ſelves in behalf of the queen of Scotland; and, in 1574, the misfortunes of his royal miſtrels were farther aggravated by the death of Charles IX. of France, and her uncle the cardinal of Lorraine. The regent, in the mean time, ruled with the moſt despotic ſway. He twice coined baſe money in the name of his ſovereign; and after putting it into circulation the ſecond time, he iſſued orders for its paſſing only for its intrinſic value. The duke of Chatelherault happening to die this year, the regent took every method of ruining all thoſe of his name and family. He committed to priſon all the Hamiltons, and every perſon of diſtinction who had fought for the queen at the battle of Langſide, and compelled them to buy their liberty at an exorbitant price. He inſtigated Douglas of Lochleven to aſſaſſinate lord Arbroath, and it was with difficulty that the latter eſcaped the ambuſh that was laid for him. Reid, the biſhop of Orkney, having left his eſtate to pious and charitable uſes, the regent prohibited the execution of the will, and took upon himſelf the adminiſtration. To be rich was a ſufficient crime to excite his venge­ance. He entered the warehouſes of merchants, and confiſcated their property; and if he wanted a pretence to juſtify his conduct, the judges and lawyers were ready at his call.

In this diſaſtrous period the clergy augmented the general confuſion. Mr Andrew Melvil had lately re­turned from Geneva; and the diſcipline of its aſſembly being conſideredby him as the moſt perfect model of eccleſiaſtical policy, he was infinitely offended with the introduction of Epiſcopacy into Scotland. His learn­ing was conſiderable, and his ſkill in languages was profound. He was fond of diſputation, hot, violent, and pertinacious. The Scottiſh clergy were in a hu­mour to attend to him; and his merit was ſufficient to excite their admiration. Inſtigated by his practices, John Drury, one of the miniſters of Edinburgh, called in queſtion, in a general aſſembly, the lawfulneſs of the biſhops, and the authority of chapters in electing them. Melvil, after commending his zeal and his motion, de­claimed concerning the flouriſhing ſtate of the eſtabliſhment of Geneva; and having recited the opinions of Calvin and Beza upon eccleſiaſtical government, main­tained, that there ſhould be no office-bearers in the church whoſe titles were not ſeen in the book of God. He affirmed, that the term *bishoρ* was nowhere to be found in it in the ſenſe in which it was commonly underſtood, as Chriſt allowed not any ſuperiority among miniſters. He contended that Chriſt was the only lord of his church, and that the miniſters of the word were all equal in degree and power. He urged, that the eſtate of the biſhops, beſide being unlawful, had grown unſeemly with corruptions; and that if they were not removed out of the church, it would fall into decay, and endanger the intereſts of religion. His ſentiments were received with flattering approbation; and though the archbiſhop of Glaſgow, with the biſhops of Dunkeld, Galloway, Brechin, Dumblain, and the Iſles, were preſent in this aſſembly, they ventured not to de­fend their vocation. It was reſolved, that the name of

*biſhop* conferred no diſtinction or rank; that the office was not more honourable than that of the other mi­niſters; and that by the word of God their functions conſiſted in preaching, in adminiſtering the ſacraments, and in exerciſing eccleſiaſtical diſcipline with the con­ſent of the elders. The Epiſcopal eſtate, in the mean­while, was watched with anxious obſervation; and the faults and demerits of every kind, which were found in individuals, were charged upon the order with rudeneſs and aſperity. In a new aſſembly this ſubject was again canvaſſed. It was moved, whether biſhops, as conſtituted in Scotland, had any authority tor their functions from the Scriptures? After long debates, it was thought prudent to avoid an explicit determination of this important queſtion. But a confirmation was be­llowed upon the reſolution of the former aſſembly; and it was eſtabliſhed as a rule, that every biſhop ſhould make choice of a particular church within his dioceſe, and ſhould actually diſcharge the duties of a miniſter.

The regent, diſturbed with theſe proceedings of the brethren, was diſpoſed to amuſe and to deceive them. He ſent a meſſenger to adviſe them not to infringe and disfigure the eſtabliſhed forms; and to admoniſh them, that if their averſion from Epiſcopacy was inſurmountable, it would become them to think of ſome mode of eccleſiaſtical government to which they could adhere with conſtancy. The aſſembly taking the ad­vantage of this meſſage, made a formal intimation to him, that they would diligently frame a laſting plat­form of polity, and ſubmit it to the privy-council. They appointed, accordingly, a committee of the bre­thren for this purpoſe. The buſineſs was too agreeable to be neglected; and in a ſhort time Mr David Lindſay, Mr James Lawſon, and Mr Robert Pont, were deputed to wait upon the regent with a new ſcheme of eccleſiaſtical government. After reminding him, that he had been a notable infiniment in purging the realm of Popery, and begging that he would conſnlt with them upon any of its articles which he thought improper or incomplete, they informed him, that they did not account it to be a perfect work to which nothing could be added, or from which nothing could be taken away; for that they would alter and improve it, as the Al­mighty God might farther reveal his will unto them. The regent, taking from them their ſchedule, replied, that he would appoint certain perſons of the privy-council to confer with them. A conference was even begun upon the ſubject of their new eſtabliſhment; but from his arts, or from the troubles of the times, no advances were made in it.

This year the earl of Bothwel died in Denmark; and in his laſt moments, being ſtung with remorſe, he confeſſed that he had been guilty of the king’s mur­der, revealed the names of the perſons who were his accomplices, and with the moſt ſolemn proteſtations declared the honour and innocence of the queen. His confeſſion was tranſmitted to Elizabeth by the king of Denmark; but was ſuppreſſed by her with an anxi­ous ſolicitude.

The regent ſtill continued his enormities, till having

@@@ (U) Jebb, Vol. II. p. 227. It has never been publiſhed. Keith and other hiſtorians have preſerved what they call *the earl of Bothwel's declaration at his death,* and account it to be genuine. Their partiality for Mary induced them the more eaſily to fall into this miſtake. The paper they give is demonſtratively a forgery; and the want of the real confeſſion, of Rothwel is ſtill a deficiency in our hiſtory.