

Wm. Compton, to harrow the feelings of a brother, and in this your committee can very readily join, it would be well to inquire if none have feelings but the *antis*. Had Jones no sensibility, when dragged before an unrelenting tribunal he heard his name associated with *tories*, and at the same time saw himself thrown from the membership of his church; and that too for an act declared by his Judges, to constitute nothing immoral? Had Harris no sensibility, when charged by this self-same man, with turning others from the simplicity of the Gospel? It were useless to follow this subject further—the adage is exemplified, “that we are guilty of what we blame in others.”

“Our brother’s letter has one remarkable passage, the import of which your committee hope he did not intend—the passage is this: “reject me if you think proper and with me the Gospel of Christ.” Your committee, in regard to this part of the letter of the said Rev. Wm. Compton, are persuaded that no reasonable man, can for one moment suppose, that the rejection of any one man amounts to a rejection of the Gospel of our Saviour; if it did, we apprehend that few would be in the pale of that Gospel. Your committee, without commenting on the vanity and self-sufficiency of the man in arrogating to himself so eminent a distinction, will barely remark, that if the rejection, by this Society, of the Rev. W. Compton as a “messenger of peace” to it, places its members in the awful situation of rejecting the council of God against themselves, what is the situation of the man who uses his mission as a means to oppress, and to deprive of communion with his *Maker*, a soul that has been purchased by the blood of the Saviour? Your committee are forced to believe, on a review of the whole matter, that though possibly to some the mission of our brother Compton may be one of peace, yet to this Society, it evidently carries with it, and sent before it, the emblems of war. Something is said in the reply to your resolutions, about the representative departments of the different Societies. Your committee, to this part of it, are at a loss to understand the object of the writer; he boldly avows himself to be on that side of this controversy which denies the semblance of representation from the membership of the church. Your committee are therefore of opinion, that this Society take no steps to inform the said Rev. Wm. Compton of the names of those who voted in affirmative or negative on the passage of the resolutions referred to.

“By your resolutions your course is now decided—from the answer of the Rev. Wm. Compton, his seems to be equally as much so—Your committee, therefore, recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

“Resolved, That this Society deem it inexpedient to make any reply to the letter of the said Rev. Wm. Compton.

“Resolved, That this Society is engaged in a contest involving interests to its members of a class the most important.

“Resolved, That its members will make common cause with each other, and will stand by each other in every emergency.

“Resolved, by the members of this Society individually, That they make no disclosures, no concessions, and no apologies of what, nor for what has been done in Society, for the sake of peace or advantage to themselves and of throwing blame on others, otherwise than may be ordered by the Society itself.

“All of which is respectfully submitted.”

POSTSCRIPT.

A member of the Corresponding Committee, in reference to that part of the foregoing report, which alludes to the conduct of the Rev. W. Compton in the affair of Jones, deems it adviseable to refer the reader to the April No. of the Mutual Rights, for 1827, published in the city of Baltimore, and edited by Dr. Jennings and others, in the correspondence of Ivey Harris and Wm. Compton; by which he can see whether the conduct of the said W. Compton has been misrepresented.

The writer of this acknowledges, that the only vehicle of information to him in relation thereto, has been the correspondence in the publication referred to and a letter of James Hunt, from Gran-

ville, which letter is at this time in the possession of the writer.

The correctness of this correspondence has not been denied by the Rev. W. Compton; so far as the writer knows or believes, it may be considered to contain the real sentiments and to detail the actual conduct of Mr. C. But as it is to be presumed, that this publication will be read by persons that have not seen the publication referred to, the writer will give a brief statement of the facts detailed therein.

Within a short time posterior to the institution of the Granville Union Society, James Hunt, a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was called before a committee of which W. Compton was a member, charged with the common count of inveighing against the discipline of the church, and endeavoring to sow dissension in it. Hunt was acquitted, but was recommended by the committee sitting on his case, to be less urgent in behalf of reform; the inference is plain, that Hunt’s being a Reformer was the “head and front” of his offence—it was on this particular juncture, that the Rev. W. Compton advocated the freedom of speech and the liberty of untrammelled discussion, in as strong terms as his ingenuity could prompt him to. It was however, his fortune to hold a seat in the Quarterly Conference as a local preacher, when the case of Jones came up by appeal, within a short time after Hunt’s acquittal. By some means, not satisfactorily to be accounted for in Mr. C.’s letter to Mr. Harris, we behold the whole man changed; and he urged with all his power an act to be highly criminal in Jones, and to be deserving of the highest penalty the church could inflict, which he justified in Hunt. To account for this discrepancy in the conduct of Mr. C. we must combine the circumstances of the whole transaction and the man’s subsequent conduct, by which we may arrive to some conclusion relative thereto, that seems to have the sanction of human reason.

