

LETTER
TO THE
CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
WORSHIPPING IN THE
Congregational Church, Saltaire
FROM THE
REV. DAVID R. COWAN
INCLUDING HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH
TITUS SALT, ESQ,
RESPECTING HIS MINISTRY AT SALTAIRE, AND ITS TERMINATION.

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TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
WORSHIPPING IN THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SALTAIRE

DEAR FRIENDS,

It was my earnest desire and purpose to have moved away from the district, without troubling you with any account of the circumstances which led me to resign my charge; but the attempt to misrepresent these, and to damage my character and ministerial reputation, has been, and still continues to be, so persistent, that I feel reluctantly compelled to put the whole case before you. Its appearance in pamphlet (sic) form has been determined upon in consequence of an attempt to deprive Mr. Salt's correspondence with myself to all point and force by the newspaper authorities, as a condition to its insertion; and also by a most unwarrantable attack made upon me at the district meeting of the Yorkshire Home Missionary Society, held at Allerton, on Tuesday, Feb. 26, 1877, when an attempt was made to cast a stigma upon my character in my absence, and to prevent me from being retained upon the list of accredited Congregational Ministers. Mark you – without having made a charge against me, and without giving me the opportunity of defending myself, it was deemed becoming to ask the meeting to withhold its sanction to my name being sent up to the General Meeting of the Union. So pronounced was this attack, that a leading Minister, in speaking of it, said he thought he had got into a "*Minister's Slaughter-house*." Perhaps it was the fear of being slaughtered that kept so many ministers dumb on the occasion, forgetting that those who could act such a part towards me, will not show any more pity towards them when their time for being similarly dealt with comes. If, however, ministers and churches (to use the elegant expression of one of these men of influence) are thus to be "sat upon," without being brought before judge or jury, whenever they happen to differ in opinion, or take a different course of action from such men, then it will not be difficult to predict what their future will be.

I am told that a good deal of capital is being made now, out of my resolution to connect myself with another denomination of Christians. Need I assure you that it has been no easy task for me to do so, and that nothing but the conviction, after an extensive observation and an eighteen years' ministerial experience, that Congregationalism lacks the elements of cohesion and stability, and the means of dealing with misunderstandings and disputes, which Presbyterianism supplies, could have led me to take this step. The want of a proper and unbiased tribunal to which Church disputes can be taken is a tremendous one. If we had possessed such a tribunal, where rich and poor, minister and people alike, could have had a fair

hearing, and where any decision arrived at would have carried with it authority, our case would never have arisen. As things are with Congregationalists pretty generally, one many may take the place of the whole Church; or a few may become (though not nominally, yet virtually) the rulers of the entire congregation. The treatment I have lately received – the manner in which the affairs of the Church have been managed, and the want of an impartial tribunal for the settlement of cases like my own, have been largely instrumental in driving me from the denomination to which I have belonged for so many years. I know that many will try to make light of these things, but I am convinced also that not a few are longing for such protection as Presbyterianism affords; and the more it becomes known and understood, the more will peace-loving people seek in connection with it a Spiritual home. I have no misgivings whatever as to the propriety of the step I have taken; and, heedless of all the misrepresentations of my enemies, I know I shall have the privilege amongst those I have joined of preaching, as heretofore, the grand old Gospel of the Grace of God; nay, I hope to do *this* far more efficiently and comfortably when sheltered by Presbyterian protection.

The considerations referred to, as I have said, determined the form in which this letter should appear, but the publication of Mr. Titus Salt's letter addressed to the Church, on 6th December, 1876, rendered its appearance, with all his previous correspondence, absolutely necessary. His letter, as many of you know, was so adroitly managed on the evening it was read to the Church, that I was not permitted to read it for myself, the person in charge of it refusing to give it up (though it had become the Church's property) on the ground that Mr. Salt had given him strict injunctions to return it to himself. It is only since its publication, therefore, that I have become thoroughly acquainted with its contents, and they are so one-sided, contradictory, and misleading, that I cannot allow them either to remain unchallenged, or the preceding correspondence to be kept longer out of view. That I might not take Mr. Salt by surprise, and at the same time that I might afford him an opportunity for preventing the publication of private correspondence if he chose, I sent him the following letter:-

SALTAIRE, 23rd Feb., 1877.

TITUS SALT, Esq.

Dear Sir, -Feeling that you have broken faith with myself and the Church over which I was Pastor, by publishing the letter which appeared in the *Shipleigh and Saltaire Times* on 17th inst., which gives a very one-sided view of the matters referred to, I now write to say that I have prepared the whole of our correspondence for publication next week. I feel exceedingly sorry to have to do so in self-defence, but the publication of

your letter to the Church seems to leave me no alternative. I feel, however, it would be undignified on my part to do so without giving you notice; though you did not condescend to act thus towards myself.- I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

DAVID R. COWAN.

P.S. – Since the foregoing note was written, Mr. Kennedy has made known to me your wish for an interview. I could not answer him at the time, but in thinking over the matter since, it appears to me that there is only one honourable ground upon which this is possible, or on which the publication of the correspondence can be prevented, viz. – by apologising in the paper in which your letter appeared for its publication. If you should wish to communicate with me, a letter enclosed to my son, New College, Oxford, will find me. If I don't hear from you by Monday evening, I shall conclude that matters are to take their course.

D.R.C.

The following reply to my letter was received in due course, which, so far from preventing, increased the necessity for the publication of the correspondence:-

SALTAIRE, BRADFORD, Feb. 24, 1877.

