



Newcastle upon Tyne

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- 10. The names of the persons who were present at the meeting held on the 15th day of May 1871.











(35)

AN

ADDRESS,

BY

MR. SAMUEL PIKE,

TO A

CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN LONDON,

OF WHICH HE IS NOW A MEMBER.

INTENDED AS A CONCLUSION TO THE BOOK, ENTITLED  
AN EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN S. P. AND R. S.

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M.DCCC.XXXIX.



AN  
ADDRESS, &c.

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*Dec. 22, 1765.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

YOU may easily conceive, that there must have been a great variety of thoughts working in my mind, previous to my appearing before you on this occasion. Indeed I have been both drawn and driven hither, for I have, for years past, been perpetually attentive to your profession, discipline, and practice; and now, at length, can truly say, that I cordially agree with you, (so far as I know) both in the faith and in the obedience of the Gospel, which induces me to offer and desire fellowship with you.

My faith is briefly this. The righteousness and atonement of Christ as God man, is the only immediate and perpetual ground of a sinner's hope, in the presence of God. The sufficiency of his sacrifice for the atonement of sin, appears in the infinite dignity of his person; and the evidence of its being accepted, is his resurrection from the dead. This atonement, as related or held forth in the Gospel-testimony, is the only ground of a sinner's hope, to the exclusion of all duties, frames, feelings, endeavours, and experiences, as in competition or connection with it; yea, these things must not so much as enter into the thought, to be any part of our support or encouragement in the presence of God, for this would be an

abomination to him. This faith is a doctrine according to godliness, and this grace of God in Christ proclaimed in the Gospel, which bringeth salvation to our ears, and which, when accompanied with the agency of the blessed Spirit, brings it to the heart, teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

But, besides the duties of sobriety and morality, our Lord has required several other things to be observed by his disciples. As to these peculiar observances, I do now profess my agreement with you in general, and might descend to all the various particulars thereof: for instance, saluting each other with a kiss of charity, I look upon to be a duty as expressly required in the word, and as frequently exhorted to, as perhaps any one single precept in the whole book of God. I look upon the eating of blood to be a sin, because it is solemnly forbidden in the edict, Act. xv. which edict is declared, Rev. ii. 24, 25, to be of perpetual obligation upon the disciples of Christ unto his second coming. Weekly communion in the Lord's Supper, and the feast of charity, ought to be observed, as what was doubtless the practice of the apostolic churches. Thus I might proceed upon the other articles, but must mention one more: I have been for a considerable time convinced, that there ought to be a plurality of elders in a Gospel-church; in which respect, I must confess with shame, that I have been negligent, and trifled with my own conscience.

But that in your profession which has been all along the greatest difficulty to me, and the greatest stumbling-block in my way, has been the doctrine of unanimity and non-forgiveness. I all along indeed saw, that an unanimity in doctrine and duty, was very desirable in Gospel-

fellowship, that it was in some respects commanded and promised, and prayed for by our Lord. But could not believe, that it was actual among you, or indeed really practicable; and, accordingly, looked upon the profession of it to be hypocritical, and the exacting of it to be enslaving to the conscience. This mistake has so operated upon me, as to induce me to act the part of an enemy towards you, for which I am now greatly ashamed. For I now plainly see, that a real union, not only in the ground of hope, and the doctrines annexed to it, but likewise in every article of present sin and duty, is both practicable and necessary.

