

II.

PETITION FROM THE INHABITANTS OF SOUTH LEITH, ADDRESSED TO GENERAL MONK, PRAYING HIM TO RESTORE TO THEM THE USE OF THE PARISH CHURCH, *CIRCA* 1655; ILLUSTRATED WITH A SERIES OF EXTRACTS FROM THE KIRK-SESSION RECORDS OF THAT PARISH. BY DAVID LAING, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

After the battle of Dunbar, in September 1650, it is well known that Cromwell took possession of Leith, and the town being strongly fortified, and a cita-

del erected, it continued during the Commonwealth to be one of his chief military garrisons in Scotland, the others being Glasgow, Ayr, Inverness, and the castle of Inverlochy. The circumstance of the Parish Church of South Leith being used by his soldiers for secular purposes is partially noticed in various works, and in particular, in Kincaid's History of Edinburgh, 1787; in Campbell's History of Leith, 1827; in Dr Wilson's Memorials of Edinburgh; and still more recently in Dr D. H. Robertson's Antiquities and Sculptured Stones of Leith, 1851.

The following Petition of the inhabitants addressed to General Monk, to have their church restored to its proper use, has no date, but may be referred to the year 1655 or 1656. It was lately discovered by Mr T. Thomson, one of our members, among the papers of Mr Boswell, formerly of the Lyon Office; and considering it to be a curious document, I had it transcribed for the Society's Topographical Collections.

TO THE REIGHT HON^{BLE} GENERALL MONCK

Commander in Cheife of all the fforges in Scotland

The humble Petitione of the Inhabitants of the parochie of South Leith

SHEWETH

That yo^r petitioners in obedience to ane ordour from Yo^r hon^r to our deputie governour Leiuetenant Collonel Timothie Wilks, did delyver to him the kye of our church doore and haith ever since had our meitting for the worshippe and service of God in the oppine feilds, which by the vnconstancie of the weather haith verie much disturbed the excerceife, befyds many aged and infirme people can not goe foe farre, and such as have young children in there families and can not come to church befoir noone, are now debared from Efternoons Sermons, and many take occasion to goe afrac through the feilds to the great dishonour of God and greife of the godlie.

The grounds moueing Your Honour to emite this ordour as wee humble conceaue was Mr John Hogge his remembring the King in his prayers, as some would alledge, as alsoe the great refort of people to heare him. For fatiffactione, Mr John Hogge doeth not at all mentione the nam of the King, nather intends to doe it in tym coming. And wee propofed a way to our Governour, which will hinder any to com to our meitting, but such as are of the congregacione; by sufferring none to enter into the garifone vpon the Lords day but such as haith a warrand frome the Governour. And we are now making a diligent searck through the towne, taking vp the nams of all such as are leatlle come into the Towne, and haith not the Governour his Licence, whose names wee

are to giene vp to the Governour, that he may dispose of them at his pleasour. Befyds, wee are willing to doe any other thing shall be required for our peaceable leaveing, to giene yo^r Hon^r and the Governour content.

Which being considered wee hope yo^r Hon^r will be pleased to grant our defyre and to restore us to our former Libertie to meit in our church and wee (as in deutie) shall ever pray.

JA : RIDDELL	JAMES SEATONE
J STEVINSONE	HENRY BELL
JAMES KYLL	ALEXANDER DOWNY Younger
JOHNE GRAY	JOHN WILKIE
MAURICE TRENT	WILLIAM RAMSAY
THOMAS LITCHFELD	J MACKON
JOHN YOUNG	G. LAWTRIE
WILL. MURREY	RO. BRUCE
ROBERT TAILZOUR	THO. MILL
ROBERT DEWER	M ^r DA. ALDINSTOUNE
ROBERT BEDFORD	JAMES CARSE
H. BROUN	JA : CRAWFURD.
JAMES THOMSONE	

