

CHAP. III.

1559 - 1561.

CONTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNS.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Popes.</i>
Elizabeth.	Francis II. Charles IX.	Philip II.	Sebastian.	Ferdinand I	Paul IV. Pius IV.

THE occupation of the capital by the army of the Congregation, was an event of great importance. It convinced the Queen Regent that all hope of avoiding a civil war was at an end, unless she was prepared to agree to a total alteration of the established religion, —it was equally decisive on the minds of the reformers. In the eye of the law, they had gone too far in resistance to dream of retreat, and considerations of safety urged them to press forward in the work which they had begun. It becomes an interesting inquiry at this moment, what was the exact object which they proposed to themselves, and fortunately we have their own evidence upon the subject. In an original letter from Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange, one of the ablest leaders of the Protestants, written to Sir Henry Percy the day after they entered Edinburgh, he thus speaks, “I received your

letter this last of June, perceiving thereby the doubt and suspicion you stand in for the coming forward of the Congregation, whom I assure you, you need not to have in suspicion, for they mean nothing but reformation of religion, which shortly throughout the realm they will bring to pass, for the Queen and Monsieur D'Osell, with all the Frenchmen, for refuge are retired to Dunbar. The foresaid Congregation came this last of June, by three of the clock to Edinburgh, where they will take order for the maintenance of the true religion and resisting of the King of France, if he sends any force against them.* * The manner of their proceeding in reformation, is this: they pull down all manner of Friaries, and some Abbeys, which willingly receive not the Reformation. As to parish churches, they cleanse them of images and all other monuments of idolatry, and command that no masses be said in them—in place thereof, the Book set forth by godly King Edward is read in the same churches. They have never as yet meddled with a pennyworth of that which pertains to the Church, but presently they will take order throughout all the parts where they dwell, that all the fruits of the abbeys and other churches shall be kept and bestowed upon the faithful ministers, until such time as a further order be taken. Some suppose the Queen, seeing no other remedy, will follow their desires, which is a general reformation throughout the whole realm, conform to the pure word of God, and the Frenchmen to be sent away. If her Grace will do so, they will obey her, and serve her, and annex the

whole revenues of the abbeys to the Crown; if her Grace will not be content with this, they are determined to hear of no agreement.”¹

At the same time that Kirkaldy directed this letter to Percy, with the object of explaining their real intentions, and quieting his fears regarding any hostile designs upon England, Knox addressed the English knight in the name of the whole Congregation. He intreated, that through them a correspondence might be opened betwixt the faithful in both realms. “The troubles of this realm,” says he, “you hear, but the cause to many is not known. Persuade yourself, and assure others, that we mean neither sedition neither yet rebellion against any just and lawful authority, but only the advancement of Christ’s religion, and the liberty of this poor realm. If we can have the one with the other, it will fare better with England; which if we lack, although we mourn and smart, England will not escape without worse trouble.”² Soon after this Kirkaldy had a private meeting with Percy at Norham. The interview took place with the concurrence and under the directions of Cecil, and the Scottish Baron having explained more fully the intentions of the Protestants, returned to them with the grateful intelligence that England was disposed to favour their views, and to enter into a league with

¹ MS. Letter, State P. Off., Sir William Kirkaldy to Sir Henry Percy, backed by Cecil. Edinburgh, 1st July, 1559. Also, Cecil to Throgmorton—Forbes, vol. i. p. 155, and Lingard, vol. vii. p. 311.

² MS. Letter, State P. Off. Knox to Sir Henry Percy, Edinburgh, 1st July, 1559.

them, for the attainment of their designs. The news was received with much exultation, and Grange, in a letter addressed to the English secretary, declares that "all Europe shall know that a league made in the name of God hath another foundation and assurance, than pactions made by man for worldly commodity."¹

There is every reason to believe that these letters contain an honest statement of the views of the Congregation. The establishment of the reformed religion in opposition to the Romish faith, the expulsion of the French troops from Scotland, and the conclusion of a league, offensive and defensive, with Elizabeth, were the great objects which they proposed to themselves. Nor, although they had agreed and acted upon the necessity of pulling down all religious houses which adhered to the ancient faith, were they as deeply inimical to prelacy at this moment as they became not long after. They used the Service-book of King Edward the Sixth,² an extraordinary circumstance when we consider the violent opposition raised by Knox against this same form of Liturgy, only a few years before, at Frankfort. Their hands were clean from any appropriation of ecclesiastical property, and on condition that the Regent gave her consent to a

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Office. Sir William Kirkaldy to Cecil. Edin. 17th July, 1559. Also, St. P. Off. Knox to Cecil, 12th July, 1559. Edin.

² This important fact, which is now set at rest, has been much disputed, and some able writers have come to a contrary conclusion.

