1689 the Convention which declared the throne vacant and called William and Mary to fill it, declared in its Claim of Right that prelacy and the superiority of any office in the church above ministers had been a great and insupportable grievance to Scotland. Effect was given to this; and in April 1690 the act was passed on which the establishment of the Church of Scotland rests, the Westminster Confession being recognized, the laws in favour of Episcopacy repealed, though the Rescissory Act remained on the statute book, and the assembly appointed to meet. The Covenants were not mentioned; at his coronation William had refused to be a persecutor, and he desired that the church should embrace all who were willing to be in it. The Revolution church contained from the first men of different views. Its first assembly in 1690 received into the church the three remaining ministers of the Cameronians, though their followers refused to come with them. With regard to Episco- palian ministers, by whom the majority of parishes were served, there was more difficulty. The Presbyterians were not ready for union with them, and many of them were put out of their livings, ostensibly by way of discipline. The king and his representatives at the assembly pressed hard for their reception, and in 1693 the “ Act for settling the quiet and peace of the Church ” was passed, which provided for their admission on taking the oaths of allegiance and assurance, subscribing the Confession of Faith and acknowledging Presbyterian government. This act fixed the formula of subscription to be signed by all ministers.

From this time forward the church, while jealously asserting her spiritual independence, was on the side of the crown against the Jacobites, and became more and more an orderly and useful ally of the state. In 1697 the Barrier Act was passed, which provides that any act which is to be binding on the church is to come before the assembly as an overture and to be transmitted to presbyteries for their approval. The difficulties which threatened to arise about the union were skilfully avoided; the Act of Security provided that the Confession of Faith and the Presbyterian government should “ continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding ages,” and the first oath taken by Queen Anne at her accession was to preserve it. The Act of Toleration of 1712 allowed Episco- palian dissenters to use the English liturgy. This had not hitherto been done, and the claim of the Episcopalians for this liberty had been the occasion of a bitter controversy. The same parliament restored lay patronage in Scotland, an act against which the church always protested and which was the origin of great troubles.

Presbytery, being loyal to the house of Hanover, while Episco- pacy was Jacobite, was now in enjoyment of the royal favour and was treated as a firm ally of the government. But while the church as a whole was more peaceful, more courtly, more inclined to the friendship of the world than at any former time, it contained two well- marked parties. The Moderate party, which maintained its ascendancy till the beginning of the 19th century, sought to make the working of the church in its different parts as syste- matic and regular as possible, to make the assembly supreme, to enforce on presbyteries respect for its decisions, and to render the judicial procedure of the church as exact and formal as that of the civil courts. The Popular party, regarding the church less from the side of the government, had less sympathy with the progressive movements of the age, and desired greater strictness in discipline. The main subject of dispute arose at first from the exercise of patronage. Presbyteries in various parts of the country were still disposed to disregard the presenta­tions of lay patrons, and to settle the men desired by the people; but legal decisions had shown that if they acted in this way their nominee, while legally minister of the parish, could not claim the stipend. To the risk of such sacrifices the church, led by the Moderate party, refused to expose herself. By the new policy inaugurated by Dr William Robertson (1721-1793), which led to the second secession, the assembly compelled presbyteries to give effect to presentations, and in a long series

of disputed settlements the “ call,” though still held essential to a settlement, was less and less regarded, until it was declared that it was not necessary, and that the church courts were bound to induct any qualified presentee. The substitution of the word “ concurrence ” for “ call ” about 1764 indicates the subsidiary and ornamental light in which the assent of the parishioners was now to be regarded. The church could have given more weight to the wishes of the people; she professed to regard patronage as a grievance, and the annual instructions of the assembly to the commission (the committee representing the assembly till its next meeting) enjoined that body to take advantage of any opportunity which might arise for getting rid of the grievance of patronage, an injunction which was not discontinued till 1784. It is not likely that any change in the law could have been obtained at this period, and dis­regard of the law might have led to an exhausting struggle with the state, as was actually the case at a later period. Still it was in the power of the church to give more weight than she did to the feelings of the people; and her working of the patron­age system drove large numbers from the Establishment. A melancholy catalogue of forced settlements marks the annals of the church from 1749 to 1780, and wherever an unpopular presentee was settled the people quietly left the Establishment and erected a meeting-house. In 1763 there was a great debate in the assembly on the progress of schism, in which the Popular party laid the whole blame at the door of the Moderates, while the Moderates rejoined that patronage and Moderatism had made the church the dignified and powerful institution she had come to be. In 1764 the number of meeting-houses was 120, and in 1773 it had risen to 190. Nor was a conciliatory attitude taken up towards the seceders. The ministers of the Relief desired to remain con­nected with the Establishment, but were not suffered to do so. Those ministers who resigned their parishes to accept calls to Relief congregations, in places where forced settlements had taken place, and who might have been and claimed to be recog­nized as still ministers of the church, were deposed and forbidden to look for any ministerial communion with the clergy of the Establishment. Such was the policy of the Moderate ascendancy, or of Principal Robertson’s administration, on this vital subject. It had the merit of success in so far as it completely established itself in the church. The presbyteries ceased to disregard presentations, and lay patronage came to be regarded as part of the order of things. But the growth of dissent steadily continued and excited alarm from time to time; and it may be questioned whether the peace of the church was not purchased at too high a price. The Moderate period is justly regarded as in some respects the most brilliant in the history of the church. Her clergy included many distinguished Scotsmen, among them Thomas Reid, George Campbell, Adam Ferguson, John Home, Hugh Blair, William Robertson and John Erskine. The labours of these men were not mainly in theology; in religion the age was one not of advance but of rest; they gained for the church a great and widespread respect and influence.

Another salient feature of the Moderate policy was the con- solidation of discipline. It is frequently asserted that discipline was lax at this period and that ministers of scandalous lives were allowed to continue in their charges. It cannot, however, be shown that the leaders of the church at this time sought to procure the miscarriage of justice in dealing with such cases. That some offenders were acquitted on technical grounds is true; it was insisted that in dealing with the character and status of their members the church courts should proceed in as formal and punctilious a manner as civil tribunals, and should recognize the same laws of evidence; in fact, that the same securities should exist in the church as in the state for individual rights and liberties.

The religious state of the Highlands, to which at the period of the Union the Reformation had only very partially pene- trated, occupied the attention of the church during the whole of the 18th century. In 1725 the gift called the “ royal bounty ” was first granted—a subsidy amounting at first to £1000