Recently I was asked to speak to physicians and their wives at a Christmas banquet on the subject, "The Spiritual Roots of Western Medicine." The challenge required some research and reading and as such matters evolve, resulted in great personal profit. One person whom I discovered was profoundly interested in the spiritual basis of medicine and life in general was the great Canadian doctor, Sir William Osler. Osler was the son of an Anglican minister in Ontario, a member of a larger and rather poor family, receiving his name after William of Orange. He wrote in his book "An Alabama Student," "As a boy it was my good fortune to come under the influence of a parish priest of the Gilbert White type, who followed the seasons of nature no less absolutely than those of the Church, and whose excursions into science had brought him into contact with physic and physicians. Father Johnson, as his friends loved to call him, founder and Warden of the Trinity College School, near Toronto, illustrated that Anglical conjunction (to use Cotton Mather's words) of medicine and divinity more common in the 16th and 17th centuries than in the 19th. An earnest student of Sir Thomas Browne, particularly of the Religio Medici, he often read to us extracts in illustration of the beauty of the English language ..."

With the advent of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases for which present cure is not in sight, and with drug and other moral problems present in society (including abortion and euthanasia) one is led to reconsider the need of the angelical conjunction. The minister needs to consider patient support and care as part of his pastoral duty to suffering mankind. The physician needs to discover and put into practice the diagnosis and therapy of illness of the spirit as well as the psychosoma. In the conjunction lies the hope of man in the last decade of this century of science which has produced such astounding inventions but has also caused more heart-pain and death than any prior era. Can it be that the etiology of our present illness is: "Priest and doctor both have thus their holy God forgot and so the whirlwind thus have wrought"? Could it be that Canada having produced Sir William Osler and its glorious medical and research institutions will now rediscover and produce a generation of compassion, possessors of a new Christ-inspired angelical conjunction, the true answer to the world dilemma?

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