In some of the works above mentioned, a few extracts relating to this period have been quoted from the Kirk-Session Records of South Leith. With the view of ascertaining the precise date of the Petition, I obtained from the Rev. Dr Stevenson, V.P., the First Minister of the parish, the use of the Kirk-Session Records of that time, and it appears that the parishioners of South Leith had been put to great personal inconvenience in attending upon Divine worship, in consequence of being deprived of their church for a period of nearly six years. I have extracted from the Register the several entries which bear reference to the general affairs of the South Leith congregation during Cromwell's administration, and consider them worthy of the notice of the Society, as they possess more than a mere local interest. The minutes prove that the Church of St Mary's, or the Parish Church of South Leith, had been converted by the English garrison, not, according to tradition, into a stable for their horses, but into a magazine or store-house for ammunition, until the new citadel in North Leith was completed. Various entries in the Register (which I have not copied) containing directions for "building" or erecting seats or pews, in particular parts of the church, for the chief heritors and the different incorporations of the town, lead to the conclusion that the interior of the Church had been treated with very little reverence.

SOUTH LEITH.

Register,
1643-1660.
p. 521.

There was no Session holddine from the 7 of Julie 1650 untill the 26 of December 1651, be reafone of the great troubles and warre betwixt Scotland and England. The Scots Armie lying in leigour in Leith and about it; and efter the defeat at Dumbar, the Minifters and most part of all the honest people fled out the Town for fear of theemie.

23 *November* 1651.

P. 521.

The which day was the first day that Mr John Weir our pastor (immediately efter his returning home) did conveye the scattered Congregatione of South Leith together (being the Lords day) and preached to them in the Caitehall at the foot of the Cannongaite.

11 *April* 1652.

P. 524.

The which day (being the Lord's day) Mr George Lesly did preach (being defyred be the Presbyterie) and efter fermon did mak intimatiōne to the Congregatione of South Leith that Mr John Weir was to be transported from the South Church of Leith and Restalrig unto the Church of Borthwick, &c.

23 *May* 1652.

Ib.

It is thought expedient that the Presbyterie and Sessione should represent to My Lord Balmerinock the distressed conditione of our kirk and people for setting of a Minister there for the scattered congregatione. Also, that Mr David Aldinfoune thare Clerk should constantlie attend the Presbyterie every Presbyterie day to have ane to preach to the said scattered congregatione every Lords day till it fall please God to fetle there ane actual Minister.

28 *November* 1652.

P. 526.

The which day (etter incalling upon God) there was a meeting of the Sessione and neighbours of the whole parioch of South Léith and Restalrig, efter the efternoones fermone (being appoynted be the Presbyterie) and Mr George Lesly did moderat at the defyr of the Presbyterie, who did intimat to the said meeting That it was the will of the Presbyterie to signifie unto them, That there should be ane established Minister (for the interim) at Restalrig in the Landwart part of the parioch till it fall please God to let them have the South Church of Leith agane as formerly (which is now in the power of the Inglishe,) and that it should be no wayes prejudiciall to the Towne of Leith whenever it shall be in its owne capacitie for establishing of a minifterie there as it was in former tymes.

The neighbours of Leith rendered the Presbyterie many thanks for the cair they had of them, &c. P. 527.

P. 523.

19th January 1653.

[A formall call agreed upon, to call Mr John Hogg from the Church of the Canongait to the Church of South Leith and Restalrig.]

P. 533.

At Restalrig the 28 of Julie 1653.

The which day Mr Robert Lourie preached at Restalrig (being the ordinar place of meitting at sermons for the tyme) and admitted Mr John Hogg to be our Minister at the South kirk of Leith and Restalrig, and was receavit be the Seffione and neighbours; and efter fermon the Presbyterie fat at Restalrig at the Presbyteriall meitting, &c.

Ib.

21 August 1653.

The which day (efter incalling upon God) the Seffione and some of the neighbours mett (Mr John Hogg moderater) who did speik and confidder of the estait and effairs of our Church, but no thing was concludid upon till further

P. 544.

15 June 1654.

The said day, These of the Seffione within the Towne of Leith did all unanimo conclude that the week dayes fermone sould be within the Towne of Leith in tymes coming quhair it aught and sould bee, feing libertie is granted thairto. But Sir Hary Nisbit and William Purves gentlemen heritors within the barrony of Restalrig for themselves and in name of the rest of the heritours and those of the Seffion within the said barrony did give in a protestation in the contrair, quhair of the tenor follows:

The protestation is signed by JOHN LORD COWFER.

