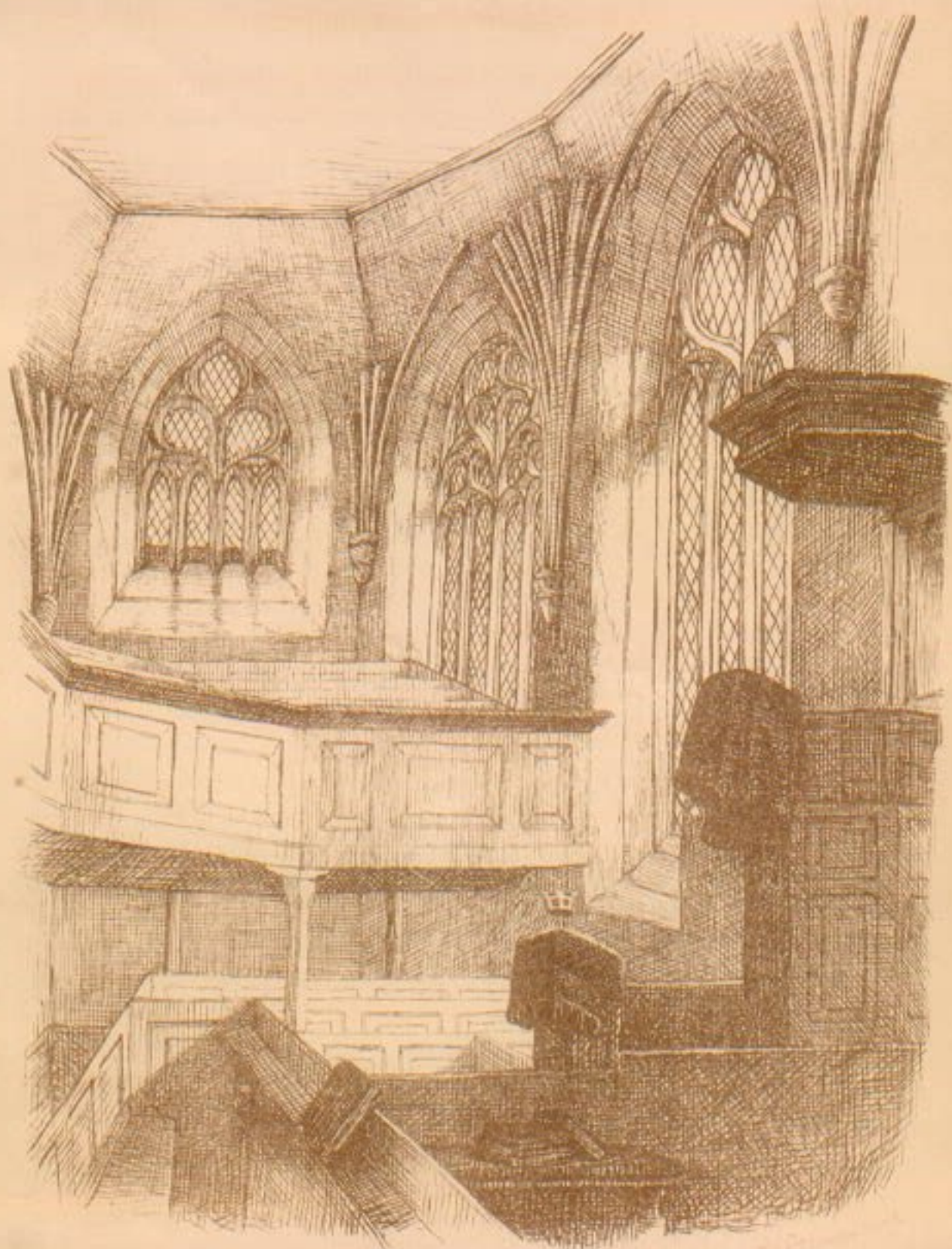


I.

