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. GENERALL MONCK
Commander in Cheife of all the forces in Scotland

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

SHEWBTH
That your petitioners in obedience to ane ordour from Yo’ hon’ 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 worhippe and service of God in the oppine fields, which by the vnconftancie of the weather haith verie much disturbed the exercize, belyds many aged and infirme people can not goe soe farre, and such as have young children in there families and can not come to church befoir noone, are now debared frome Afternoons Sermons, and many take occaion to goe atray through the fields to the great dishonour of God and greife of the godlie.

The grounds moueing Your Honour to emite this ordour as wee humblie conceaue was Mr John Hogge his remembring the King in his prayers, as some would alledge, as aloke the great refort of people to heare him. For satisfactions, Mr John Hogge doeth not at all mentione the nam of the King, nather intends to doe it in tym coming. And wee proposed a way to our Governour, which will hinder any to com to our meitting, but such as are of the congregatioue; 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 search through the towne, taking vp the nams of all such as are leatlie come into the Towne, and haith not the Governour his Licence, whose names wee
are to give up to the Governor, that he may dispose of them at his pleasure. Besides, we are willing to do any other thing shall be required for our peaceable leaving, to give your Honour and the Governor content.

Which being considered we hope your Honour will be pleased to grant our desire and to restore us to our former liberty to meet in our church and we (as in duty) shall ever pray.

Ja : RIDDELL
J Stevinson
James Kyll
John Gray
Maurice Trent
Thomas Litchfield
John Young
Will Murray
Robert Tailzour
Robert Dewer
Robert Bedford
H. Brown
James Thomson
James Seatone
Henry Bell
Alexander Down Younger
John Wilkie
William Ramsay
J Mackie
G. Lawrie
Ro. Bruce
Tho. Mill
Mr Da. Aldinstoune
James Carse
Ja : Crawfurd.

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.
There was no session holding from the 7th of July 1650 until the 26th of December 1651, because of the great troubles and war between Scotland and England. The Scots Army lying in leisure in Leith and about it; and after the defeat at Dumbar, the Ministers and most part of all the honest people fled out the Town for fear of the enemy.

23 November 1651.

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

11 April 1652.

The which day (being the Lord's day) Mr. George Lefly did preach (being desired by the Presbytery) and after sermon did make intimation to the Congregation 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.

It is thought expedient that the Presbytery and Session should represent to My Lord Balmerino the distressed condition of our kirk and people for settling of a Minister there for the scattered congregation. Also, that Mr. David Aldinstone there Clerk should constantly attend the Presbytery every Presbytery day to have one to preach to the said scattered congregation every Lords day till it fall please God to settle there an actual Minister.

28 November 1652.

The which day (after incalling upon God) there was a meeting of the Session and neighbours of the whole parish of South Leith and Restalrig, after the afternoones sermon (being appointed by the Presbytery) and Mr. George Lefly did moderate at the desyr of the Presbytery, who did intimat to the said meeting That it was the will of the Presbytery to signifie unto them, That there should be an established Minister (for the interim) at Restalrig in the Landwart part of the parish till it fall please God to let them have the South Church of Leith again as formerly (which is now in the power of the English), and that it should be no ways prejudicial to the Towne of Leith whenever it shall be in its owne capacity for establishing of a minister there as it was in former times.

The neighbours of Leith rendered the Presbytery many thanks for the care they had of them, &c.
P. 528.

19th January 1653.

[A formall call agreed upon, to call Mr John Hog from the Church of the Can-
nongait to the Church of South Leith and Reftalrig.]

P. 533.

At Reftalrig the 28 of July 1653.

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

P. 544.

15 June 1654.

The said day, These of the Seffione within the Towne of Leith did all unani-
mously conclude that the week dayes sermons fould be within the Towne of
Leith in tymes coming quhair it aught and fould bee, feing libertie is granted
thairto. But Sir Hary Nisbit and William Purves gentlemen heritors within
the barony of Reftalrig for themselves and in name of the rest of the heritoures
and those of the Seffion within the said barony did give in a protestation in the
contrair, quhairof the tenor follows:

The protestation is signed by John Lord Cowper.
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 paftor Mr John Hogg did protest that his going into
Leith to preach either week day or Lords day fould in no wayes be prejudicial
to him in any part of his stipend, gleib, manse, or any uther benefice pertaining
to the Personage of Reftalrig, nather to be prejudicial to his successeurs in any
poyn. And declared that he is most willing to preach at Leith becaus it is the
ordinar place appoynted quhar the whole parochiners of South Leith and Ref-
talrig haith these many years, yea almost these hundredth yeares, mett to the
publick worshipe of God.

22 of June 1654.

The which day Mr John 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.

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 nixt Lords day, seing libertie is granted by those who hath the power in their hands, leaft (if he doe not preach and tak present possessione) he be not permitted afterward. But Mr John Hogg our pastor earneftlie defyred that the Session might continue for a day till the Presbyteries advyce might be sought therin. But the Session being instant with him moved him to condescend to preach here in the New Hospital the next Lord's day afternoone, provyding he and the people be suffered to come in betwixt sermones to the Towne: Quherupon the Session promifed to be at the Presbyterie the nixt Wednesday both to give in their reaones 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.

Mr Woodcock being sent by the Deput Governour Timothie Wilks to the Session, defyred that everie Elder and Deacone should go throw their severall quarters to tak up a lift of the poor therin; and to meett with the Deputie upon Saturday next at Two hours after noone.

5 October 1654.

William Ramfay, [and] William Murray are appoynted, with Mr David Aldinhoune, [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 Refalrig, and to report ane answere to the Session.

