

C. Separation From the London Society, Etc.

by A.T. Pierson

A.T. Pierson explains his reasons for separating from the London Society and his objections to being connected with state churches or national religious establishments.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, Acts 5:29, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 2:13, Galatians 1:10

Topics: "Spiritual Guidance", "Church Governance"

Description

A.T. Pierson grapples with the dilemma of remaining connected with the Society due to various objections. He questions the necessity of ordination for extensive usefulness and the conflict with state churches that deviate from the true standard of the word of God. Pierson also expresses a conscientious objection against being directed by men in his missionary work, emphasizing the guidance of the Spirit over human influence. Despite his love for the Jews, he struggles with the committee's expectation of dedicating most of his time to them, leading him to confront these internal conflicts openly.

Transcript

IT became a point of solemn consideration with me, whether I could remain connected with the Society in the usual way. My chief objections were these:

1. If I were sent out by the Society, it was more than probable, yea almost needful, if I were to leave England, that I should labour on the Continent, as I was unfit to be sent to eastern countries on account of my health, which would probably have suffered, both on account of the climate, and of my having to learn other languages.

Now, if I did go to the Continent, it was evident that without ordination I could not have any extensive field of usefulness, as unordained ministers are generally prevented from labouring freely there; but I could not conscientiously submit to being ordained by unconverted men, professing to have power to set me apart for the ministry, or to communicate something to me for this work which they do not possess themselves. Besides this, I had other objections to being connected with any state church or national religious establishment, which arose from the increased light which I had obtained through the reception of this truth, that the word of God is our only standard, and the Holy Spirit our only teacher. For as I now began to compare what I knew of the establishment in England and those on the Continent with this only true standard, the word of God, I found that all establishments, even because they are establishments, i.e., the world and the church mixed up together, not only contain in them the principles which necessarily must lead to departure from the word of God; but also, as long as they remain establishments, entirely preclude

the acting throughout according to the Holy Scriptures.-- Then again, if I were to stay in England, the Society would not allow me to preach in any place indiscriminately, where the Lord might open a door for me; and to the ordination of English bishops I had still greater objections than to the ordination of a Prussian Consistory.

2. I further had a conscientious objection against being led and directed by men in my missionary labours. As a servant of Christ, it appeared to me I ought to be guided by the Spirit, and not by men, as to time and place; and this I would say, with all deference to others, who may be much more taught and much more spiritually minded than myself. A servant of Christ has but one Master.

3. I had love for the Jews, and I had been enabled to give proofs of it; yet I could not conscientiously say, as the committee would expect from me, that I would spend the greater part of my time only among them. For the scriptural plan seemed to me that, in coming to a place, I should seek out the Jews, and commence my labour particularly among them; but that, if they rejected the gospel, I should go to the nominal Christians.-- The more I weighed these points, the more it appeared to me that I should be acting hypocritically, were I to suffer them to remain in my mind, without making them known to the committee.

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