

Infirmary—I trust in God there is at least a practical difference. The speculative difference is, perhaps, not so great as might be imagined, although, 1st, “No Protestant teaches that the visit of the minister”—nor that extreme unction is necessary to prepare for heaven. Neither does any Catholic teach that the salvation of the soul depends on the mere visit of the priest—nor that extreme unction is *necessary* to prepare for heaven. But Catholics teach that the visit of the priest *may contribute* much to the salvation of the soul, and that, in consequence, it is the duty of the priest to visit the sick and the dying, no matter what the disease may be. Perfectly similar is the doctrine of Protestants with regard to the visit of the minister.—For proof, Sir, I must refer you to your own Confession of Faith. Does not, then, your standard the Westminster Confession, admonish ministers that “times of sickness and affliction are special opportunities put into his hand by God, to minister a word in season to every soul; because the consciences of men, are, or should be more awakened to bethink themselves of their spiritual estate for eternity; and satan also takes advantage to load them more with sore temptations.”—And does not experience tell us that if spiritual advice and consolation be ever necessary it is on such occasions. When the body is weakened by disease—when the faculties of the mind are impaired—when the ties of the world are distracting that sorrowing sinner, and the terrors of death have encompassed him on every side, is he who styles himself God’s minister to complain if he be summoned to the bedside of his suffering parishoner? Is he to complain that an opportunity has been offered him of pouring into the breast of the dying man the balm of hope and consolation—of awakening in his soul sentiments of confidence in an all-merciful God, in the merits of a crucified Saviour? and, by recalling to his distracted mind the promises of the gospel, to fortify him in the hour of danger against the efforts of the infernal fiend, who “goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour! If this be Conspiracy, Mr. Editor—if it be conspiracy to give you an opportunity of doing what the Confession of Faith urges you to do—if it be conspiracy to call upon you to do what the clearest injunctions of Christianity command you to perform, then I publicly declare myself to be a conspirator—then I publicly avow that I have conspired to procure the aids of religion for the sick and the dying, when all the Established parsons in Glasgow conspired to leave them to perish! Second difference. A ‘priest has no family to whom infection may be communicated.’ Mr. Editor, are you aware that you are, here giving one of the strongest arguments for the celibacy of the clergy?

3. “There is a Protestant chaplain attached to the Infirmary.” I assert, and I am ready to prove, that no chaplain attends the Fever Hospital, except, perhaps, he may pay an occasional visit to the recovery. I can bring the testimony of a person who declares, that during six years that she was nurse in the Infirmary she never yet saw the foot of a minister cross the threshold of a fever ward. What does the public think of this? Another nurse declared that in the course of twenty one months she had seen a minister, I think, once. And another said that she had seen a minister twice, once when he came to give some directions (of which we shall see more afterwards), and even for that visit she was indebted to the priest; and another time he came to ask how many Testaments she had!!

To come to a conclusion on this point. If I have injured the Established Ministers by sending for them to the Infirmary, I have at least this consolation, that I have followed the Gospel rule of “doing as I would done by.” I have done no more to them than I would wish them on all similar occasions to do to me. Again and again has the Rev. Mr. Routledge, sent us a card, acquainting us that some of our people were lying sick and wished to see us. Did we accuse him of a design to blacken our character? No; but we considered ourselves under high obligations to him on that account; and I avail myself of the opportunity, in my own name and in the name of the other Catholic Clergymen of the city, publicly and cordially to return him our grateful and warmest acknowledgements for his Christian kindness and benevolence.

We come now to the second charge, viz. “by attempts to press Popery on the patients.” This charge, I unequivocally,

utterly, absolutely deny, and as proof, I appeal to the patient themselves—I appeal to the nurses in the various wards—I appeal to every visitor and attendant there, clerical and medical, male and female, whether ever they saw me or any of my brother clergymen pressing Popery on the Patients, or intruding upon any person whatever in point of religion. A great number of persons have already declared that they never did, and I am not in the least afraid of the testimony of the others. No, no, Mr. Editor, I am too well aware that forced prayers are no devotion; and so far from pressing or forcing our ministrations on the patients, I and the other Catholic Clergymen have been invited, urged, and deputations even have been sent to us to officiate publicly in the wards, and we never yet consented—so careful have we been to press Popery on the patients! Indeed the general complaint is, that we will not speak to people—that we speak only to our own. In short, in order to find out the Catholics, I am obliged generally to ask the names of the patients and to what church they belong; and there is the sum and substance—my whole amount and pressure of Popery.

But did I not offer or “wish a woman to take my sacrament?” I never did; I never so much as thought of such a thing. I refer to the statement of the cause and circumstances of my revisit to that woman, and which were all confirmed by her own declaration before witnesses yesterday. The truth is, this is a charge too silly to require an answer. The slightest knowledge of the Catholic religion would have been sufficient to convince any persons in their senses that the whole was a perfect absurdity—that I durst not in such circumstances give her my Sacrament even if she had requested it. With us the sacrament is one of the last things—and before we get that length there is a long process to go through, and particularly with a person not yet instructed. Now, I am persuaded I was not two minutes speaking to the woman altogether. Besides what end would such a proceeding serve? Giving her the sacrament could never make her a Catholic. What possible object therefore, could I have in view? None truly, to me conceivable. But she thought she felt something curious about her mouth afterwards. Probably she did, for that very day she had been taking copious quantity of opium. I heard she had been telling some person that surely the priest had given her the sacrament, for he had said *God bless you!* ‘This is good! The truth is—everybody says the poor woman was in such a state of delirious stupor, that she did not know what she was saying or doing.

Were not this letter already too long, I would have a number more of remarks to make. One thing however, you will just allow me to hint at. J. Campbell has declared before witnesses that I never made her send for the minister—that I never told her to send for the minister—that it was not at my suggestion the minister was sent for. I leave you and her to settle between you. Yes, Mr. Editor, I have a number of little bits of useful information to lay before the public; but I hope soon to have another opportunity.

We shall perhaps then see who presses religion. We shall then see who have been insulted and ill-treated in that Infirmary on account of their religion. We shall perhaps then see what mean expedients have been had recourse to—in order to make certain persons prevaricate.

But you threaten disclosures, too—you may try your utmost. You call for examination—so do I. I challenge inquiry—I bid defiance to investigation.

You talk of getting me excluded from the Infirmary. Yes, exclude me if you can—banish me if you dare—and on the Infirmary walls let it be written, that in 1836 a Catholic Clergyman was banished from this Institution through the malignity of the Law Church Parsons for kindly inviting them—at least to try—to save their people’s souls from hell.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

P. FORBES.

YOUNG IRELAND AND O’CONNELL.

The funeral monument is not yet reared;—the earth is not yet sprinkled on the coffin lid; the