SIR HARY NISBIT.

WILLIAM PURVES.

[It is followed by a "contrar protestation, by James Stevinsoun our Church Thesaurer," in name and behalf of the whole Session—and also by all the elders, deacons, and inhabitants within the town of Leith.]

P. 548.

Lykewayes our Reverend pastor Mr John Hogg did protest that his going into Leith to preach aither week day or Lords day sould in no wayes be præjudicial to him in any part of his stipend, gleib, manse, or any uther benefice pertaining to the Personage of Restalrig, nather to be præjudicial to his successeurs in any poynt. And declared that he is most willing to preach at Leith because it is the ordinar place appoynted quhar the whole parochiners of South Leith and Restalrig haith these many years, yea almost these hundreth yeares, mett to the publick worship of God.

Ib.

22 of June 1654.

The which day Mr Johne Hogg did preach at Leith which was the first

day of preaching there since the 3 of September 1650; but there was no Session, and the preaching was in the Tolbuith.

17 August 1654.

P. 551.

The which day, it was condescendit unanimously by all those of the Session within the Towne of Leith (but not by those of the landwart part of the paroch) That Mr John Hog our pastor would preach heir in Leith in the New Hospital upon the next Lords day, seing libertie is granted by those who hath the power in their hands, least (if he doe not preach and tak present possessione) he be not permitted efterward. But Mr John Hogg our pastor earnestlie desyred that the Session might continue for a day till the Presbyteries advyce might be sought therein. But the Session being infant with him moved him to condescend to preach here in the New Hospital the next Lord's day afternoon, provyding he and the people be suffered to come in betwixt sermons to the Towne: Quherupon the Session promised to be at the Presbyterie the next Wedensday both to give in their reasons of the premises, and to excuse the said Mr John our pastor at the Presbyteries hands, seing he is unwilling to preach their before he have the Presbyteries advyce.

7 September 1654.

P. 553.

Mr Woodcock being sent by the Deput Governour Timothie Wilks to the Session, desyred that everie Elder and Deacone fould go throw their severall quarters to tak up a list of the poor therein; and to mett with the Deputie upon Saturday next at Two hours efter noone.

5 October 1654.

P. 555.

William Ramsay, [and] William Murray are appoynted, with Mr David Aldinftoune, [by the] Session, to visit Wm. Purves and John Fiddes there compt the time the preaching was in the Tower of the Abbay, and in Restalrig, and to report ane answer to the Session.

26 October 1654.

Ib.

The which day, &c. Mr John Hog, James Riddell, James Stevinstone, Antonie Roswell, and William Ramsay are desyred to go to the Controller and Mr Newball, for removeing of the Traine out of the Kirk.

James Kyll and Thomas Banks are appoynted to speak with Mr Hagins [in the margin, Haigins—probably Christopher Higgins the printer, who carried on business at Leith as printer to the Commonwealth] for his removing out of the Hofpital.

P. 556.

Every Elder and Deacon are appoynted to go throw their severall quarters to visit, and to try who are new incomers in their quarters, and who hes and who

Ib.

wants Testimonials, and to try concerning anie scandalous perfoncs, and to give in a nott of their names, that order may be taken with them.

P. 556. Vpon the 13th day of November 1654, being the Lords day The preaching began agane to be in our Church.

Praises to our Lord for ever.

P. 557.

16 November 1654.

James Riddill and Anthonie Rosewell are defyred to go to the Presbyterie to defyr a meitting of the Presbyterie to be heir in our Church for visitatione thereof befor that any feats be built in the Church.

Ib.

24 November 1654.

The which day there was a vifitation of our Church.

Sederunt—Mr Mungo Lawe Moderator, Mr Robert Dowglas, Mr John Smith, Mr George Leslie, Mr Robert Trail, Mr William Dalgleish, and Mr Robert Dalgleish.

The Presbyterie promised to return to our Sessione the double of what is done this day to be infert in this our Register.

[No such minute has been recorded.]

P. 570.

2 May 1655.

The which day Maior Pearson Town Maior of this Garifon cam to James Stevinsone our present Thesaurer (by order of Timothie Wilks Governour Deput) and requyred the kyes of our Church door from us saying, the Deputie would not suffer any Scots Minister to preach there till farder order.

