord said "The girl is not dead but sleepeth" what did He mean? Does not Catholic tradition hold that the child was in fact dead?*  
 Matt. ix, 24 : Mk. v, 39 : Lk. viii, 52.

Comparing these words of Christ with what He said at the raising of Lazarus (Jn. xi, 11ff.) we notice that on the latter occasion He explained His mention of sleep as describing death. No such explanation is given on the occasion which we are now considering and a few commentators have somewhat precipitately concluded that our Lord really meant sleep in the literal sense and not death. If this were so then the only miracle on this occasion would be one of knowledge of her actual condition. But, as Plummer points out (*St. Luke* in loc.) "the εἰδότες ('knowing') in verse 53 is conclusive as to the Evangelist's meaning: not 'supposing' but 'knowing' she was dead." Unless we are prepared therefore to reject the explicit statement of the Evangelist we can be in no doubt that the girl was in fact dead, and Catholic tradition has always taken it to be so.

It follows then that our Lord uses the word "sleep" in a metaphorical sense. The Greek word used here is καθεύδει. In the account of the raising of Lazarus, the Evangelist uses the verb κείνηται. Death is often described in the Bible as sleep. In Christian times of course the expression is used to imply a belief in the resurrection but the word was used to describe death long before the time of Christ and even before there was any clear idea of a future life. The word used in the Lazarus episode is the one generally met with in the Greek OT to express the same idea, cf. Deut. xxxi, 16 : II Kings vii, 12. The word used in our passage about the daughter of Jairus (καθεύδω) appears to be used in a metaphorical sense in the OT only in Daniel xii, 2, but this text is enough to corroborate its use in that sense in the Gospel.

Why does our Lord describe death as sleep especially without explaining His meaning? The answer is surely that it is a hint that He is about to raise the person to life, just as if it had only been a question of sleep. It is clear from the context in each case that He never intended His remark to be taken literally, though in fact some did. Our Lord made almost a habit of using enigmatic phrases which people would at first misunderstand, no doubt to attract their attention and impress His words and acts on their memory, cf. Mk. viii, 15 : Jn. iv, 10-15, 32.

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*Why did not Jesus allay the fear of the people after the miracle of the Gadarene swine, as He usually does in similar circumstances in the Gospel? Are there cases today of possession by evil spirits?*

The Synoptic accounts of the miracle tell us that the whole people wanted our Lord to depart from their district and that they were afraid. They feared further manifestations of His miraculous power which

might lead to more material losses on their part. Everything shows that they were quite unprepared to consider Christ's claims and there is no suggestion that He had any intention of making this miracle the start of a mission to them by Himself in person. They were not Jews, living as they did in the region of Decapolis and owning swine, a thing forbidden by the Mosaic Law; and Jesus said that He had not come but to save the lost sheep of the House of Israel, Matt. xv, 24.

Their fear is quite understandable on two counts—the natural fear that the amazing destruction of the herd of swine would excite and the further apprehension of possible future losses. Our Lord did not trouble to allay their fears because there was no special reason why He should do so. On the other occasions in the Gospel where He does allay fear, He so acts in order to stimulate faith and trust in Himself, or in the case of an angelic appearance the fear is allayed in order to strengthen faith and trust in God, *e.g.* Matt. viii, 26: Lk. i, 13, 30, etc. These reasons are not operative in the present case. But Jesus does begin to prepare these people for the reception of the Gospel by instructing the healed man to return to his home and tell the people what great things God had done to him (Lk. viii, 39). And the man did as Jesus commanded.

In countries in which Christianity has been long established, cases of possession by evil spirits appear to be of rare occurrence. The power of Satan is not at its height there, however feeble at times the practice of Christianity may seem. But in missionary lands where paganism is dominant it is a very different matter. Missionaries in Africa, for example, vouch for the fact of diabolical possession at the present day and for a visible manifestation of Satanic power which is quite unfamiliar to us in Europe.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Paul of Tarsus.* By Rt. Rev. Joseph Holzner (an English trans. by Rev. F. C. Eckhoff of *Paulus, sein Leben und seine Briefe*), 1946. (Herder.) 30s.

In any book on St. Paul the first thing one looks for is surely the authentic portrait of the Apostle and in a work intended for the general public one looks further for a living and vivid picture of the man. It is unfortunate that there are so few works in English that fulfil these expectations; at least works that can be profitably read by Catholics. Dr. Holzner has admirably succeeded in achieving his purpose of making the person of the Apostle live again for us with all his ardent love of Christ, his zeal for souls, his indomitable courage which bore him through dangers that few men have faced. It is true that in pursuit of his end Dr. Holzner has at times adopted the style rather of the historical