26 October 1654.

The which day, &c. Mr John Hog, James Riddell, James Stevinfone, Antonie Rofwell, and William Ramfay are defyred to go to the Controller and Mr Newball, for removing of the Traine out of the Kirk.

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

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

P. 556. Upon 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 defyr to go to the Presbyterie to defyr a meeting of the Presbyterie to be heir in our Church for visitatione thereof before that any seats be built in the Church.

Ib. 24 November 1654.

The which day there was a visitation 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 Session the double of what is done this day to be inserted in this our Register.

[No such minute has been recorded.]

P. 570. 2 May 1655.

The which day Maior Pearfon Town Maior of this Garifon cam to James Stevinfone our present Thesaurer (by order of Timothie Wilks Governor Deput) and required the kyes of our Church door from us saying, the Deputie would not suffer any Scots Minifter to preach there till further order.

P. 572. 30 of May 1655.

The which day after incalling upon God, Mr John Hog Moderator, There was a meeting of the Session and Neighbours.

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

Mr John Hogg our paftor, James Stevinfone, &c. are appointed to go to the Governor Deput to speake with his Honor, concerning the Skipperisyll be caft the pulpit, That the controversy betwixt the Skipperis and the Gentlemen trafficqueurs may be taken away.
The which day it was appoynted, that ane petitione fould be drawne up and to prefent 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 reforning 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 Agulis 1655.

James Riddill and James Kyll are defyred to speek with the Deputie Governour to fee 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 afternoon for outgoing and incoming of the people to Sermonie in the Links.

30 Agulis 1655.

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

Mr Rosewell is defyred to prefent the paper of Annexation of Reftalrig to Leith Church to the Presbyterie to be infert and registrat in the Presbyterie booke.

13 September 1655.

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

20 September 1655.

Mr Hewgo M'Kell, Mr George Lefly, 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 Councill of Eftait concerning our Kirk.

1 November 1655.

The which day it was condefcendit that a Petition be drawne up to be sent to the Lord Protector to fupplicate his Heighnes for our Church and to feek Mr Andrew Gilmuir his advyce heirin and to returne ane anfwer betwixt and Saturday nixt, as also to feek the Towne of Edinburgh their concurrence therwith, and in the meantyme the preaching to be in Reftalrig for a tyme.

Mr John Hogg is defyred to speek Mr William Hay concerning the annexing of Pilrig to the South Kirk of Leith.
15 November 1655.
Ordaines a metting of the Seffion and Neighbours to be upon Saturday nixt.

17 November 1655.
The which day there was a metting of the Seffione and Neighbours, and all did agree unanimously to subscribe the petition which was drawne up be Mr John Hogg our pastor that is to be sent to the Lord Protector for our Church.

17 December 1655.
It was this day condescendit that the Petitione drawne up be Mr John Hogg our pastorould be written over again in mando, and subscri vit with all expedi tion, and sent away, To supplicat his Heighneffe the Lord Protector for our Church.

Mr John Hogg is defyred to speack with Mr Charles Lumbidane Clerk to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, that he insert and registrat in the Presbytery books The Profeffation which was given in be the Inhabitants of the towne of Leith against the Landward part of the paroch concerning preaching and keep ing Seffione at Restalrig, &c.

13 March 1656.
It is unanimously condenced and concluded that our Petitioneould be sent up to England to the Lord Protector concerning our Kirk, That it would please his Heighneffe to cause restore it to us again. That we may conven in it for the worship of God, seeing we have no place to meitt in but in the open fields.

Alfo to write to Colonell Fenwick Governor of Leith, who for the present is at Londone, that his Honour would be affitant thereunto.

19 June 1656.
This day the Marquife of Argyll writ ane letter from England to our Seffione wherein (our Petition that was sent up to his Heighnes the Lord Protector for our Kirk was inclofed with a reference upon the back therof to the Honorable Counfell of Sait in Scotland supercibed 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.]

26 of June 1656.
Anthonie Rosewell, James Cutler, and John Young tailor are defyred to go to the North Kirk Seffion of Leith, to intimat unto them That the Counfell of Sait in Scotland, after the fight of ane Reference (from his Heighnes the Lord
ANTTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND.

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 Cityial, at which tym the South Congregation are to be restored to their owne South Kirk agane, God willing.

3 July 1656.

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

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

The Seffione of South Leith are content and contents, that if so be the North Parish can obtain licence of the Counsell of Eftait to preach in the North Kirk, the Seffion will be gladly content, as the Seffion and they can aggrie.

Upon the 9 of Julie 1656, there was a Visitacione of our Kirk by the Presbytery.

10th Julie 1656.

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

The which 10 of Julie 1656, it was condenced unanimouslie be the whole Seffione who wer present, That our acceptatione of the North Kirk from the Honourable Counsell of Eftat (for a tym) shall not be prejudicial to our Minifter, to our South Paroch, or to the Landwart part of the paroch.

17 Julie 1656.

It was ordained this day, that every familie in Reftalrig, Craigend, and in the rest of the Landwart part of the paroch have a writtin ticket in parchment subscribit be the Minifter, which ticket they muft shew to the guard at Edinbourgh port when they com in to fermon upon the Lords day.

[A propofal to have a Second Minifter—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 Minifter should have ane helper, and a coleague in the ministerie of the Gospel;” “and that some young men be.desired to preach, as candidates.

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

On the 2d October Mr George Kintor, elected Second Minifter.
2 April 1657.

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

[Mr George Kintor his Edict—read from the pulpit—after 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 speek their several incorporations for a denner to the brethren of the Presbyterie at the said admission.]

19 June 1657.

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

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