P. 572.

30 of May 1655.

The which day efter incalling upon God, Mr John Hog Moderator, There was a meitting of the Sessione and Neighbours.

First, It is appoynted to drawe up Two petitions: 1. ane to the Deputie Governour; the uther the Commander in Cheif to supplicat their Honors that they may give us the ufe of our Kirk agane.

Mr John Hogg our pastor, James Stevinsone, &c. are appoynted to go to the Governour Deput to speak with his Honor, concerning the Skipperis yll be east the pulpit, That the contraverfie betwixt the Skipperis and the Gentlemen trafekquers may be taken away.

19 *Julie* 1655.

P. 574.

The which day it was appoynted, that ane petitione fould be drawne up and to present it to the Deputie Governour and remanent Officers and Commanders within the Garifon, and to give it in when they are sitting at ane Court Martiall, concerning the restoring of our Kirk to us agane.

James Riddill, James Stevinsone, James Kyll, William Ramfay, and William Murray for this effect are to speek with the Commanders.

2 *Aguß* 1655.

P. 575.

James Riddill and James Kyll are defyred to speek with the Deputie Governour to see if his Honour would be pleased to caus the Port be open upon the Lords day betwixt ij [xi] hours in the forenoon, until 2 hours in the efternoon for outgoing and incoming of the people to Sermone in the Links.

30 *Aguß* 1655.

P. 577.

Mr John Hogg, Mr Rosewell, Ja. Riddill, Ja. Stevinsone, Ja. Kyll are defyred to speek with Mr Desborow concerning our Kirk.

Mr Rosewell is defyred to present the paper of Annexation of Restalrig to Leith Church to the Presbyterie to be infert and regiftrat in the Presbyterie booke.

13 *September* 1655.

Ib.

Mr Rosewell reported that the Presbyterie refused to infert and regiftrat in their book the Ticket of Annexation of Restalrig to the South Church of Leith, but he thinks to gett it regiftrat in some uther books.

20 *September* 1655.

P. 578.

Mr Hewgo M'Kell, Mr George Lesly, Mr Thomas Garvie, and Mr Peter Blair cam to the Seffion this day and consulted with the Seffione concerning a Petition to be drawne up and to be given in to the Council of Estait concerning our Kirk.

1 *November* 1655.

P. 580.

The which day it was condescendit that a Petition be drawne up to be sent to the Lord Protector to supplicat his Heighnes for our Church and to seek Mr Andrew Gilmuir his advyce heirin and to returne ane answer betwixt and Saturday nixt, as also to seek the Towne of Edinburgh their concurrence therewith, and in the meantyme the preaching to be in Restalrig for a tyme.

Mr John Hogg is defyred to speek Mr William Hay concerning the annexing of Pilrig to the South Kirk of Leith.

P. 581.

15 November 1655.

Ordaines a meitting of the Sessione and Neighboures to be upon Saturday nixt.

1b.

17 November 1655.

The which day there was a meitting of the Sessione and Neighbours, and all did agree unanimously to subferive the petition which was drawne up be Mr John Hogg our pastor that is to be sent to the Lord Protector for our Church.

1b.

17 December 1655.

It was this day condescendit that the Petitione drawne up be Mr John Hogg our pastor sould be written over again *in mundo*, and subferivit with all expedition, and sent away, To supplicat his Heighnesse the Lord Protector for our Church.

Mr John Hogg is desyred to speak with Mr Charles Lumbifdane Clerk to the Presbyterie of Edinburgh, that he infert and registrat in the Presbyterie books The Proteftation which was given in be the Inhabitants of the towne of Leith against the Landward part of the paroch concerning preaching and keeping Sessione at Restalrig, &c.

P. 586.

13 March 1656.

It is unanimously condescended and concluded that our Petitione sould be sent up to England to the Lord Protector concerning our Kirk, That it would please his Heighnesse to caufe restore it to us again. That we may convey in it for the worship of God, seeing we have no place to meitt in but in the open fields.

Also to writ to Colonell Fenwick Governor of Leith, who for the present is at Londone, that his Honour would be affistant thereunto.