Dear Sir, - In reply to your letter for yesterday's date. I had no alternative but to publish my letter addressed to the Church, after the remarks made at your testimonial meeting respecting the part I took in bringing about your resignation. I have certainly no objection to the publication of our correspondence, *if you are advised that its publication will in any respect justify you in your recent extraordinary conduct*; but I do *object and protest* against my *private letters* being published in the *Bradford Tory Paper*. I have never written a line in that paper, and it is too bad to drag me into its columns. You have my consent to publish the correspondence that has passed between us in reference to your resignation, in the *ShIPLEY Times*, in which paper my letter appeared. I certainly have no apology to make; if any apology be needed, it is I who should demand one. You seem to be under the impression that I am doing all I can to injure you; and I am extremely sorry that I cannot disabuse your mind of any such feeling. I have done all I possible could since you settled in Saltaire to help you in your work, and I have scarcely ever refused you anything you have asked. Because, unfortunately, it feel to my lot to have to tell you facts connected to the condition of the

Church here, you immediately turned round and said all the cruel things you possibly could about me. I must confess that I did not expect my repeated acts of kindness to be requited in this matter. All I did was done with every intention of kindly feeling and consideration; and I regret that I have been misunderstood. I hope that when you come to consider the matter more calmly, you will see that I have been your real friend throughout, and am so still. – I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

TITUS SALT.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

To this letter I sent the following answer:-

SALTAIRE, 7th March, 1877.

TITUS SALT, Esq.

Dear Sir, - I found your letter of Feb. 24, at Oxford, when I called on my way home, but I have been too unwell since, to give it any attention until now. Though an answer is unnecessary, yet I deem it respectful to send a few lines, as you have obviously misunderstood my object in writing. The publication of the letter you sent to the Church, I hold to be sufficient justification for the publication of the whole correspondence, without your permission; and as you chose your own medium of publicity, I must claim the liberty of doing the same. Moreover, as your friends deemed the *Chronicle* a proper paper for the commencement of the controversy, I can see no reason for terminating it anywhere else. The question to be decided is not one of politics, but justice; and the facts necessary for this may be published and read in one paper as well as in another. I cannot, therefore, disturb the arrangement previously made. Indeed, but for the representation made to me of your desire to terminate the controversy and come to some more friendly understanding, I would not have waited for a reply. Being unprepared to make even so small a concession as an expression of regret for writing and publishing a letter designed to injure my character and reputation as a Minister, I cannot conceive what object you could have had in view in seeking for an interview at all; unless you imagined that all concession was to be made on one side. Such an expression of regret would have removed the necessity for publishing the correspondence, the absence of it renders its publication absolutely necessary.

I may add that I am at a loss to know which of my spoken things you deem *cruel*, and what part of my *recent conduct* you deem *extraordinary*. I am conscious of having

done more to defend and uphold the reputation of yourself and family in the district than you will ever know; and my *recent*, like my *previous* conduct, can stand investigation in the light of day. It is at least doubtful whether those now so forward in trying to defame me would be able to possess a like well-grounded consciousness of innocence, if their sifting time was come.

I am equally perplexed by your declaration of friendship. Doubtless you have persuaded yourself to believe it, or you would not have said it; but judging by the way you have treated me during the last few months, the conviction is forced upon me, that you must be labouring under a great delusion.

If it be the part of a true friend to give advice to another to seek a change of sphere, he should certainly give him time to do so. In less than two months, however, for the time the advice was given, said friend also gave notice of his intention (as far as was in his power) to stop the supplies. You may say that you did this as by friend; but can you expect me to believe it?

If it be a proof of friendship to receive accusations against a friend (either from *ladies* or *others*) without bringing the accusers and the accused face to face, then your friendship is unmistakable.

If it be a proof of friendship to do everything in one's power to deprive a Minister of his reputation – prevent him from receiving any honour or help his friends may wish to give him, and, by means I need not characterise, to pry into his private affairs; then I must acknowledge you to be my friend. Talk about a future of calm reflection upon such things revealing to me your kindness *throughout* and *now* – may Heaven forbid the illusion! A greater kindness to me, were it possible, would be to erase them for ever from my memory. Doubtless there will be a future to us both for calm reflection, when self-complacency must vanish, and justice and righteousness reign; but, God knows, such things as I have alluded to will afford little comfort for such a period.

A word also as to the way in which you say I have requited your *repeated acts of kindness*. If by word or deed I have seemed ungrateful for any kindness I have received, I feel truly sorry. At the same time, candour demands that I should say, that even if they had been repeated a thousand times more frequently than they had been, they would have been too small, as a price, at which to sell my freedom and independence.

Referring once more to your *repeated acts of kindness*, allow me to say that it would be esteemed a personal favour if you would condescend to particulars. You will save me much trouble by doing so. My friends cannot understand whether you mean acts of kindness to the people *through me*, or acts of kindness to myself and family. The latter, of course, is presumed to be your meaning, and the inference drawn is – that we must have been frequently receiving gifts at your hands; and they are amazed when the catalogue is produced. I can hardly imagine, however, that this is your meaning; but greater explicitness would prevent mistakes. From your *unrequited kindness* my mind naturally turns to unrequited labours; aye, and many kindnesses too! If I were to mention all the works done outside my own particular sphere in the interests of Saltaire, without even the feeblest expression of thanks from those at whose instance, some of them at least, were done, I might also produce a considerable list; but even to refer to this seems a humiliation to me. Still, be this as it may, rest assured the sowings of the last few months will be followed by a reaping time, and, however, others may persuade you to the contrary, this episode in your history will not, I fear, be without its dark shadow. Hoping to be able to attend to the publication of the correspondence tomorrow, -I remain, yours truly,

DAVID R. COWAN.

When the above letter was sent to Mr. Salt, I had every reason to believe that the correspondence would appear in the *Chronicle* on the following Friday, but to my surprise I found difficulties had arisen in connection with its insertion in that journal. At length, however, after several days' hindrance, permission was given to publish the letters without any introduction or interspersed remarks of my own, leaving such to be embodied in a letter to follow after. To these terms I could not agree, and hence the delay which has taken place.

The publication of the letters, I again repeat, is most painful to me, but I have been left no alternative, as Mr. Salt's private letter to the Church has not only been published, but many copies of the paper in which it appeared have been posted to ministers and others in the district, with a view to injure my character, which is too valuable to me to allow it to be taken away without an effort to retain it.

