

We are not certain of the historicity of this account,<sup>11</sup> but the incidental idea gives us a small narrative with which to demonstrate our content ideas. The names of the persons, the place, and the occasion are the facts of history. How John perceived Cerinthus, why he was going to bathe on that day, and whether or not his reasoning had foundation in fact are part of the subjective assessments. That the two men should arrive at approximately the same time, know one another and have the ability to react is a matter of providential arrangement. The subjective concepts give life to the bare facts and the overriding influence of God makes us realize that apart from some strange government of circumstance the whole thing might never have happened at all.

The content of history was not lost in the classes of Allan MacRae. The facts were lived out, the viewpoint of the teacher and the analyzing of situations were a constant thrust. God, at the same time, was regarded as the real force in the lives of men.

## **THE APPROACH OF HISTORY**

History, made worthwhile by its content, becomes interesting through the approach of the historian. We are not now talking of the technical approach -- whether e.g., one prefers the ideology of Spengler to that of Augustine, but of the practical approach as to how one views the services and demands of history. This is a critical point in our discussion for the observation is that the value of history is indisputable but it is often obscured by a dull involvement. The best food can be rendered unpalatable if the preparation is inferior or the seasoning too much. So it is with history, if it is poorly approached it may become an unwholesome burden hardly fit for the diet of the student. The approach to history will largely determine its interest value. Our postulate is simple: approach it as a living matter and it will be a living influence in the life of the student; approach it as a corpse and it will have a similar effect in the student life. Approaching history as a living matter involves several interesting steps which were apparent in the methods of Dr MacRae.

### **(1) A Positive Attitude by the Teacher**

This is absolutely basic. One who seeks to lead another in history needs a positive and creative attitude. The teacher must see the value of the discipline and sense the worth it offers to others. A disenchanting lecturer of obscure proposition is one of the fastest ways known to turn a history course into a disaster.

The unhappy fact is rendered doubly true in the light of the fact that so much of the content of history is not pleasant in itself. In the history of the church it is inevitable but what great emphasis will be given the heresies, schisms, factions, and ill-will that have so tortured the church. These are among the components of history but the very force of them can be depressing and a depressed teaching is not going to promote vigorous class