NOTICE OF A DEED BY WHICH SIR JAMES SANDILANDS OF CALDER, KNIGHT, BINDS HIMSELF AND HIS HEIR TO COMPLETE THE VESTRY, AND TO BUILD THE NAVE, STEEPLE, AND PORCH OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF MID-CALDER. By JOSEPH ROBERTSON, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

Few of the larger Scottish churches of the century immediately preceding the Reformation appear ever to have been finished; but the parish church of Mid-Calder stands conspicuously incomplete even among the imperfect buildings of its style and age. The nave was never begun; and, as will be seen from the accompanying sketch of the interior by Mr James Drummond, R.S.A. (Plate XVIII.), the choir was abruptly stopped, when the walls had reached the point for turning the arch of the groined roof by which it was to be spanned. The writing which I beg to lay before the Society will enable us so far to understand both how the work was left thus half done, and what it would have been if the design of its founder had been accomplished.

The church was a well-endowed parsonage in the gift of the lord of the manor. From the Earls of Fife, from whom it had its old name of Earl's Calder, the manor passed to the Douglasses; and from the Douglasses, about the middle of the fourteenth century, it came, as the



INTERIOR OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF MIDCALDER

marriage dowry of a niece of the Good Sir James, to the knightly house of Sandilands. Early in the sixteenth century the rectory is found in the possession of Master Peter Sandilands, a younger son of the sixth Knight of Calder. It is to this ecclesiastic that we owe the present church of Mid-Calder. He had raised the walls of the vestry, and laid the foundations of the choir before the year 1542. But he was then an aged man; and seeing, it would appear, that there was little likelihood of himself living to finish the building, he made arrangements for its being completed by his nephew and grand-nephew, Sir James Sandilands of Calder, and John his son and heir. These arrangements were embodied in a formal bond engrossed in the public records, from which I have transcribed it:—

“Be it kend till all menn be thir present lettres me James Sandelandis of Calder knycht and Johnne Sandelandis fear of Calder my sone and apperand air Forsamekle as ane venerabill clerk Maister Petir Sandelandis my fader bruder and persoun of Calder hes riallie and with effect deliuerit to ws the saidis James and Johnne the sovme of xvj hundrethe merkis gude and vsuale money of the realme Heirfor we bind and obllissis ws coniunctlie and seueralie and the airis successouris and executouris of ws and ilkane of ws renunciand the benifites of divisioun to the said Maister Petir his airis executouris and assignais that we sall do and fulfill all and sindry the pounctis following within the tyme vnder specifit That is to say to big and compleit the revestrie of the paroche kirk of Caldor with ane walter tabill at the heich that it is now vnder the thak inlikewise with ane wthir walter tabill abone the thak on the est gauill of the queir weill pendit in half round to the said queir vnder the said tabill inlikeuse weill thekit with thak stane And sall rais abone the said tabill in the est gauill of the queir and abone the turnegres and the tabill thairof tua lichtis als fair as thai may be had efferand to the heicht of the queir And abone the walter tabill abone the thak of the revestre and thre penis thairof to ryse cunteranis of buttreis vpoune the said eist gauill and thre penis thairof And the remanent of the said queir tobe endit of the lenthe and widenes as it is foundit and in heicht fra the sollis of the said queir duris to the vuer part of the walter tabill vnder the thak thairof xxxij futtis And the