P. 595.

19 June 1656.

This day the Marquife of Argyll writ ane letter from England to our Sessione wherin (our Petition that was sent up to his Heighnes the Lord Protector for our Kirk was inclosed with a reference upon the back therof to the Honorable Counfell of Stait in Scotland superscribed by his Heighnes, wherof the tenor followeth.

[This, however, is not inserted, a blank space being left by the Clerk; but its purport appears from the following minute.]

P. 596.

26 of June 1656.

Anthonie Rosewell, James Cutler, and John Young tailor are desyred to go to the North Kirk Sessione of Leith, to intimat unto them That the Counfell of Stait in Scotland, efter the fight of ane Reference (from his Heighnes the Lord

Protector) hath appoynted the South Congregatione of Leith to have the use of the North Kirk to preach in for a tym untill the Magazin be removed from the South paroch unto the North paroch unto the Citideal, at which tym the South Congregation are to be restored to their owne South Kirk agane, God willing.

3 July 1656.

P. 597.

Mr John Hogg our pastor declared this day that there will be a visitatione of our kirk upon Wednesfday nixt.

Mr John Hogg is defyrred to go to the Governour to receive the kyes of the North Kirk, and the keyes of the seats therein, William Ramsfey (& 3 others) are appoynted to go with him this day at 2 afternoon.

The Sessione of South Leith are content and consents, that if so be the North Parish can obtain licence of the Counsell of Eftait to preach in the North Kirk, the Session will be gladly content, as the Session and they can aggree.

Upon the 9 of Julie 1656, there was a Vistatione of our Kirk by the Presbyterie.

10th Julie 1656.

P. 598.

Upon the 10th of Julie we began to preach in the North Kirk.

The which 10 of Julie 1656, it was condescended unanimoullie be the whole Sessione who wer present, That our acceptatione of the North Kirk from the Honourable Counsell of Eftat (for a tyme) shall not be prejudicial to our Minister, to our South Paroch, or to the Landwart part of the paroch.

17 Julie 1656.

P. 599.

It was ordained this day, that every familie in Restalrig, Craigend, and in the rest of the Landwart part of the paroch have a writtin tickit in parchment subferivit be the Minister, which tickit they must shew to the guard at Edinburgh port when they com in to fermon upon the Lords day.

[A proposal to have a Second Minister—the Four Corporations of Trafficquers, Skippers, Maltmen, and Traids, by some of their number, on the 24 July expressed their willingness, “that Master John Hogg our present Minister should have ane helper, and a colegue in the ministerie of the Gospell;” and that some young men be desired to preach, as candidates.]

On the 20th of September, James Stevenfon late Treasurer delivered to his successer in office the Silver work which appertained to the Session (consisting of two silver basins, with the fyve cups, and silver laver, &c.)

P. 606.

On the 2d October Mr George Kintor, elected Second Minister.

P. 625.

2 April 1657.

Mr John Hogg, Robert Sandilands, James Riddell & Anthonie Rosewell are desyred to go presentlie efter the Sessione, to speek with the Governour for our Kirk.

[Mr George Kintor his Edict—read from the pulpit—efter the forenoones sermon, by Mr John Hogg, 17 May 1657, and ordered to be admitted on Friday come 8 days, for the 11 of June. Three persons named, are appoynted to speak their severall incorporations for a denner to the brethren of the Presbyterie at the said admiffion.]

P. 632.

19 June 1657.

The which day, being Fryday, Mr George Kintor was admitted to be Minister and fellow helper at the South Kirk of Leith, by the Reverend Brethren of the Presbyterie of Edinburgh.—The brethren who were present at the said Admiffion, were Mr Hew M'Kell, who preached, Mr David Dickfone, Mr Robert Douglas, Mr John Smyth, Mr James Hamiltoune, Mr Mungo Law, Mr Robert Lourie, Mr William Dagleife, Mr John Knox, Mr James Nairne, Mr Charles Lumbifdan, Mr Alexander Livingstone, Mr John Charteris, Mr Robert Hunter, Mr James Reid, Mr Peter Blair, and Mr David Reddie.

1b. Our South Kirk of Leith was restored to us agane upon the 30 of June 1657.