



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Answer to letter in today's 'Belfast Newsletter' (Dec 21, 2020)

The week has got underway with another attack upon us.

This letter appears in the 'Belfast Newsletter' of today. A friend sent me the **screenshot** of it. Here is my reply.

Dear Editor,

I thank Mr Maxwell of Bleary for his kind words regarding my former witness.

I wish to assure him that I strive to maintain that 'faithfulness' of which he speaks.

1. I would want him to recognise that it was the Pastor of Tandragee Baptist Church who launched a 'damaging' attack upon virtually all Bible-believing Christians in Ulster. He wrote in his original article: "Church leaders were quick to close the doors of the meeting house, without any Scriptural warrant, and thereby preventing God's people from gathering to worship Him as He has commanded." That was an unwarranted attack upon those who acted in obedience to God's Word.

2. I believe it right to say that Pastor Patterson was amongst those in the early months of the year when lockdown was first introduced, who closed the doors of the meeting house, 'without any Scriptural warrant.'

Why was it alright for him to do in March what he then lambasts others for doing in November?

That is hardly consistency. Pastor Patterson has never come forward with an answer to that question.

3. Many of the Synagogues in Israel were shut to the Saviour of which the incident in Nazareth was an example, Luke 4:28-29. In the face of these closed 'pulpits' the Saviour continued His ministry in the open-air and it is from such meetings that we have so many glorious truths in our four gospels. There is a principle there. No matter what the reason is that we are denied the usual means of gathering together in worship, whatever legitimate alternative means are employed the Lord will bless His people. When a location which was formerly used for worship becomes 'morally' or 'physically' corrupted or infected we are commanded to 'come out' of such and the Lord will receive us, not order us back in! 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

When people gather in pubs and restaurants and other such places is it not true that the Coronavirus rapidly spreads? That being so, there are those of us who believe that it was wise to cease gathering in a building for worship and to employ alternative means of gathering to worship and to proclaim Christ. Pastor Patterson was wrong to charge fellow-believers, including the majority of his own Baptist Association, of acting without any Scriptural warrant, especially when (in the absence of any denial) he had acted just so earlier in the year, with all 'Scriptural warrant'!

4. I am surprised and alarmed at the concluding remarks of Mr Maxwell. He says that 'swopping Bible texts' serves no useful purpose. That seems to be another of my failures and faults! However, what he says is most dreadful. 'Swopping' our notions and views as to what is right and what is wrong most certainly serves no useful purpose.

It is in 'Bible verses' that the mind of God on ALL matters is revealed.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isaiah 8:20. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Timothy 3:15-17.



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The 'courageous stand' that Mr Maxwell says I took in the past centred upon and consisted of publicly 'swopping Bible texts' in order to show what was the will and way of God. I notice that he avoids offering any support from the Bible for what he writes.

I am going to stay with the old method of deciding issues on what pleases or displeases the Lord, summed up in the phrase, 'What saith the Scriptures'?

I feel that the Lord will not fault me for that, whatever men may say.

Sincerely,

Ivan Foster.