

A Doctrine According to Godliness

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

...ministers of the gospel should declare the ordinances and institutions of Christ. Our Lord's last words, when he was leaving the world, were, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," &c.

The positive institutions of Christianity, for all the clamour and noise that have been made about them by infidels, are but a few in number, and of easy observance, especially when compared with the ritual of the Jewish church, once of divine institution, and which the apostle Peter calls "a yoke that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear."

But then, ministers of the gospel must preach the laws and commandments of Christ. Hence we find the great Apostle of the Gentiles in his epistles, always subjoins under the doctrines of... grace, (which he had a particular talent of displaying,) the warmest exhortations to piety, holiness, and righteousness in their several branches. For he well knew how prone corrupt nature is to divorce comfort from duty, and to turn the grace of God into wantonness.

The gospel is “a doctrine according to godliness,” it is a most holy gospel; and where it appears, it “teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,” the gospel of Christ commands us to “think on these things,” Titus ii. 11, 12; Phil. iv. 8.

Therefore, when ministers declaim against vice, either in general, or more particularly;—when they inculcate the duties of sobriety, righteousness, and charity, the people must not call it legal preaching, or not preaching Christ; for he who preaches *the laws of Christ*, preaches Christ, as well as he who preaches *the love of Christ*.

But then faithful preachers of the gospel, in urging duty and obedience upon the people, will be sure to remind them of... the necessity of an entire dependence upon the Spirit and grace of the Lord Jesus, for assistance and acceptance and every good work.

(Select Sermons by Thomas Boston and James Baine, Edinburgh: A. Fullerton & Co., 1850, 9-10, Excerpt from Chapter I: The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Crucified by Thomas Boston, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)