For the better understanding of the case, I shall here transcribe Mr. Salt's letters, which appeared in the *Shipley and Saltaire Times*, of 17th February, 1877:-

TO THE EDITOR, SHIPLEY AND SALTIRE TIMES.

SIR, -I suppose there can be no mistaking the impression which was sought to be conveyed at the Rev. D. R. Cowan's Testimonial Meeting on Saturday last, when reference was made to the influence which had been used to bring about Mr. Cowan's removal from Saltaire.

The subjoined letter, which I addressed to the Church meeting held on December 6th of last year, in order to correct certain misrepresentations which even then prevailed, may be of use, now that grave charges have in public meeting been insinuated against myself.

To the position I therein take up I have since strictly adhered, and I am sorry that the reckless statements made by some of the speakers on Saturday, render it necessary for me to publish a communication which was written expressly for a meeting of the church.

It may be well to add, with reference to the absence of the Mayor –which at Saturday's meeting was attributed “to the interference of the Salt family” –that I am willing to take any responsibility of my action in that matter. I arrived from London at midnight on Wednesday, and knew nothing of the proposed meeting until the following morning, when I saw the Mayor's name so prominently displayed on the immense bill, which to my knowledge had been printed under Mr. Cowan's instructions and from his own handwriting. I left a copy of this bill at the Town Clerk's office in Bradford, along with a letter addressed to myself from Mr. Morrell, but not written with any intention of being shown to the Mayor, and which I should not have left had the Mayor been in the Town Hall when I called; and suggested that he make enquiries on the spot, as to the genuineness of the demonstration. My object was certainly not “to rob the meeting of the honour” of the Mayor's presence, but simply to prevent Bradford's Chief Magistrate being unknowingly dragged into what is in reality a church dispute. –I am, &c.,

SALTAIRE, Feb. 16, 1877.

TITUS SALT

[COPY.]

SALTAIRE, BRADFORD, Dec. 5, 1876.

To the Members of the Saltaire Congregational Church assembled in meeting on Wednesday, December 6, 1876.

DEAR FRIENDS, -I hear from various sources that my name is being freely dragged into the discussion which has arisen in the church, upon matters connected with the minister. I feel it due to myself, as well as to you, to put you in possession of the facts of the case, as far as I am personally concerned, so as to correct the misrepresentations that have been set afloat in reference to myself.

I would gladly have been with you to-night and explained personally my connection with the question at issue, but I have for some years refrained from taking any active part in church matters in Saltaire, for reasons that I need not here explain, but which are quite sufficient to me. I decided to act upon this rule after mature deliberation, and it is one I still think holds good, and which I intend to carry out. My wish is, and always has been, that you should conduct the affairs of the church in a perfectly free and independent manner.

A report is in circulation –and I understand to a great extent believed –that I have asked Mr. Cowan to resign the pastorate. I can give this report a most distinct denial. Such a request would have been great presumption on my part, and I certainly should not be guilty of placing myself in such a false position. I have certainly had a conversation with Mr. Cowan on the subject, and I will take this opportunity of saying that if I am to be the only man in the congregation whose tongue is to be tied, and who must not speak to the minister upon matters which have come to my knowledge, I must most certainly decline to remain connected with the church. As Mr. Cowan does not deny the report referred to, I am compelled to come forward to speak on my own behalf. I hope it may not prove, as I fear it may, that he himself has spread that report.

I may at this stage say that what I have now to report was done *entirely* upon my own responsibility, and without any instigation on the part of any of the deacons; this latter, I understand, is another absurd report afloat. The deacons had not, at the time, the slightest knowledge of what I intended to do.

Let me now take you back, for a moment, to the time when the church decided to invite Mr. Cowan to become its pastor in 1869. At that time, as some of you will remember, there was not perfect unanimity amongst the members of the church, as to the invitation proposed to be given to Mr. Cowan, and the decision of the church led to a “departure” on the part of a few friends. I remember very well at the time giving it as my opinion that the people of Saltaire should themselves select their minister, and that if they were satisfied with their choice, the object my father had in view in building the church was best fulfilled, and that, under the circumstances, I should support the

people's choice. I hope some of you will remember what I then said, and the sacrifices I then made; and looking back on the last six or seven years will acquit me of any disloyalty to the people's minister. Mr. Cowan himself can tell you how I have always been willing to help forward any good work he may have had in hand; and I can assure you all, that during the whole time he has been in Saltaire, he has received nothing but kindness at my hands.

Soon after Mr. Cowan settled amongst us, both Mrs. Salt and myself felt that his preaching was completely out of harmony with our desires; we thought, however, that the people generally were satisfied, and we therefore agreed to submit, and to do all that lay in our power to assist the minister in his work. This resolution, formed some seven years ago, I can most emphatically assert, has been carried out to the present time, notwithstanding feelings of a personal nature which already existed. Several members of the congregation mentioned to me, as far back as 1870, in confidence, their dissatisfaction with Mr. Cowan's preaching, and I have had, from that time to the present, repeated complaints on the subject.

I cannot tell why I became the recipient of these complaints; however, they were mentioned to me in confidence, and I could only hear what was said, and smooth things over as best I could.

I find that the feeling that has been smouldering in the minds of a few of us for years, has at least become more general. I can conscientiously say that I have not raised so much as my little finger to bring about this result. I have had, however, the most unequivocal evidence that a very strong feeling exists in the congregation on the subject. The matter was brought to a climax a few weeks ago, when Mr. Cowan preached a sermon that so disgusted some ladies in the congregation that I was told immediately afterwards by several considerable subscribers to our church funds, that unless something was done, and that soon, they must withdraw from attending the church services. I had no help for it; I only too deeply sympathised with them in their objections; and as I saw how serious matters would become if this second "departure" took place, and knowing as I did how large it would be, I resolved, after careful consideration, to see Mr. Cowan and tell him of the feeling that existed. It was necessarily a very painful duty for me to perform, but I felt it was a duty that devolved upon me; and I thought it was –and I am of the same opinion still –the kindest thing I could do to meet Mr. Cowan in a manly, straightforward manner, and to tell him in a brotherly way what I believed to be the facts of the case. I distinctly stated at our

interview, that if I were mistaken in my estimate of the dissatisfaction existing in the congregation, I was quite willing, as far as I myself was concerned, to allow matters to continue as usual; that I did not wish any personal feeling on my part to interfere with his work here –it has not done so in the past, and it need not have done so in the future. I told him, further, that after calling his most careful attention to the subject, I should decline to do anything further, leaving the question of taking any action entirely in his hands. I advised him most strongly to consult with the deacons, hear all they had to say, and to report as to the extent of the feeling to which I have referred; and I further advised him, that if he found on inquiry, that I had not exaggerated the extent and power of that feeling, he would be in duty bound, in the interests of the church, to give an early intimation of his intended resignation, so as to avoid what I have seen to be a danger ahead for sometime past –a split in the church.

