

Roman Catholics, and secured to them by law, the appointments received by our Clergy do not impose any specific obligation, nor convey any kind of authority, with respect to the religious instruction of such persons.

2. It has been supposed that the 66th Canon which relates to Popish Recusants, imposes a duty of the same kind. But that Canon refers to a state of society, and describes a class of persons, both of which have long ceased to exist. *Recusants* were persons who refused conformity to the established Religion of the country, at a time when, the principles of toleration not being understood, the whole population were by law compellable, under severe penalties, to conform. The Canons of 1603 are still binding, so far as they are now practicable and consistent with the subsequent sanctions of authority; but it must be manifest, even upon a slight inspection of them, that in other points they are obsolete, and have been virtually revoked.

I shall not notice an argument which has been drawn from the commission given by Christ to his Church at large, to preach the Gospel to *every creature*, farther than to point out that this direction to propagate the faith throughout the world, cannot be understood as if every Clergyman were charged with the direct religious instruction of every individual with whom he comes in contact in life. For in how many instances would this be *casting pearls to swine*! and in how many more would it be obstructing, by ill-advised or premature interference, the cause which it would be designed to promote!

Let me not be here thought to repress, or to do otherwise than honor and encourage that zeal which would be *instant in season and out of season*. But if we are to do any thing in this particular behalf, let the *grounds upon which* we are to do it, be first *correctly stated*. In musing upon the subject, I have been more moved to hope for our one day creating a favorable impression upon the Romanists of this country, (if we go wisely to work,) by the single consideration of Deut. VII. 17, 18, than by all the arguments which I have ever heard in recommendation of our taking the field.

Whenever and wherever we do so, I hope it will be more in the spirit of Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont,* than of some other Protestant champions among our neighbours in the United States, who would do well to remember the saying of a very early Christian father †:—

Θράσος καὶ ἀνθαδία καὶ τόλμα, τοῖς κατηραμένοις ὑπο τῷ Θεῷ ἐπίκεια καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνη, καὶ πραύτης παρὰ τοῖς εὐλογημένοις ὑπο τῷ Θεῷ.

In modern times, and with reference to *intercourse* with Roman Catholics, we have an admirable example in the interesting Memoirs of Felix Neff.

* In his work, *The Church of Rome in her primitive purity, compared with the Church of Rome at the present day*. I think, however, that he has made some unwarranted concessions.

† Clemens Romanus, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.