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My response to a deluded detractor

Below is my response to a detractor's attempted rebuttal to my earlier comments on John 7:1.

The following is the substance of what I had to send to one who, upon receiving my email containing my comments on John 7:1, sent out this morning, replied in a most vexing manner. That person indicated what they thought of me and my attempts to serve the Lord. The email opened with the words: "Rev Foster, you are not applying the Scripture correctly...again!"

I replied as follows to the writer:

"You are the perfect example of the little axiom: 'There is none so blind as he who will not see!'

You again accuse me of misapplying God's Word. I find that most offensive, having given myself over for fifty plus years to seeking to set forth ONLY what the Lord has said, and if I may say so, paid some little price for doing that.

The Saviour stayed away from Jewry because of a threat to His life. He took precautions against that threat.

The 'Government Edict' that you refer to was a regulation set forth by those who are, rightly or wrongly, 'the higher powers', who perceived a threat to the health of the populace, arising from crowds gathering in any public place including churches and therefore required that such gatherings ceased for a short period.

You, your Pastor and a few disciples of his, may huff and puff and speak with the superior air adopted by the Pharisees, that such a regulation was in defiance of God's Law, but you are wrong. The Saviour's actions in this instance shows that you are wrong!

He ceased from His preaching duties in Jewry because of the threat. I can well imagine upstarts at the time spouting against His decision but they were wrong as are you.

John Calvin said of this verse: "He conducted himself as a man who was liable to dangers, and, therefore, it was not proper that he should throw himself at random into dangerous situations. In encountering dangers, it is not our business to inquire what God has determined respecting us in His decree, but what he commands and enjoins on us, what our office requires and demands, and what is the proper method of regulating our life."

There are times when governments have to 'order' people to do certain things for their own good, for there are always stupid people who, unless they were thus required to follow a safe course, will always act most foolishly.

Governments have in the past acted as did the Stormont Executive without the reaction of you and your Pastor coming from men of God in those times.

You and those like you are trying to make a virtue out of such stupidity and term it "a brave honouring of the Lord"!

I fear that you are on a path of self-pride and a tempting of the Providence of God."

I might add to the comments above, that the Lord Jesus on this occasion felt it proper to lay aside for a short time His duty of preaching the gospel to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This duty was the supreme and solemn undertaking that He came to earth to fulfil. YET, He set it aside for a time in order to safeguard His life from the danger of men's threats.

In this He did no wrong. Nor is the Christian in error or acting in a cowardly, sinful fashion when comply-



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ing with the government's injunction to withdraw from assembling together in public buildings, including churches, when such assembling would possibly endanger us being infected with the Covidvirus. To ignore this counsel may endanger others also, more vulnerable, with whom we may come into contact.

Doubtless, by removing Himself and His disciples (He would not have left them alone to face the threat posed by wicked men) He sets forth an example for us today.

I just wish that those who take up verbal cudgels against me, for that is what they do, would stop and think for a minute or two as to why their 'hero' Pastor Patterson does not answer in a public fashion when it is we have written in the 'Belfast Newsletter' and posted on the 'Burning Bush' a full answer to his unkind, unsubstantiated and unChristian comments on my first article!