This has been the “head and front of my offending,” and I appeal to the members of the church, whether, under the peculiar circumstances, I did not take the right course in acting as I did. Had I only been met in the same Christian spirit in which I acted, things might have been amicably arranged; and if it had been proved necessary to bring about a change, the change might have been effected in a manner befitting a Christian body, with credit to all concerned. Mr. Cowan’s services might have been retained, if the church so desired; or he might have severed his connection with us in a manner befitting his long and arduous services in our midst, in which latter case he would, I doubt not, have received some substantial recompense, as a tribute to his work in Saltaire.

There is nothing, in my opinion, so contrary to all our Christian instincts, and so damaging to us as a religious community, as strife in our midst; and I do hope that we shall all strive, in our special spheres, to prevent such a calamity happening. Should the church divide on this question, it may take years before we can again have unity amongst us.

I wish once for all to state that I shall decline to be drawn into any correspondence or quarrel. If it comes to a division in the church, my mind is quite made up; I shall hold aloof from either side, and withdraw my subscriptions to the church funds until matters are amicably settled. –I am, dear friends, yours sincerely,

TITUS SALT, Jr.

The above letter I shall not attempt to characterise, nor waste space on a lengthy refutation of it. If you will compare the paragraphs in the first half of the letter, with those in the second, you will be rewarded by seeing how unconsciously he, in large measure, answers himself; and if you will read it in the light of the following correspondence you will have no difficulty in deciding as to the merits of the case. It may be well, however, just to notice, in passing, the following points in the letter:-

1st. He says –“My wish is, and always has been, that you should conduct the affairs of the Church in a perfectly free and independent manner.” Need I say to you who know all the circumstances of the place, as well as of the Church, that the thing is impossible and that by his persistent interference in the present case –not by his speaking to me in a brotherly way as he would have you to believe –he has proved this. It is impossible to disguise the fact that his influence is as much felt in the Church when he is absent as when he is present, his mind being previously ascertained on all matters of importance.

2nd. Mr Salt complains also of a report having been circulated to the effect that he had asked the Minister to resign, as he truly says “such a request would have been a great presumption on my part.” Moreover, he insinuates that the Minister may have helped to circulate it. He forgot, when he did so, that the Minister’s life had been at least as pure, and his word as reliable, as his own, and that he had no temptation to, or object to gain, by the fabrication of a story of the kind. Whatever, therefore, I did say, was, and still is, as worthy of credence as the utterances of Mr. Salt. But I have never said either yea or nay in the matter. What I have said, and say now with double emphasis, is, that I believe the whole intent of all Mr. Salt has said and written respecting this matter was with a view to that end; and no unbiassed (sic) mind can read the above, or his following letters, without having this amply borne out. Unquestionably, therefore, he has placed himself in the false position he disavows.

3rd. Mr. Salt further tells us that he made great sacrifices in yielding to your wishes of your choice of a minister in 1869. That you may see how this matter was represented to me at the time, I shall introduce the correspondence by the letters which were the sent to me. Kindly read them and note how differently I was informed. If Mr Salt is speaking the truth now, either he must have misled you at the time, or the writer of the letter misled me by what he wrote. In all this talk about what *he* said, did, and suffered, you cannot fail to notice that there is the assumption of a position which is at variance with the idea of equality in the Church of Christ, and proves that the free and independent action of which he speaks can only exist in name.

4th. Another serious charge brought against me I the above letter is couched in the following words:-“Soon after Mr. Cowan settled amongst us, both Mrs. Salt and myself felt that his reaching was completely out of harmony with our desires.” This is very sad indeed! What their desires were, however, they have never told me. Whether they had regard to spiritualism, science, philosophy, religion, or politics, I was not informed. How unkind to keep me in the dark for so long respecting an unwritten creed which was to have so much to do with their own comfort and my future. After all, perhaps, it is well that Mr. Salt was silent, as I had a conscientious regard to the doctrinal requirements of the Trust Deed, and had sworn allegiance to a Master much greater than himself, and had resolved as far as possible to have my preaching in harmony with *His desires*. This is what you, as a Church, invited me to do, and I tried to do it.

5th. Mr Salt further says –“I cannot tell why I became the recipient of these complaints;” and again, “I find that the feeling that has been smouldering in the minds of *a few of us for years* has at last become more general.” Whatever difficulty Mr. Salt may have in knowing why he became the recipient of complaints, no other person in the district, I feel persuaded, will share in it –it must be obvious to all of you. Moreover, you cannot fail to see in what state of mind he yielded to your choice of a Minister, according to his present account. It was with a smouldering feeling of dissatisfaction. Need we marvel at what has taken place in such circumstances? It is indeed astonishing to me that, notwithstanding all the aristocratic fanning and feeding given to this smouldering feeling, few, comparatively, of the congregation had become smitten by it up to the time of my resignation. The wonder to myself has been, that, with so much influence and power to keep the feeling alive, so very few converts were made; all the talk about its having become general, as you know, was the expression of a wish, *not of a fact*.

