

Christians?" I believe the proposition is true, for the following reasons:

1. There is no warrant for the exercise of such power in the oracles of God; and therefore, as Dr. Wylie says, the exercise of such power is "usurpation."

2. All the Scripture testimony produced in my foregoing articles abundantly shows that the primitive church was based upon a different foundation; therefore the exercise of such power is implicitly prohibited in the sacred oracles.

3. If the right be admitted, we must say either that it is possessed by one organized body; and none others are to exercise it afterwards; or that all such organizations have equal authority. If the former be true, then it follows, that the Church of Rome, having first exercised this power, holds it exclusively in her own hands, and we are all bound to submit to her jurisdiction; but if the latter be the position assumed, then the Calvinistic creed, the Arminian creed, and all other conflicting creeds have equal force; and it follows, that the Divine Head of the church sanctions the authoritative establishment of all kinds of doctrinal contradictions.

4. The assumption supposes that human authority can prescribe the conditions of salvation; or in other words, that out of the sectarian church there is no salvation: for it will be admitted, that no church has authority to expel members for any thing else than for such offences as would be sufficient to exclude them from the kingdom of grace and glory; therefore if she may expel them for dissenting from particular articles of her creed, in virtue of its having been established by her General Councils, it follows that said Councils had authority to prescribe the terms on which human salvation shall depend. Thus, one church would have authority to damn a man for being a Calvinist, and another would have equal authority to damn him for being an Arminian. The poor soul must be beat to every point of the compass, it seems: and let him go wherever he may, he meets a power which can expel him from heaven for his heresy: He must be condemned, therefore, no matter what opinions he may adopt. This conclusion can only be evaded by saying, that such expulsion is only expulsion from a sect, and that the expelled person remains in the church of Christ, as a true disciple,

the same as he was before. If this be admitted, it will prove most clearly, that the sects have no christian authority, and that men may be true members of the church of Christ, independently of them all.

For the illustration of this matter, we will state a case: In the periodical entitled "The True Wesleyan," which is the organ of a new sect, who call themselves "Wesleyan Methodists," a plan of church government has been published, in which they propose to leave out of their creed two or three articles of the old Church from which they seceded, and to add two or three other articles. The law of the Old Church is as follows: "What shall be done with those ministers or preachers, who hold and disseminate publicly or privately, doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion? Ans. Let the same process be observed as in cases of gross immorality." Book of Discipline, p. 64. Now if to disseminate publicly or privately doctrines contrary to these articles, be a crime that stands on a par with "gross immorality," it will equally expose persons to the loss of their souls; and of course the seceding brethren, if they did not deserve expulsion before, are adjudged now to deserve it, as much as they would for "gross immorality." Yet it is assumed, that they themselves have equal authority to cast the articles away, as useless lumber, that their fathers had to guard them by such a penalty! And this exercise of conflicting authority, it would seem, is all Methodism—pure Wesleyan Methodism! One branch of the Church of Christ—one order of Methodists—have authority to damn men for the very same thing, for which another order have equal authority to bless and to save them! Almighty God is not the author of such sectarian contradictions. Will the Wesleyan Methodists guard their new modeled creed with a like penalty to that which stands in the statute book of their Mother Church? If they will, let us pray that they may be the last creed-making power that shall ever assemble to the end of the world,—and let all the people say, Amen.

Here the question will present itself. Must we henceforth labor with untiring zeal, to break down all the sects? Just the contrary: this is exactly the process that has been going on for hundreds of years, by the great mother and mistress of