

the subjective assessments. The values placed on the objective concepts are virtually all subjective: so we spend a fair amount of time in history with such questions as "Why did he do that?" "What was the real motive?" "Would another action have produced a better result?" "What if. . .", etc. The person is known, the result is known, and probably many of the events are known. But what it all means is very much a subjective matter as viewed by the differing writers. We only know of history as it has been given to us and the materials are part of a package which cannot be sorted out easily. As they show us the working of the human mind with its fondness for adventure and intrigue, they actually help us understand more fully the course of history and, perhaps not surprisingly, ourselves.

No doubt a cautious reader will see that even our articulation of subjective assessments is somewhat subjective. At times what seems to one party to be a stark, naked fact, appears to another as meaningless propaganda. This hurdle should not trouble us, however, until we come to the place where we actually look at a span of history and try to identify the parts. Let us note the particular aspects of subjective assessment given below.

### **(1) The Interpretative Ideal of the Historian**

Perspective is the key word in this element and the basic question is: "How does the historian view matters?" Many of us cut our teeth, so to speak, in the study of history at a time when many of the historians were romantic idealists. Washington never lied, Jackson was never afraid, Lincoln always fulfilled his word; in theology the Roman Church was never right, and a Calvinist was a synonym for a truly dedicated Christian. Somewhat later a group of negativists began rewriting history and correcting these myopic glosses. According to them, Washington only told the truth when threatened, Jackson was cowardly but had a quick draw, Lincoln only kept his word in biographies while in theology there were no truly honest men in the church since Jesus and Calvinist was a term describing a person of inferior emotion and exalted ego! This "revisionism" is plainly seen in church history<sup>6</sup> although not all writers go to the same extent -- naturally. Obviously an account of the deliberation of the Council of Nicaea as written by Hosius would have a very different concept of the events that took place from one written by Eusebius of Nicomedia. Varying interpretative ideals would make that singular Council appear as if it were hardly the same meeting at all.

Some students do not think that interpretative ideals are part of history. But as no history is written with total objectivity, the ideal in the mind of the writer is as much a part of the study as are the occurrent facts. We compare works of one side with parallel works of another and try to observe consistent slants on given facts. In such a manner one would quickly detect the interpretative ideal of D'Aubigne on one hand or Cardinal Gibbons on the other. The nature of the ideal then compels us to view the recorded facts as being only partially presented and so our conclusions are tentative and guarded. In modern speech we would say of