

FATHER EGAN AND THE REV. MR. PERCIVAL.

Last week we were treated by Rev. Mr. Percival to a lengthy dissertation on Mental Restriction in the Catholic Church. No doubt he would be pleased to find that the Catholic Church teaches that lying is sometimes justifiable, for such doctrine is one he stands very much in need of. The principle of Mental Restriction is not a Roman Dogma. It is not a dogma at all. The fact is that the Catholic Church does not command her children at all times and on all occasions to speak *all* the truth they may happen to know, but she does command them never to speak anything but the truth. She teaches them that when they use words, which by their natural force convey a false sense, they speak falsehood, whatever may have been their secret meaning, and that knowingly and intentionally to use language calculated to *deceive* the hearer, to convey to him a *false meaning*, or a meaning different from that in the mind of him using it, is to lie and to sin against God. The rev. gentleman, who, in his letter, asserts the contrary, is guilty of the very offence he would fasten upon her, and has no excuse for his conduct. If he is ignorant of her doctrine, he speaks rashly; if he is not ignorant, he is guilty of a wilful falsehood.

As far as I am aware, Protestants hold and practise mental restriction the very same as Catholics. The only difference is that some Protestants turn up their sanctimonious visages in pious horror of it, and make very slovenly attempts to use it for the sake of creating prejudice against Catholics, while they themselves have no scruple to tell *downright lies*. I have known cases of Protestant culprits, before Protestant judges, being asked, "Do you plead guilty or not guilty?" they have answered, "not guilty," though they were meaning, "it is your business to find out." I have never known such evasions to be reproved from the pulpit in any Protestant church, and this is a case of mental restriction pure and simple. What would Mr. Percival say to it? Let him tell us.

Again a priest is asked about something of which he has knowledge in the confessional, he can answer that he knows nothing about it, that is, nothing that he can tell. A servant says, the gentleman or lady of the house is not at home, meaning not to be seen. I ask, are cases of this kind confined to Catholics alone, or are they ever known amongst Protestants? I ask, is it not necessary that professional men and others should have some way of evading impertinent questions, a straight answer to which would compromise their clients, or injure others, without telling a lie, which is essentially a sin and can't be lawful on any account? This is well understood amongst intelligent and well-bred people. The thing like many others is liable to abuse, but even the abuse is not confined to Catholics.

To prove with what conscientious facility Catholics can lie, deceive and swear falsely, Rev. Mr. Percival says that "the infallible Pope Innocent XI. gives his full sanction to that kind of prevarication in the following proposition *laid down by him*: 'If any, either alone or before others, whether asked or of his own accord, or for the purpose of sport, or for any other object, swears that he has not done something which in reality he has done, by understanding something else, which he has not done, or a different way from that in which he has done it, or any other truth that is added, he does not really lie, nor is he perjured.'" The rev. gentleman has the same proposition after in Latin, and the preamble is:—"Probatum etiam ex damnatione hujus propositi 36 Inno XI. Si quis vel solus," &c. What will be the surprise of your readers who may not have already noticed it to find this very proposition was not *laid down* except to be condemned by Innocent XI., and that it proves the very contrary to what Mr. Percival would conclude. This appears from the words in which the proposition is introduced—*ex damnatione hujus propositi*—which means from the condemnation of this proposition. Such a consummate piece of stupid ignorance it would be hard to find, as to quote a condemned proposition, to prove the very contradictory of what it does prove. And he asks with a flourish, what will your intelligent readers think of this specimen of Catholic moral philosophy—and I ask, what will your readers think of this supine ignorance. He goes on, "if these rules do not form a specimen of the Jesuit system of

mental reservation, I should like to know what they do mean." They do not, and Mr. Percival has already sufficiently demonstrated his own ignorance to show that he is not a competent judge. Perhaps, he says, the renowned champion of Romanism at Thornhill, or some of his assistants, will enlighten your readers on the subject. I have no assistants I need none. On what authority, I ask, does he make that statement? I have asked him before to discuss some of these subjects orally, and he did not accept my challenge. Now I am prepared at any moment, on any platform, without a moment's preparation, to discuss any or all the subjects within the range of Moral or Dogmatic Theology with him. What do you say to that Mr. Percival? He does not state the doctrines of Catholic Theology correctly, on these nor any other matters. It would be an endless task to follow him in all his erroneous statements.

He has been entirely misled by relying on the authority of Pascal and other writers of his stamp. He refers us to Pascal's Provincial letters for an exposition of Catholic morality. He might as well refer us to Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary for an exposition of the morality of the gospel. Pascal was a Jansenist, not a Catholic. The Provincial Letters are witty, but wicked, a tissue of lies, forgeries and misrepresentations from beginning to end, as has been amply proved over and over again. I doubt if ever Mr. Percival read Pascal in the original, but by quoting him in this connection he makes it manifest that he is entirely unacquainted with the literature of modern philosophy.

The original question under discussion was, whether the Catholic Church teaches the doctrine that the end justifies the means. Now we have got over mental restriction, passing over in silent contempt the Bible and other such minor points. Behold how serenely we have been steering. Once upon a time, as an Irish judge was presiding at a case of murder, the person said to have been murdered walked into court, and the jury at once declared the prisoner acquitted. To their utter amazement, however, the judge pronounced sentence of death on the prisoner, saying, "if he did not commit this murder, he stole my grey mare six years ago, and he must hang anyhow." So if the Catholic Church does not teach that the end justifies the means, she has relics, skulls and bones, the wing of an archangel, the *step* of Jacob's ladder, mental restrictions, and several other corruptions and errors, which must go the way of *all false worship*, according to the second commandment as explained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Take care Mr. Percival how you meddle with the alleged errors of Rome, for if they were all reformed too soon not a Presbyterian minister in Canada but would be thrown out of employment inside of one year. With foreordination as a patent right there would no longer be any need of those ravishing discourses on the errors of Rome, which were always sure to draw a crowd to the Presbyterian church.

So far Mr. Percival has not proved a single charge against the church of all that he has made, neither did he retract. Neither has he attempted to refute a single argument of mine. Therefore, every charge that he has not proved after due warning, I look upon as a *lie*, and I look upon as conceded to be cause of Catholic truth every argument that he has not even attempted to refute.

Consequently, when he states that the Catholic Church teaches that the end justifies the means, I put that down as lie No. 1.

He says that the church is opposed to the circulation of the Bible—lie No. 2.

He says that the Pope cursed the Jesuits with bell, book and candle—lie No. 3.

He says that the Pope accused the Jesuits of teaching doctrines at variance with those of the Holy See—lie No. 4.

He says that the Pope charged the Jesuits with having adopted certain idolatrous ceremonies—lie No. 5, &c., &c.

As to the number of lies to be found in his letters their name is legion. He speaks of the citizen of Toronto who was shown two skulls of St. Peter, &c. I have seen myself in Rome, Cicerones who, for the sum of one franc, would show Mr. Percival, or any other Presbyterian minister whom he could stuff with such silly nonsense, a dozen skulls of St.