

marked by at least an appearance of oneness. (Note the east/west schism, etc., but the divisionary thrusts were much less marked in number than after the Reformation) Most of the great reformers to that time had worked withing the skeletal boyd (Hus, Waldo, etc., are exceptions). The different monastic groups had occasionally fought wars with one another and disturbances between prelates were common. But still the ideal was to think of the church as "the seamless robe of Christ", a body woven together by God and unified in Him. We are not discounting the eastern churches as noted above but in our western tradition this was the overall picture barring the Hussites, Waldensians, and a few pockets of individualism in remote areas, no doubt.

A key fature in the Reformation was the excessive claims of the Roman system and the substitution of its tradition for the truth of God. The light of the real character of the church did not emerge in five minutes. Luther originally sought church reform but the Vatican authorities did not take him seriously and eventually he was excommunicated. Calvin departed from the Roman church after certain adversities in Paris. These men, like most of the first wave of reformers, took the concept of separating themselves from the church very seriously. But when the crisis came they looked for the resolution for it in biblical areas. Generally the idea and pattern of Calvin took root: he argued that the church was a body where the Gospel was preached and the sacraments were rightly ordered. An organization that was principally religious but did not do these things was not a church in any proper sense. On that ground he ruggedly defended the Reformation principles. If you wish to read about it, see his work LETTER TO SADOLET and TRACTS FOR REFORMING THE CHURCH. Divisions based on the grounds mentioned above, could not--in the minds of the reformers--be thought of as schism or unnecessary divisiveness.

Immediately there were reformation churches through the northern and western parts of Europe. The groups tended to take on the characteristics of the leaders whether the leaders desired it or not. The next step was for each group to erect certain doctrinal and emotive barriers against the other groups. And so we see the "seamless robe" became something of a remnant shop.

In time many divisions were formed along the general lines the reformers had thought legitimate. Reason gave way to indulgence. We cannot think the reformers could have had the wildest notion about the proliferation of church bodies that would come from the first moves. The premises for schism were "the Gospel and the sacraments" but this was often a sort of scapegoat concealing personal and ulterior motives.

Now when time sorts out all of this, as it always does, we discover how quickly the pendulum turns. Time shows that many of the