It does not appear that our minister had, as early as Hunt’s trial, come to the decision of again becoming an itinerant preacher—the same love of power, so apparent in his conduct since that time, may have been the proximate cause of the stand then taken by him; as a local preacher, his only road to distinction was with the Reformers. If ambition was his ruling principle, he perhaps became doubtful, whether in their ranks he could become first among the foremost, and despairing of success, his course to him was a plain one, he must shrink back to his original nothingness, or propitiate the “powers that be” by some appropriate sacrifice, and evince the sincerity of his zeal by some overt act. Changing his original intention, but influenced by the same motive, Jones became a proper victim, and the Quarterly Conference a favored spot to slay him—a place in the itinerancy and a seat in the Annual Conference might afford some charms to his view—in the presence of the Presiding Elder was an excellent situation to exhibit the sincerity of his conversion, and show forth his powers as a partisan—nothing he knew would be lost, he knew he would have a faithful reporter—the death of the Elder was no obstacle—his letter to Mr. Harris was on record, where he claims “title to be an inquisitor” in common with his “brethren of the Conference,” if they deserved the appellation, and claiming the privilege of being involved in the “same righteous condemnation” with these real friends of “old Methodism.”

Mark the result—Roanoke Circuit is given him—a Circuit that had two enclosures, one that it afforded a fair field for slaughter; the other, that it had the ability to pay well. This man has received \$450 and his travelling expences paid him, for one year’s services as an itinerant minister. The writer of this has no seat in the Conference, and cannot speak from the evidence of his senses; but he has it from direct authority, that at the late Conference held for the Circuit at Sampson’s Meeting-house, the minister made use of this language: “When in — Circuit I received \$450, I then had a wife and three children; now I have a wife and four children and am appointed to Roanoke

Circuit, give me what you please.” There can be no mistake here, the intent of the preacher is evident; by being particular in detail and shewing an increase of domestic burden, the committee could but infer that he wished and expected an increase of wages. In these times of difficulty and distress five or six hundred dollars is a fund by which something can be accumulated by speculating on pecuniary embarrassment. The reader is given to understand that our minister has a small farm, is said to be independent in his circumstances, keeps his family at his plantation, and stays with it one week in five. It is well to observe, that since the Quarterly Conference he has stricken off two classes from the plan of his Circuit, the two containing some thirty or forty members, both of them of long standing and pretty much in the centre of his Circuit, for the only ostensible reason, that five or six members of one class and two members of the other, voted for the resolutions heretofore mentioned—unless we suppose, that one member from one of the classes being opposed to his receiving any extraordinary allowance for his family, formed an additional inducement. Men are but men, the garb of a minister makes them neither *lions* nor *lambs*—in all situations of life there should be a salutary check on their conduct, within human control.

The writer of this does not, in that part of the report of the committee of correspondence alluding to the fact of so much freedom of expression being enjoyed by the free people of this Union, without the terrors of a gag-law hanging over them, wish it to be understood, that the committee were of opinion it should be otherwise; the allusion was only made to show with what pains the Methodist Church had enveloped the office of a travelling preacher in the apparel of a superior existence, and had made penal in a high degree words spoken in regard to that order of beings, that have not been made so by the joint virtue and intelligence of these States, in regard to the President himself. The writer of this declares himself to be opposed to putting any restraints on the liberty of the press or the liberty of speech, more than exist at common law; although with a view of preventing the alleged abuse of either, licentiousness being an allow that must necessarily be mixed with liberty, the former can only be destroyed by destroying the latter, it should only be punished where it amounts to an injury, and that injury *real*, not constructive.