6th. Another indictment brought against me by Mr. Salt, in his own chaste and elegant phraseology, is, that I preached a sermon which *disgusted some of the ladies in the Congregation*. If Mr. Salt had only thought about what he was writing, he would not have exposed *his lady friends* to this ridicule which such a remark is likely to inspire. I shall not attempt to characterise their conduct nor expose their ignorance; but, that the people may have an opportunity of judging for themselves as to the nature of the sermon, it will be my pleasure to re-deliver it in the neighbourhood, if I can find an opportunity for doing so; when it will be seen that there are living in our days, as there were in those of our Master, those who “strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.”

7th. I need hardly refer to what he says about his sense of duty, his brotherly spirit, his resolution not to do anything further after mentioning the state of matters to me, and his complaint about my not meeting him in the same Christian spirit. There is certainly room left on all of these points for a difference of opinion. If he had remembered that it was only as a member of the Church, and not as a member of the firm at Saltaire, he had any right to interfere, he would have acted differently; and if he had been as brotherly and as true to his resolutions not to interfere more after he had spoken with me, as he tries to make you believe, the Church would not have been brought into such trouble; it would have been unnecessary to have written so many letters; and his position would not have been such as it is in the eyes of the public. What more could I have done to meet his views that I did at our first interview, when, after learning the state of his mind in reference to myself, I told him I could not remain in Saltaire, in the circumstances, with any comfort to myself, and consequently would seek another sphere of labour, but that I would require time to do so? Even this, however, was not deemed enough, and hence he went on writing and acting. How he could dare, in the face of the facts of the case, to charge me with not meeting him in a Christian spirit, is a marvel to me. Read my letters and judge for yourselves if I have not met him all along in a far more Christian and submissive spirit than his proceedings deserved.

8th. Again, Mr. Salt makes the astounding declaration –“Mr Cowan’s services might have been retained if the Church so desired, *or he might have severed his connection with us in a manner befitting his long and arduous services in our midst; in which latter case he would, I doubt not, have received some substantial recompense as a tribute of his work in Saltaire.*” All this could have been arranged, he tells us, if I had *met him* in a spirit like his own. This part of the letter was evidently intended to throw dust in the eyes of the members of the church. Remember that at the time he wrote this he had completed his correspondence with me; we had had two lengthy interviews, and he had written several letters, yet he never proposed taking the mind of the Church on the question, though I had asked him to prove the extent of the dissatisfaction by putting the clause in the Trust Deed into effect, or else be quiet until I had time to try to get another place; but he would not do either. Nay, on the 11th of November he wrote that he had no proposals to make to me, and acknowledged, for the first time, that the matter concerned the whole Church. And then, how sadly all this talk about some substantial recompense as a tribute of my work at Saltaire contrasts with his conduct in using means to prevent others from joining in a recognition of what he was leased to term my “*long and arduous services.*” As you know, the Church, as a Church, never once wavered in its attachment to my ministry. The great question, on the other hand, with Mr. Salt’s minority, was

how to get rid of me in the circumstances, and nothing, I believe, was left undone in order to accomplish their purpose. *This was their way* of rewarding my “*long and arduous services.*” To talk of his Christian, brotherly spirit, and bewail the disturbance of the peace of the Church, in view of such conduct, seems to me enough to make a Christian blush and hang his head. To talk about holding aloof from either side while acting prominently with a side, and to refuse to be drawn into any correspondence or quarrel, when he knew he had just completed a correspondence, and by his letter was contributing to a quarrel as far as he could, seem strange contradictions. The fact is, he was disappointed because he could not get rid of me as rapidly as he could of one of his workmen; and, seeing that it would be hopeless to apply the clause in the Trust Deed, he resolved upon the more dignified course (*sic!*) of trying to starve me out. Whatever sort of Christianity this may be, it is not that of the meek and loving Jesus, who taught, saying –“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

I would only further add that Mr. Salt’s great concern, as manifested in the preface to the letter to which I have been turning your attention, respecting the honour of Bradford’s Chief Magistrate, is beyond all praise, supposing that gentleman to be unable to take care of himself. He forgets, however, that in his action in impugns the honour of men whose character is as deep to them as his is to himself, and who are quite as unlikely to mislead and deceive. The Chief Magistrate knew the circumstances of the case before Mr. Salt moved in the matter at all, and he promised to preside at the *Public Meeting* as a *neutral party*, knowing that it was to be an occasion for my friends to express their kindly feelings towards myself, without any reference to previous misunderstandings, and not an allusion to them would have been made but for Mr. Salt’s interference. His decision that it was a *Church dispute* was directly in the *teeth* of the decision of the Sunday School Executive Committee, who justified their charge of a sovereign for the use of the building on the ground that it was a *public meeting*.

The bill, too, which so much disconcerted Mr. Salt and his friends, and which, he says, he knew was printed under Mr. Cowan’s instructions, was submitted inproof to, and was corrected by, the Town Clerk, so that there was no attempt whatever to mislead either of these gentlemen. Mr. Salt, however, does not tell us that in thus acting as the guardian of the Mayor of Bradford, and of society in general, he had to humble himself to the position of a busy-body in other men’s matters, and that, in order to obtain the information desired, he had to employ the Head-Master of the Shipley School Board Central Boys’ School to go to Bingley. This ever-ready servant of his went to the printer with a list of questions which he asked him to answer wither in the affirmative or negative, but in writing down the answers he forgot to write

that the printer had said that “Mr. Cowan had gone to him at the request of the Committee.” Whether the course pursued was worthy of such gentlemen of position and honour, I must leave you to judge.

These are a few of the points upon which Mr. Salt and his friends have tried to injure me in your estimation, and in the estimation of the public, but in which they have absolutely failed.

Having made these explanations, allow me now to introduce Mr. Salt’s correspondence with myself by a letter which will throw some light on the circumstances of the Church at the time I was elected to the pastorate, and make unmistakeably clear the point already referred to in Mr. Salt’s letter. As already stated, either the writer of the following letter gave a wrong account of Mr. Salt’s position at the time, or he must have been deceived by his master – assuming Mr. Salt’s latest statement to be the true one. One thing is certain, that, so far from my being made aware that Mr. Salt was making any sacrifice in reference to my election, one of the encouragements held out to me to accept the call was that MR. AND MRS. TITUS SALT WERE WITH THE MAJORITY, *without any qualification whatever*. The letter to which I have referred is as follows:-

12, ALBERT ROAD, SALTAIRE via Leeds, 17th March, 186.

