An Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry for the New York Medical College, Richard Gallagher, has published a paper in the New Oxford Review detailing his observations of a recent case of demonic possession . The aim of his paper is to establish the fact that demonic possession is a reality, and to help others discern between what is demonic and what is either counterfeit possession or mental illness. The case centres around a young woman who had been heavily involved in the occult. She came to believe she was under satanic attack and had requested a Roman Catholic exorcism to be performed. The exorcist team included several priests, deacons, nuns, lay assistants and psychiatrists, some of whom have had previous medical and psychiatric training. During the exorcism, the woman would often go into periodic trances, during which she would speak in other languages and slander those who were trying to rid her of these demons. She would have no recollection of what she had spoken after coming out of her trance. Sometimes she would grunt and growl like an animal, in noises that seemed impossible for a human to imitate. She displayed super-human strength, levitated in the air, and was able to recall intimate details of the lives of the team members of whom she had no previous knowledge of.

Quote: *""Periodically, in our presence, Julia would go into a trance state of a recurring nature," writes Gallagher. "Mentally troubled individuals often 'dissociate,' but Julia's trances were accompanied by an unusual phenomenon: Out of her mouth would come various threats, taunts and scatological language, phrases like 'Leave her alone, you idiot,' 'She's ours,' 'Leave, you imbecile priest,' or just 'Leave.' The tone of this voice differed markedly from Julia's own, and it varied, sometimes sounding guttural and vaguely masculine, at other points high pitched. Most of her comments during these 'trances,' or at the subsequent exorcisms, displayed a marked contempt for anything religious or sacred."*

I don't like to concentrate too much on the demonic aspect of things. I don't think Satan deserves that honour, and I don't feel it is edifying for the believer to be thinking on such things. Paul says in Philippians 4:8, *"whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things "*. But I can relate in some ways to what is described in this article, and I feel it would be edifying for others to be warned of staying clear of the occult. Although I have never seen or felt a demonic presence near me (I have been a Christian since I was four years old), both my mum and my grandmother have experienced this. When my mum was a young girl, a woman lived opposite her who regularly held a séance. A séance is when a person who is in contact with demonic spirits tries to make contact with the dead. One day this woman asked if she could come in to my grandmother's house to use the phone. Ever since that day, my mum used to feel that an evil presence was looking at her when she came home from school. When she sang hymns about the blood of Christ, this feeling would disappear. On another occasion, one Sunday morning my grandmother had decided to

prepare lunch instead of going to the breaking of bread meeting in her assembly. She was in the kitchen, and felt an evil presence walk into the room behind her. She was so scared she ran out of the kitchen door into the garden. These incidences all ceased after the woman who held the séances moved to another house.

In my work in recent years, and even in recent weeks, the girls in the office have talked about going to have their fortune read. I don't like confrontation and I'm not good at speaking to people, so I didn't tell them what I thought about fortune-tellers. A few years ago another colleague in the office, a girl named Patricia, decided to go and have her fortune read shortly after her dad died. I was going to tell her that this wasn't a good idea, and that things would only get worse for her if she went. Unfortunately I didn't say anything. Shortly after she went to have her fortune read she was involved in a minor car accident, and she later said that although she thought things couldn't get any worse for her, they did. I heard girls last month talking about going to have their fortunes read, and coming back astonished at how accurate the information was that they had been given. But what do you say? Even King Saul went to the witch at Endor when God stopped speaking to him. People are searching for security in their lives, but they are looking in all the wrong places. Who will go and tell them of Jesus Christ? Who will tell them of the One Who holds the future in His hands?

The Bible does mention the exorcism of evil spirits. Jesus Christ cast seven demonic spirits out of Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9), who later became a devoted follower of the Saviour. Unfortunately the exorcism mentioned in the above article reminds me more of that account detailed in the book of Acts...

Acts 19:13-16
Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, **Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?** And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Look at this demon's response to the exorcism attempted by the vagabond Jews. The demon recognized the authority of Jesus Christ to cast him out of the man. The demon even recognized the authority of Paul, who was filled by the Holy Spirit of God. But the demon did not recognize the authority of those who hadn't believed on Jesus Christ for salvation, even though they used the name of Jesus Christ. 1st John 4:4 states, "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world

". But if the Spirit of God isn't dwelling in you, how can you hope to cast the devil out of somebody else? What power have you got against Satan? None at all. Satan loves religion, it is his chief way of damning souls to hell. And he can quote the Bible better than any of us. The only power that is effective against the devil is the Word of God (Luke 4:4) and the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:11). So beware of the occult, of fortune-telling, astrology and other things that only serve to glorify the flesh and the god of this world (2nd Corinthians 4:4). If it's the future you are concerned about, turn to Christ. He has all the answers.

Isaiah 8:19
And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?

Isaiah 45:11
Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

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