

University of Notre Dame
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Accommodating Religion to Business.

The mention in Monday's Bulletin of a medical student who wanted the little green Apologetics book recalls a recent communication from another student who asked, "What can I tell a fellow who says that he has decided to join some Protestant church because a Catholic doctor can't make any money?"

This recalls a story told by a Catholic doctor. He was approached by a younger member of his profession who had just come to town and was looking for patients. The young doctor said: "I understand you are a Catholic. Tell me - how are Catholics about supporting their own people? I have been thinking of joining either the Masons or the Catholic Church in order to get some business. What would you advise?" The older man - a daily communicant - smiled benevolently and replied: "I think you had better join the Masons."

And for the medical student whose Catholicity would keep him from making money, the same advice holds good. One of the best-paying lines in the medical profession, the murder of unborn infants, is closed to Catholics; so are certain other lines not so lucrative. (The fact that they are also closed to gentlemen, non-Catholics as well as Catholics, will not disturb the young man in question.) The natural law imposes a certain duty of charity on all members of the medical profession; the Catholic physician must recognize also a supernatural law of charity.

If the young man conceives of a church only as a means of social contact for business purposes, he flatters himself when he speaks of leaving the Catholic Church. He has never known what it means to be a Catholic; and while he may have maintained some sort of external membership, we can say flatly that he never was a Catholic. The fundamental truth Our Lord organized His Church to teach is this: "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his soul?"

But why should he pick on an honorable profession like medicine if he wants to be an unprincipled practitioner? Or why should he choose a Catholic school for his instruction if he is at heart a renegade?

Well, Our Lord speaks of wolves in sheep's clothing, and tells us to beware of them. When avarice takes hold of a man, he doesn't hesitate pick up the clothing of any sheep that will serve his nefarious purpose. Out in Vancouver they tell a story of two nuns who came over the border in a fine limousine with a liveried chauffeur. The customs officials graciously waved them on. They went a few feet and the engine went dead. An officer heard one of them remark, in a gruff voice: "This is a heck of a place to have a breakdown." The remark brought an investigation, which showed that the "nuns" were bootleggers who had not hesitated to resort to a trick that would bring all travelling nuns under suspicion.

The student whose only conception of life is that it is a time for money-making is wasting his time studying medicine. Not so many doctors pile up large fortunes, and they have to be pretty smart to do that - and the poor fellow who wants to leave the Church to make money can't be so very smart. He may not have nerve enough to be either a bandit or a racketeer, but he could at least try his hand at crooked politics - and save himself the long preparation that is necessary for medicine. -- Or, if he wants to reconsider his decision to "leave the Church", let him start out by meditating on what Dr. S. A. Knopf told the Society of Medical Jurisprudence, in 1922: "Those of us who have witnessed many death-bed scenes will long since have abandoned the medical student's conception of death." And for the life after death, there are no pockets in shrouds.

PRAYERS: Father Hope's father is quite ill. A friend of a student died recently. Four special intentions, one of them a conversion.