south thre lychtis in the sydevall of the said queir betuix the foure buttreis to ryse as thai ar foundit als heich as thai may be had in the pend of the said queir efferand to the heich foirsaid And the saidis buttereis tobe compleit endit as thai ar now foundit And the north turnegres in the west pairt of the north sydevall thairof tobe tane away And the said north vall to ryse xvj futtis of heicht as it is foundit rouch werk with corbell and walter tabill on the vther pairt thairof for ane closter and fra thine vp effeirand to the heicht of the said queir aislar werk And the said queir tobe compleitlie pendit with croce brace and rinruif conforme to Sanct Anthonis Yle in Sanct Gëlis Kirk And at the west end of the said queir forgane the south west buttreis to rais ane substantious wall of rouch werk sevin fut of breid fra ilk sydewall with ane brace to be raisit tharein als heych as it may be had to serue the west gavil of the queir with hewin oggeruris And abone the said brace in the forsaid west gavill sulyeis tobe laid and ane stepil tobe raisit tharepoun viij futis of breid and lenth or vj futis braid and xij futis lenth within the sidewallis of the said stepill quhilk sidewallis salbe of vj futis of heich abone the queir thak at all partys with lychtis at all partis for the sound of the bellis in the said stepill to be persit for the orlage hand and bell in place maist ganand and convenient tharto And in the northe angell betuix the foresaid wall vnder the grete brace and northe wall of the kirk syd to rais ane commodious turngreis to serue the rud'loft of the said kirk and stepill foresaid als esaly as it may be had Item to big ane kirk on the west pair[t] of the said queir nixt the said brace contenand in lenthe iiiij^{xx} of futis and xxviij futis braid within the wallis respectiue of rouche werk And the wallis thairof to be foure futis thik and xxvj futis heych fra the sole of the durris to the vuir part of the watter tabill of the syd wallis with foure buttreis one ilk syd of the said kirk eslar werk efferand to the queir and four lycht to be biggit in the southsyd wall of the said kirk of x futis of wydnes and als heych as thai may be had squair lintalit efferand to the said heicht And in the southe wall of the said kirk betuix the twa buttreis to be biggit ane honest dur with ane plain proche with sege stabill on ilk syd thikyt with thak stane and ane honest dur in the west gavill of the said kirk with ane lycht abone the samen in myd gavill xij futis of breid rysand of heich in poynthead als heich as it may be had efferand

to the heycht of the gavill with sufficient mygallis in all the lychtis of the said kirk and queir with plane substantious cornettis of stane or irne quhilk salbe thoct maist gainand in the lychtis raisit of poyntcast And to put in ilk lycht of the wyndoys grete lokartis of irne for binding of glas thareto And inlikuiss to put grete crukis in the said kirk durrys as efferis And the said haill kirk to be pendyt and weill thekyt with thak stane and the watter tabill of the sidewallis of the said kirk and queir to be larg of sulye betuix buttreis and buttereis and in ane caisment hevin for leid to be lad thairin to schout the watter by the wyndowis of the said kirk and queir to the angellis next the buttreis And ilk buttere of the foirsaid kirk and queir to haif ane honeste fall And the alter of the queir to be biggit of aislar werk and the haill queir to be weill pathit with greis befoir the said alter and vther wayis as efferis with tua halie wattir fattis weill hewin to the said kirk and queir And the foirsaidis kirk and queir to be biggit and completit in maner foirsaid That is to say the said queir within the space of thre yeris nixt efter the dait herof And the said kirk within the space of vthair thre yeris nixt and immediatlie thairefter Attoure I the foirsaid Johnne fear of the saidis landis of the barony of Caldor bindis and obliassis me with consent of my said fayther franktenementar thairof to the said Maister Peter his airis and executouris to gif incontinent ane annuell rent of xx merkis money of the realme to ane chaiplane to be namit be him and to the saidis chaiplanis successouris for doing of mess and devyne seruice within the said kirk and at the hie alter thairof to be tane vp be thame of the saidis haill landis and barony of Caldor and mylnis thairof at Witsounday and Martymes in winter be evin portionis perpetuallye in tyme to cum Efter the forme and tennour of the erectioun and fundatioun to be maid be the said Maister Peter thairupone Quhilk chaiplane salbe removabill be him for his tyme allanerlie And to mak sufficient charter and infetment to the said chaiplane and his successouris thairupon of the said annuell rent to the effect foirsaid in dew forme as efferis. And for fulfilling of all and sindry thir premissis in maner abone expremyt we James Dundas of that Ilk and Johnne Cokburne of Ormestoune bindis and obliassis ws coniunctlie and seueralie cautionaris and souerteis to the said Maister Peter for the said James and Johnne his sone And for fulfilling of all and sindrie the premissis and every poynt thareof I the foresaid James