MY DEAR FRIEND, -According to my promise, I am sitting down to give you a few lines respecting our meeting which has just been held. Mr. Stainsby, I dare say, will write to you by the same post, and you will then see that the question is now left with you for decision. We are extremely sorry to find that the opposition spoken of is not entirely subsided though greatly reduced. I think I may tell you how we have been acting. At our last Church Meeting some of our members said that although the Congregation have no voice in calling the Minister, yet it would be well for them all to have the chance of saying who they were in favour of. A few of us, therefore, prepared a sheet with a declaration of this sort at the head –I think I can quote it word for word:-

“SALTAIRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

“WE, the undersigned Members of the Church or Congregation are desirous that the Rev. D. R. Cowan should be invited to take the Pastorate of the above-mentioned Church.”

We visited every member of the Church and Congregation, with perhaps six exceptions (who were forgotten), and received the names of 236 persons (none under 16 years of age); 99 were members of the Church, and the remaining 137 of the Congregation includes two who hold letters of dismission from other Churches, but have not been received yet. (We only estimate our present Congregation at about 250). Some of our members had not heard you, and could not therefore sign; but expressed their determination to vote with the majority –their signatures were of no use, however, except to state to the Church.

To-night we have had a full, quiet, orderly meeting –we have certainly felt the Master’s presence. A Prayer Meeting commenced at 7.30, and the Special Church Meeting at 8. We were soon called upon to vote, and 73 out of 81 voted for you. 7 voted to the contrary, and 1 (who signed the paper) remained neutral. Only 2 members who we know are opposed were absent; the others were in favour or indifferent. It is only fair, however, to say that there are several (perhaps 10 altogether) of the Congregation who still remain opposed; though some of those quite give way to the majority. You will, I know, feel desirous of knowing what sort of positions they are in. Only one opponent is an active Church member; some of them are “dead” ones –their names are enrolled amongst us, but they take no part in the work of the Church. And some of the opposition, I am confident, you will soon overcome. I do not think any one single member would oppose your work, or desire to make you uncomfortable. If they did so at all, it would be by their absence from the Sunday Service, which, under existing circumstances, is far from being seldom now. The people for whom, as Mr. Titus remarked, the Church was built, are, I may say, *en masse* in your favour –and I do not doubt but that the deacons will be able to satisfy you as to the permanency of financial affairs. Mr. and Mrs. Titus Salt are with the majority. We pray that in the consideration of the “call” you may have the guidance of the Great Shepherd; *we feel that we have in giving it.* It would not become me to advise you, though I shall be glad to furnish you with any other facts that might assist you in your decision. This many of us do think that there is no likelihood of any other minister having such an overwhelming majority in his favour, if we should be called to choose again. May the Divine Spirit guide you to your decision, is our earnest and continued prayer. With Christian love to you and Mrs. Cowan, in which Mrs Morrell joins, I remain, my dear friend, yours very faithfully,

GEORGE MORRELL

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

P.S. –Thursday morning. –On looking over my scribble of last night I feel there is nothing that the morning’s reflection would cause me to retract. I see how thoroughly desultory it is; but I hope, amidst its broken sentences and disjointed phrases you will be able to extract my meaning. I ought to have said that Mr. and Mrs. Titus were not at the meeting last night, for they were preparing for a journey and *could not get*. I mention it because I think this circumstance was quite overruled. The people had to vote upon *conviction* in the face of expected opposition. But an hour’s chat would be worth more than a quire of paper just now. I ought also to say that there was no opposition in words. The meeting was quiet, full, orderly, solemn, and short.

I have just had Mr. Stainsby in. He wishes me to say that in consequence of having to attend a funeral in Leeds yesterday, and extra business to-day, he will not be able to write you an official “dispatch” until to-morrow. He also reminds me that there was only *one* single *Saltaire* person who voted contrary last night; and I know he (the one who voted) has already declared himself willing to amicably fall in with the decision of the majority.

Our Church certainly says, “Come over and help us.” I know that amongst our 122 members, at least 110, I might say 117, are wishful for you to come. G.M.

The following letter is the official document referred to in the preceding letter:-

SALTAIRE, March 18, 1869.

To the Rev. D. R. COWAN, Kirkcaldy,

DEAR SIR, -The Church of Christ, joined together in Christian fellowship in Saltaire, in accordance with the principles and practice of the Churches of the Congregational Order, being desirous of calling one to the work of the Ministry among them, who shall, as their Pastor and Teacher, admonish, exhort, and instruct them in accordance with God’s revealed Word, and under the guidance of His Holy Spirit; to the end, that they may grow in Grace and the knowledge of Christ, honouring Him in all things; and who shall also be able, as an Evangelist, to preach the Gospel to the unconverted, believing that in answer to prayer the great Head of the Church has directed you to them, and by making acceptable and profitable to them your recent ministry among them, and inclining their hearts towards you, He has made it manifest

that they shall be acting conformably with His will in calling you to be their Minister and Pastor.

They therefore now request you to take the oversight of them in the Lord, believing you to be endowed by Him with gifts qualifying you for this work, and pray that He may incline you to accept the office. –With Christian regards, we are, dear Sir, on behalf of the Church,

MARK STAINSBY }
HENRY BREAR } *Deacons*

From these letters those of you not connected with the congregation at the time will see that I did not force myself upon the Church, and that the invitation was both cordial and hearty. If I was wrong in disregarding the opposition of such a small minority, as was affirmed at the meeting at Allerton, then, alas! for the state of things in most congregations. But is it becoming or right that such a minority should be allowed to dictate to all the rest? This was evidently a sore point in 1869, and the same evil is proving the ruin of Congregational and other Churches now. If a few men possessed of money be in a minority, they are vain enough to imagine that all the others should give way for their pleasure; and if this is not done, the feeling of dissatisfaction, as in this case, is kept smouldering, even under different appearances, until a favourable opportunity is found for getting rid of the minister.

