

## RENEWAL, RENEWAL, RENEWAL

Throughout the world of Christendom the cry is heard for renewal. It has been heard in the Roman Catholic Church and all the Major Protestant bodies. Now it is heard in our midst. “Renewal” is written in large letters on the banner under which the agents of change march.

In his book, **Will the Cycle Be Unbroken**, Dr. Douglas Foster, a leading spokesman for change, writes, “For any movement to survive and continue to be vital, it must constantly be renewed. Without renewal the options are virtually reduced to stagnation and death on one hand or revolution on the other” (p. 57).

Of human organizations what Dr. Foster says is true. Being the products of finite and fallible minds they must constantly be correcting their flaws and striving to improve their essential nature. The products that businesses manufacture or sell become obsolete and are no longer marketable. Changes must be made. Populations change as the urban cycle moves along and a business having lost its clientele must move to a better location. The need for this kind of renewal is clearly seen and of practical necessity.

Then there is the church of Christ: a divine kingdom, chartered by the God of heaven, founded by his Son, perfect in its doctrine, organization and ordinances (Matt. 16:18). We are provided with an infallible constitution and handbook revealing the will of God, delivered to us by the Holy Spirit. The church was designed to last so long as the earth stands (Dan. 2:44). It was conceived and fashioned by a Masterful Hand and thus able to flourish in every nation, every culture and every age. The church Christ built needs no revision or renewal at the hands of sinful men.

We freely grant that we who are members of the sacred body of Christ oft need to be renewed. Being weak and fallible we often fail to measure up to the standard Christ has set for us. We need to renew our faith and commitment when they have grown weak. We need to renew our participation when we have been distracted or grown lazy and indifferent. We need to renew our commitment to study and understand God’s Will for our lives. We need to renew our respect for the Word of God, and specifically for the New Testament of Christ. We need to renew our commitment to being Bible Christians and the church that Jesus founded. We need to renew our resolutions to godly living. We need to renew our involvement in soul-winning and missions. We need to renew our commitment to nurturing the young people God has sent us so they will grow up to be faithful Christians. We need to renew our determination to restore the faith, worship and practice of the original church.

We do not however need a renewal movement that will lead us to embrace the errors of our denominational neighbors. We do not need to seek renewal by pursuing unscriptural fads and gimmicks that church growth specialists have invented. No renewal can be tolerated if it means changing the sacred ordinances and doctrines given by the head of the church (Eph. 1:22). The renewal proposed by our promoters of change will have the opposite effect than is promised. Those churches embracing it, will not thereby become more faithful to Christ, purer and more effective in his service. They will cease to be churches of Christ, morphing into worthless denominational bodies offering vain, unacceptable worship unto God (Matt. 15:9). JHW