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Pike, Samuel, 1717?-1773.

( D. N. B. )

A Letter Wrote by Mr. Samuel Pike.

Portsmouth, [ 1766 ]. 8 pp.

MHS copy.

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L E T T E R

Wrote by Mr. SAMUEL PIKE, to Mr. ROBERT SANDEMAN, soon after he left all his former religious connections, and had joined the church in *London.*

Dear Brother,

**G**LAD I am that now at length this affectionate appellation can be cordially used by me, and I trust allow'd by you. I have been long walking in a perverse way; striving against the stream, and kicking against the pricks, until forced as it were out of that enslav'd situation I chose to be in: I have been brought thro' fire and thro' water, but now I trust am bro't forth into a place of spiritual enlargement, neither of us can forget that in our printed epistolary correspondence we parted about the doctrine of unanimity and non-forbearance, but now I see such abundant reason to fall in with it, that what I used to account and call by the disagreeable name of infallibility, hypocrisy, imposition, uncharitableness, censoriousness and the like; I now call and see to be nothing other, than such christian faithfulness as is necessary to maintain that mutual love, which is the only true evidence of christianity. Having been lately convinced that blood-eating is a sin, and the kiss of charity an incumbent duty, I mention'd this to my late people, and notwithstanding several condescending (alass, too condescending) proposals made by me to them, they signified to me, that my continuance among them with such principles would be destructive to the peace and hazzardous to the existence of the church: this constrain'd me to remove, which has prov'd a great release to my mind, and been follow'd with much conviction in my conscience; of which you have an  
account

account in what follows; being so much as I could recollect of what I deliver'd to the church, and with which they were satisfied to receive me. I heartily pray for you and the faithful brethren with you, that the Lord may strengthen your hands, encourage your hearts, direct your ways, prosper your labours and protect your persons from those which believe not in *America*: I subscribe my self, dear brother, yours affectionately in the truth and obedience of the gospel.

SAMUEL PIKE.

*Haxton-Square, London, Jan. 4, 1766.*

The following was Mr. *Pike's* Profession before the Church in *London*, at the Time when he was received into their Fellowship; which was *December 22d, 1765.*

Dear Friends,

**Y**OU may easily conceive 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 now 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, his resurrection

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 our thoughts, to be any part of our support or encouragement in the sight of God, for this would be an abomination to him. This faith is a doctrine according to godliness, and this grace of God proclaim'd 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 lust, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in in this present world. But besides the duties of sobriety and morality, our Lord has requir'd several other things to be observ'd 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 of God, and as frequently exorted 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 *Acts* 15, which edict is declar'd, *Rev.* 2, 24, 25, to be of perpetual obligation upon the disciples of Christ until his second coming. Weekly communion in the Lord's supper, and the feast of charity ought to be observ'd, as what was doubtless the practice of the apostolic church. Thus I might proceed upon the other articles, but must mention one more ; I have been for a considerable time convinc'd, 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

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-forbearance : I all along indeed saw, that an unanimity in doctrine and duty was very desirable in gospel fellowship, that it was in some respect commanded and promised and pray'd for by our Lord ; but could not believe that it was actually among you, or indeed really practicable, and accordingly look'd 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 upon 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 and common sense would understand it ; the very admission of reasoning about what is plain in the word, tends to obscure & set aside the obvious meaning, & 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 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-forbearance has

come

come ~~with~~ great weight upon my mind; time after time, and even while I professed and preached the sinful forbearance, my own conscience would often rectificate; 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 perform'd? have we any power or right to dispence 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 or exhortations invalid or indifferent? but these plain dictates of conscience I have often stifled and rebell'd against, influenc'd 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 inconveniences in my connections; for these things I do now heartily condemn my self as a great sinner in the presence of God, and look upon them as the greatest of sins: now convinc'd 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 choose 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 within 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

principle of non-forbearance themselves, with regard to the gifts 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 worldly, 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 intanglements, 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 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; thro' the compleat atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ: and trust there is forgiveness with this church of the living God: and hope you will forgive me, tho' 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 convinc'd 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.

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