I deemed it my duty to accept of the call to the pastorate of the Church, and entered upon my duties on 18th April, 1869, and continued to do my best for all concerned, up to the day of my resignation.

On 16th October, 1876, I received the following letter from Mr. Titus Salt:-

MILNER FIELD, BINGLEY, YORKSHIRE

Sunday 15th October, 1876.

DEAR SIR, -Can you meet me at the office tomorrow afternoon, at 2.20? I wish to mention a matter of importance to you. I am, dear sir, yours truly, TITUS SALT,
Jun.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

I have a record of what took place at the above interview, written immediately after returning home; but as the accuracy of the report might be questioned, I pass it over with the single remark that, I learned then, for the first time, the state of Mr. Salt's mind respecting my

ministry, and stated at once that, as I could not be comfortable here in such circumstances, I would seek a new sphere of labour as soon as possible –a declaration which would have satisfied most gentlemen, even if some delay had taken place in making the attempt; but it was otherwise with him. After an interval of a week, the following letter reached me:-

SALTAIRE, BRADFORD, 26th Oct., 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -If you have made any inquiries, as the result of our conversation the other day, I shall be glad to hear from you. I may have a communication to make to the Church, at their next meeting, upon an entirely personal matter, and any action you decide to take may possibly influence me. –I am, yours sincerely, TITUS SALT, Jun.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

To this letter I returned the following reply:-

SALTAIRE, 27th October, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -I beg to say, in answer to your note to hand this morning, that, though I have not found, on inquiry, matters to be as represented to you, yet, feeling that my comfort, if not my usefulness, at Saltaire will be at an end if I experience your opposition, I have made up my mind to look out for another place as speedily as possible. This, as I stated to you in conversation, will require a little time –how long it is impossible to say; but, for my own comfort of mind, and for the sake of my poor afflicted wife, not a day longer than is absolutely necessary.

The whole matter having taken me by surprise, everything in the way of inquiry about vacant churches has had to be done since I saw you.

I am, of course, ignorant of the nature of the communication your propose to make to the Church, but, if it refers to my leaving, you will see, from what I have stated, that I am resolved to do everything in my power to get another charge. It will be most agreeable to me and (I presume) also to you, that I should terminate my connection with Saltaire in as quiet a way as possible. This I write in perfect confidence, again assuring you that no effort on my part will be spared to hasten my escape from such circumstances of pain and disappointment. –I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

DAVID R. COWAN.

TITUS SALT, Esq.

To this letter I received the following reply:-

SALTAIRE, BRADFORD, 28th Oct., 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -I am surprised at the reference you make in your letter of yesterday's date to what you are pleased to term "my opposition." I distinctly stated at our interview that I was willing, as far as I myself was concerned to allow matters to proceed as usual. I requested you to make inquiries for *yourself* as to the feeling that exists amongst the Members and Congregation of the Saltaire Church in reference to your ministry. I do now know what may be the extent of the inquiries you have made, but I can assure you that, had I not been convinced that the feeling was almost unanimous, I would not have moved in the matter at all. It was very painful for me to have to mention the subject to you, and I regret that, owing to the peculiar relations I seem to hold at Saltaire, it seemed to be my duty to do so. I wished to do it in the kindest manner, and to bring the change about, if change there need be, with as little pain to you as possible; but if, as you assert, I am mistaken in my estimate of the dissatisfaction which exists in the minds of your congregation, I can only repeat what I said to you, that I do not want any personal feelings of mine to come in between you and your work here; and I should, after calling your attention to the facts, decline to do anything further, *leaving the question of taking any action entirely in your hands*. At the same time, if I am to have it thrown in my teeth that it is "my opposition" that is leading you to leave Saltaire, I can only do what I have long felt included to do –retire altogether from any connection with the Saltaire Church. I cannot allow myself to be placed in a false position.

I hope you will see your way to withdraw your remark as to "my opposition," for if you look at the matter calmly I am sure you will recognise that, so far from my ever having opposed you, my action has always been in a contrary direction.

I think the best plan for you to adopt is to consult with the Deacons, hear what they have to report, and if you then find I have not exaggerated the strength of the feeling of dissatisfaction, I think it will be your duty to give an early intimation to the Church of your intended resignation. I am sure some such plan will be the means of preventing a large "departure." I must again express astonishment at the surprise you affect; I have known of the feeling existing for two or three years, and I understand the matter has been repeatedly mentioned to you. I shall be glad of a line from you,

withdrawing your reference to “my opposition,” otherwise I shall have to transfer my family to the Shipley or Bingley Congregational Church. –I am, my dear Sir, yours truly, TITUS SALT, Jun.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

To this long letter I sent the following reply:-

SALTAIRE, 31st October, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -I regret that I did not return home in time to answer your letter last night. I cordially withdraw the words to which you take exception –“your opposition.” I simply felt and intended to convey the idea that the withdrawal of your sympathy and cordial support would, in the circumstances, be construed as opposition. With the experience of your past kindness, and after the communications I have already made to you, and received from you, I cannot imagine that you would either suggest or support any action that would precipitate, on my part, the taking of a step which I have resolved to take at the earliest possible moment. You have sufficient knowledge of our Church organisation to know that removing into a new sphere is not to be accomplished at one’s pleasure, and I am sure you would never advise my retiring from Saltaire in circumstances that might imperil my future usefulness, my family’s comfort, and perhaps, also, reflect unfavourably upon the character of the Church I have served so long.

I need hardly refer again to the alleged “almost unanimous dissatisfaction” which is said to have prevailed during the last two years, although, as I have said to you already, *I am not aware, nor have I been made aware* (apart from your communications) that such is the case. I have, however, made up my mind as to my future course, and, therefore, need not further inquire into the matter. I leave it all in the hands of the Great Head of the Church, who, I believe, brought me here; and I merely await his behest to go elsewhere. When that behest comes, which I pray God to send speedily, rest assured I shall not tarry long to confer with flesh and blood. –I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely, DAVID R. COWAN.

