

Free Church Manse
Penicuik
NB
Tues July 6th 1892

Dear Mr and Mrs Cavan

I need not say that I was as much astonished as grieved by the letter of tonight signed by your household. I had not the remotest idea of your thinking of taking such a step. I can only say that I am deeply sorry that the Free Church loses you as members, and you, Sir, as an Officebearer. But will you be kind enough to make one point clear – in your note you say that ‘being out of sympathy’ with the Free Church, specially as to Disestablishment, you therefore leave the church as a protest.

Now it is I who will chiefly suffer by your loss and it is I who in the eyes of all will be held responsible for your secession.

I have always endeavoured to make my ministry in Penicuik a purely not political one, and have never, so far as I know, made a single political allusion in the pulpit, or held a Disestablishment meeting in my parish. It would be only fair to say if it is anything I have said and done in my ministry which has cause you to make this decision. I have striven ever to be faithful in spiritual matters, but I have left political matters to the politicians – indeed never mentioning them save in your own friendly house when specially asked to do so.

Finally, has it occurred to you that it is a little hard that I shall chiefly suffer for what is in no sense my fault, in which I have taken no part, and could not help?

I trust you may continue the interest in and sympathy with my work which you have so often expressed.

I need to say that, deeply as we regret your decision, my wife and I cordially reciprocate your desire that the friendly intercourse of the first five years may always continue; and we may be allowed to add, it will certainly know no difference on our side for such a reason as this,

Yours very truly
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