But it may be urged, and certainly will be urged, that the Union Society, in its qualified rejection of our minister, assumed an authority to which its members were not entitled:—The rejection was a qualified one, the resolutions required and only required, the reparation of an injury, which the Society considered to have been inflicted on an innocent man; which reparation could be easily accomplished, by the bare recommendation of the minister in Roanoke Circuit to the minister in Tar River Circuit, that Jones and his fellow sufferers were properly qualified to become members of the Methodist Church; which recommendation being made public, would be sufficiently repairing the wrong committed—by a course of this kind, harmony would have been restored between the classes supporting the resolutions and their minister. If Jones was guilty of any offence, and for the commission of that offence deserved punishment, so did we; nothing was charged against Jones but what could be equally charged against us. If our minister thought the conduct of Jones deserved reprobation, he thought so of ours. If he thought our conduct not deserving punishment, he must have concluded he was in an error as regarded the Granville Reformers; and if he had committed a wrong, nothing was easier than a confession of it; and a consciousness of wrong should always be attended with reparation for it. If the Society had pursued a course different from the one adopted by it, jealousy must have constantly existed; and if jealousy existed, all usefulness on the part of the minister is thereby paralyzed. The classes would look upon their preacher as a minister of terror,

with the rod of his vengeance suspended over them; the minister knowing this disposition of his flock, would hardly be disposed to take much trouble on himself in attending to their spiritual welfare. Under such circumstances could he be a minister of peace to them? Is it in the nature of things to suppose, that a rational independent being can kiss the dagger reeking with his brother’s blood? An injury to a man’s social rights demands reparation, for which all well regulated governments have provided. And shall a death blow, aimed at the vitals of man’s moral rights, pass unheeded as the whispers of the breeze? The writer of this looks upon the saying of the old Grecian worthy to be full of sublimity, in which he declared “the government is best in which an insult offered to the meanest individual, is an injury to the whole community.” But he was a heathen and spake of man as a social being only; it has fallen to the lot of men in these times of modern civilization and moral improvement, to find out a thesis too refined to be comprehended by an old Greek idolater. They have discovered that it is totally an error to think a man’s mind and body both should be free; it would constitute too much felicity for his nature to bear, and be utterly at variance with the mandates of the Gospel. To our claim for equality of privileges, to our demand for suffrage, they reply that our system of ecclesiastical policy should be unlike the system of our civil policy, less we conform ourselves to the world. The writer cannot envy the man who believes such a doctrine; he deserves as much pity for the belief of it, as the propagator of it does abhorrence. Carry the doctrine to its legitimate results, and it amounts to this—that in Turkey, in Russia, in France and in Spain, their ecclesiastical government should be totally free, because the civil institutions of all these countries are quite despotic; and that in the United States, in England, and in the Swiss Cantons, the civil institutions being free in a very great measure, their ecclesiastical governments should be despotic; that in one country man should be a freeman and in the other a slave, so far as his *mind* is concerned, less he conform himself to the world. Dr. Bond’s book has something like this notion in it, some of the publications in Baltimore urge it; but surely the Methodist public are not to be hoodwinked by such absurdity.

The writer does not intend to decline the question of right; on the contrary, he joins issue with those who deny it, and asserts in the broadest terms that it is a right which we always have had, possess now, and which cannot be surrendered—it is nothing more nor less than the right of suffrage. Is the claim to executive, judicial and legislative authority, as practically exercised by the itinerant preachers, a right to which they derive title *jure divino*, or to which they claim title by the consent of those over whom it is exercised? If the former, title derived from the Deity can only be taken by, or surrendered to, the Deity; it cannot be taken away by, nor surrendered to man, otherwise than by the express command of the Deity himself; it is as inalienable as the right to live; the creature by no deed however solemnly executed, can surrender the gift emanating from so pure a source. If the itinerants claim title to the exercise of this power, it must be in virtue of their call to preach; and if in virtue of their call to preach, all that are set aside for the ministerial office are entitled to the same power. But the local preachers are so set aside, therefore the local preachers have this authority—the local preachers having this authority in common with the travelling preachers, become thereby joint heirs and tenants in common to the same estate—and each owner is accountable to his co-tenants for any damage done to the estate; the estate being common, whatever is done that touches it can only be legal by receiving common consent, either express or by plain implication. But the local ministers have no seat in Conference, the doors are closed against them, neither have they any representation in it; their consent therefore cannot be express, neither can it be implied, because