TITUS SALT, Esq.

Mr. Salt’s next communication is as follows:-

SALTAIRE, BRADFORD, Nov. 3, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -If you are disengaged at 4 o'clock this afternoon, I shall be glad to see you –can you call? Yours sincerely, TITUS SALT, Jun.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

With some reluctance I met Mr. Salt as requested though apprehensive that little good could be gained by such an interview. Various matters were discussed, of which I wrote an account at the time, but I must pass them over for the same reasons as before. I may say, however, that the point in dispute was that of giving notice to the Church of my intention to resign, which I failed to see it my duty to do to gratify a minority, until Providence should somehow open up my way. Having failed to agree upon this point, we parted with the understanding it was to be considered for another week, when I wrote to him as follows:-

SALTAIRE, 11th Nov., 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -Having very earnestly considered the matter under discussion at our last interview, and consulted with friends both without and within the Church as to the path of duty, I now write to say that I have failed to discover any reason for departing from what I stated in my last letter. I am sorry to cause you disappointment by saying so, but I must follow the leadings of Providence as far as I can trace them.

I have deemed it better to write than to call upon you, as our last interview has been misrepresented outside, and I feel it necessary to prevent this as far as possible. Though I fear little good has been gained by a private correspondence on a matter that concerns the whole Church, yet, if you have any proposals to make which you still wish me to consider, I shall be glad to receive them in writing. –I am, my dear Sir, yours sincerely,

DAVID R. COWAN.

TITUS SALT, Esq., Jr.

The following is Mr. Salt's reply:-

MILNER FIELD, BINGLEY, YORKSHIRE, NOV. 11, 1876.

DEAR SIR, -I have your letter for this morning. In reply to your query I may at once say that I have no proposals to make to you; it is, as you say, "a matter that concerns the whole Church." –I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

TITUS SALT, Jr.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

There were no further letters until 1st Dec., when I received the following:-

SALTAIRE, BRADFORD, 1st Dec., 1876.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

DEAR SIR, -I understand that you have my copy of the Trust Deed of the Saltaire Congregational Church; may I trouble you to forward it to me per bearer. I intended my copy to have been kept in the vestry of the Church. You can have a copy for yourself if you wish it, and will let me know that such is your wish. -I am, dear Sir, yours truly, TITUS SALT, Jr.

Reply-

SALTAIRE, 1st Dec., 1876.

MY DEAR SIR, -I send herewith the copy of Trust Deed you put into my care. I regret that I did not understand that it was to be kept always in the vestry, or it would have been there now. Thanking you for your kind offer. -I am, in haste, yours sincerely,
DAVID R. COWAN.

In considerably less than an hour after my last note was sent away, the following letter came to hand. I am sorry, indeed, to have to print it, on account of the good man's name which it contains; but in the circumstances, it cannot be avoided -the responsibility is not mine.

SALTAIRE ALMSHOUSES, NEAR BRADFORD, 1st Dec., 1876.

Rev. D. R. COWAN.

DEAR SIR, -Sir Titus, having made other arrangements in connection with the Saltaire Almshouses, he requests me to say that after the 31st Dec. next, your salary in connection with the Almshouses will cease, viz. -your House Rent, £33 16s per annum. Your House Rent, after the 31st inst., will be 13s per week, payable to the firm. -I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

TITUS SALT, Jr.

When I received this letter, I looked at it again and again, and at length said to myself – What! did the writer of this letter join with others in raising a Memorial Hall to the memory of the noble men who, in 1662, chose suffering and shame rather than prove false to their conscience and duty; and yet, in imitation of their persecutors, he does the same thing as far as he has the power to do it? This is one of the ways in which Mr. Titus Salt tried to prove himself my *friend throughout* – *one of his acts of kindness*.

How melancholy the exhibition! It is a letter, not only written in the name of his honoured father, but it is written as if he had been specially instructed by him. Need I say that not a complaint had ever been made respecting the way in which I had discharged my duties, or a hint given as to the likelihood of any changes being made. A month's notice was the honourable and dignified method of getting rid of a minister who had served him for nearly eight years.

This took place on 1st December, after the three Deacons had given notice of their intention to resign, and on the 6th, when they assayed to do so in the most imposing manner possible, Mr. Titus Salt came to their assistance with the letter he has published, and to which I have already turned your attention –not, of course, because of any arrangement between them, for they tell us that they all acted independently; but by a very astounding and inexplicable coincidence! Just as by *another coincidence*, as operations began to wane in the counting-house, they began to wax strong in the vestry.

In looking back upon all that transpired, I am filled with wonder and amazement that men, ay and women too, calling themselves Christians, should have been capable of such conduct they manifested. I am equally filled with wonder at the noble and decided stand most of you were enabled to make in such a time of trial –illustrating, meeting after meeting, the fewness of the members of the discontented minority, and your firm adherence, in spite of adverse influences, to rectitude and truth. For all your fidelity and principle, and kindness and devotion to myself, I heartily thank you; and now that you have most of the fact before you, I feel sure that you will see more clearly than ever the justice of our cause, and the unreasonableness of the opposition we have had to face. Though parted from you, I shall ever cherish a pleasing recollection of your kindness, and my prayer is, that you may be kept in the faith of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ –that after much penitence and prayer on the part of those who have broken your peace, and renewed consecration on the part of all the great Head of the Church, you may become a more Christlike community than you have hitherto been. My desires towards you are those of peace, purity, and prosperity, and it will ever be a joy to me to hear that you are abounding in the Works of the Lord.

With every sentiment of Christian regard, I am, yours sincerely, DAVID R. COWAN.

P.S. –I sincerely regret that owing to circumstances over which I had no control, the publication of this letter has been much longer delayed than I expected.

D.R.C.

May, 1877.