Sandelands and Johnne my sone and we the forsaidis James Dundas and Johnne Cokburne bindis and oblissis ws and ilkane of ws our aris successouris and executouris coniauctlie and seueralie renunceand the benefite of devisioun to the said Maister Peter his airis and executouris And for the mair securite ar content that this our present band and obligation be registrat in the bukis of the Lordes of Counsale havand the strenthe of thair decrete with executorialis thairupoun in dew forme as efferis And als in the Officialis bukis of Loudeane and we monest to fulfill the samen vnder the panis of cursing Subscriuit with our handis at Edinburgh the penult day of Januar the yeir of God j^m v^c xlj yeris befor thir witnes Maister Robert Galbrath persoun of Spot Maister Johne Skrymgeour of the Myris Freir Andro Carnys wardane of the Gray Freirs of Edinburgh Paule Dischintoun sone and apperand air to Williame Dischintoun of Ardros with vtheris diuers

JOHNE COKBURNE
JAMES DUNDAS of that Ilk

JAMES SANDELANDIS
JOHNE SANDELANDIS"

Master Peter Sandilands died before the year 1548, when the well-known John Spottiswoode, afterwards Superintendent of Lothian, was presented to the parsonage of Calder. The Knight of Calder, on whom the obligation to complete the church rested in the first instance, became, not long afterwards, an early and distinguished disciple of that Reformation which was, for a time, to bring all church-building to a stand. It was by him that the "First Oration and Petition of the Protestants of Scotland" was presented to the Queen-Regent, in the year 1558. Two years earlier, his house of Calder was the frequent abode of Knox, who there taught the Reformed doctrines to Murray, Erskine, and Argyle. His son was one of the companions of George Wishart when that reformer was taken prisoner, before being committed to the flames, in 1546. Of the two sureties in the bond, one, Cockburn of Ormiston, was conspicuous as among the first and most zealous converts to the Reformed faith. It was in his house that Wishart was seized.

The plan of the parson of Calder, in 1542, was for a choir of two bays, with a three-sided apsidal termination, on which a vestry abutted on the east; a low square or oblong central tower, with clock and bells; and a nave of four bays, seven feet longer and five feet broader than the choir.



EXTERIOR OF THE CHOIR OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF MIDCALDER
from the South East.

Both choir and nave were to have groined roofs, and to be covered with stone. There were to be four buttresses on either side of the nave, as well as on the south side of the choir, all of ashlar, and surmounted by finials. The walls of the nave were to be of rubble, as well as the lower part of the north wall of the choir, against which, it would seem, some sort of enclosure was to be raised. There was to be a turret with a newel stair leading to the rood-loft and belfry, in the north angle between the central tower and the choir. There were to be three pointed windows in the south wall of the choir; four flat-lintelled windows, each ten feet wide, in the south wall of the nave; a pointed window, twelve feet wide, in the west gable of the nave, and two windows in the east gable of the choir, above the vestry. All the windows were to have mullions, with lockets of iron to which the glass might be fastened. The pointed windows were to have "cornettis" of stone or of iron, as might be found most convenient. There was to be a door with a plain porch between two of the buttresses on the south side of the nave, the porch having fixed seats on either side, and a stone roof. There was to be another door under the window in the west gable of the nave. Both nave and choir were to have water tables, or weather mouldings, resting on corbels, and channelled with lead, to carry off the water from the roof. The choir was to be well paved, with steps leading to the altar, which was to be of ashlar stone. There were to be two holy water stoups, one in the nave and one in the choir.

Of this plan, so far as can now be discovered, scarcely a half was executed. The walls of the vestry and choir were built, but the latter never received its vaulted roof. For two small windows in its east gable above the vestry, one large light was substituted. If the buttresses were crowned with the large finials, so characteristic of that age, no trace of them is now to be found. The top of the tower is comparatively modern, leaving us room to doubt whether or not this part of the church had been completed. Not even the foundations of the nave were laid. The vestry, I should add, has long been used as the burying-place of the Lords of Torphichen. Two pinnacles, showing traces of early *renaissance*, spring from its external angles, one of them bearing a legend commemorative of the founder—*PETRVS FECIT : NE CORRIVAM.*¹

¹ The accompanying view of the exterior of the choir, from the south-east (Plate