I am now persuaded that it is practicable, and hope that it does actually exist among you; practicable I say, but not on any other plan, than that of our being led to take the Scripture, both in doctrine and duty, simply as it lies, in such a literal sense as we must apprehend a person of ordinary capacity, or common sense, would understand it. The very admission of reasonings about what is plain in the word, tends to obscure or set aside the obvious meaning, and is the true occasion of running into various divisions.—As to forbearance in Church-fellowship, I conceive that we may and ought to forbear with each other in regard to our different natural tempers and capacities, and the like, but cannot now see how it can be lawfully extended to a forbearance, with the commission of what Christ forbids, or the omission of what he requires, as this would be suffering sin upon a brother.—This doctrine of unanimity and non-forgiveness, has come with great weight upon my mind, time after time: and even, while I professed and practised the sinful forgiveness, my own conscience would often recriminate by some of the most plain and simple reasonings imaginable, such as these: if

Christ forbids any thing, must we not think he would have it avoided? If he requires any thing, must we not suppose he would have it punctually performed? Have we any power or right to dispense with any of the rules or laws of Christ's kingdom; or can we suppose, that he should require any such forbearance, as should render his own requirements and exhortations invalid or indifferent?

But these plain dictates of conscience, I have often stifled and rebelled against, influenced thereto by the fear of man, and the love of the world, being sensible that the acting agreeable to them would be attended with many inconveniencies in my connections. For these things I do now heartily condemn myself as a great sinner, in the presence of God, and look upon them as the greatest of sins; being now convinced, that the usual doctrine and practice of forbearance is both Antinomian and Antichristian, since we are assured, that Christ will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel: I rather therefore chuse to call the doctrine of non-forbearance, the doctrine of conscientiousness in religion, and the fear of God.—Several things have of late conspired to drive me from holding and cherishing this false doctrine of forbearance, particularly my finding there was no such thing as settling the limits of it, or drawing the line of partition between what may and what may not be forborne with in Christian-fellowship, so as for any number of persons to be agreed about those limits; and especially of late, when I found that those with whom I have been connected, did both argue and act upon the principle of non-forbearance themselves, with regard to the kiss of charity. This last circumstance, in connection with former misgiving doubts, and recriminating thoughts arising in the mind, did, as I may

say, clinch the nail, and made me see, that I had been all along acting from wordly selfish principles, in maintaining this false forbearance, instead of acting from the fear of God. Thus have I been for gaining quiet to my conscience from this doctrine of forbearance, rather than from the atoning blood of Christ; which, while it displays the infinite love of God towards sinners, does at the same time discover his infinite hatred of sin.—No sooner was I released from these entanglements, but I found myself as one emerged out of the mire; and had nothing to do, but to recollect past circumstances, and to reflect upon myself for going on in such a false way. The conviction of this now strikes so close upon my conscience, that I have nothing to say, but, God be merciful to me a sinner, and the only hope I have, is the assurance that there is free forgiveness with God, through the complete atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ; and I trust there is forgiveness with this church of the living God, and hope you will forgive me, though I have spoken and done so many things against you, for which I am now ashamed.

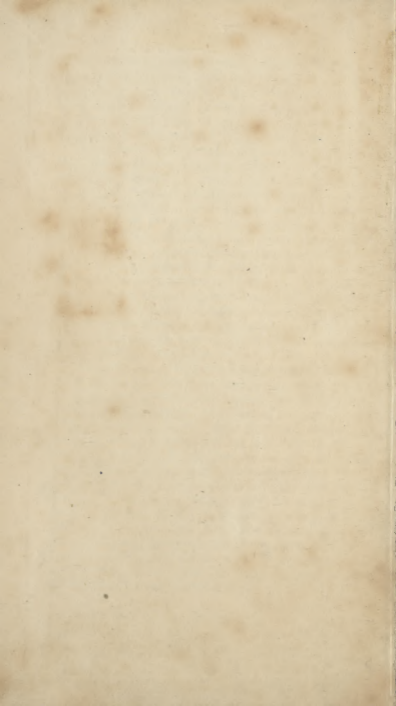
What I have had access to observe among you within this fortnight, has given me an idea of such faithfulness and zeal for the honour of God, in connection with Christian tenderness, as has convinced me that God is among you of a truth; wherefore I desire fellowship with you, and am cheerfully willing to be ranked with the meanest brother of the church. ↓

S. PIKE.









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9-9-87

