

the unity of Protestant Church government, by the continuance of the Popish institution of Diocesan Episcopacy. Scotland, with (as we think) more wisdom and more courage, established the Church polity generally regarded by the Protestant leaders as most agreeable to Scripture. Even at the present day, the most extensively followed form of Protestant Church government is the Presbyterian. It is maintained by all the Reformed Churches of the European Continent, and by the Waldenses, the most ancient of all the Churches. It claims not only Scotland, but almost half of the Protestant population of Ireland. It is acknowledged to be the most influential Church polity in the United States. And if it has little reputation in England at the present day, it can at least point to those "Westminster Standards," which are followed by all Presbyterians speaking the English language, and which are mainly the productions of great English Divines. The Presbyterian Church lost its once powerful position in England, not from any real lack of adaptation to the English mind, but from political events and arbitrary acts of tyranny, which leave the merits of the system untouched.

We fear not to demand, What system of Church polity has proved itself so independent of national peculiarities as the Presbyterian? Is English Episcopacy, with its glaring anomalies, and helpless Erastianism, likely to prevail anywhere but in English society, or to maintain an ascendancy, if deprived of State favor and support? The polity of Wesleyan Methodism is that of a vast Missionary institute, rather than of a Church. Congregational Independency is a system weak in those very points in which it diverges from the Presbyterian. We see no likelihood of its obtaining anything more than a subordinate influence in Christendom.

For Presbyterianism, as exemplified in any modern Church, we do not claim perfection; but we have a right to say, that, however dear to Scotland's children at home and abroad, it is no mere Scottish peculiarity, but a polity of universal adaptation, needing no Acts of Parliament or decrees of Monarchs to organise and conduct it; and securing everywhere, by the firmest and most tried guarantees, the interests both of Christian order and of Christian liberty. Our Episcopalian friends, in particular, must do a little more than cry, "The Church of God are we," if they would establish the claims of their Church polity to be as ancient, as scriptural, or as Catholic as ours.

II. *That the differences which separate Presbyterian Churches from one another are mere abstractions.* We deplore these separations as sincerely as any; but we deem it neither respectful to our ancestors, nor just to our contemporaries, nor conducive to the restoration of Presbyterian unity, to make light of the grounds on which separations and disruptions have been made. Though we acknowledge that such divisions have been too frequent in the Presbyterian Church, and have injured to a certain extent the reputation of our system, we must also recognise the fact, that, united to a large measure of mere controversial zeal, there has been in almost every case of division a noble and conscientious loyalty to some high truth or principle. The old Scottish Seceders rebelled not