

I.7 Approaching History

Approaching History

The basic approaches and the philosophies represented are seen in chart form on page 6. In a brief word, these three basic approaches are:

1) The Linear approach...history is an on-going narrative with process, progress, regress, etc., until the end.

2) The Cyclic approach...states that history repeats itself on a predictable, almost fatalistic, pattern.

3) The Conic approach sees history repeating itself on an ascending cycle...the top of which is the consummation of all things by God in an eschatological sequence.

TVT follows the third of these but he is not one of the known historical philosophers.

History teachers, perhaps more than any other group of educators, often have axes to grind and points to make in their study of history...they think of themselves as mind-benders, not mere reciters of the past. One's philosophy cannot help but affect one's interpretation of facts as well as that of ideas and interpretations. The wise student seeks to understand the standpoint of his mentor before being too easily led to conclusions that are being pressed. How the teacher approaches history is dramatically important therefore. And our brief analysis of approaches does not exhaust the field...a number of alternate, syncretistic, etc., ideas may be found in history reading. Remember that figures do not lie but liars sometimes figure...and the same may be said for the history faculties. In this line you might find the article of TVT in the MacRae Festschrift HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION worth reading. It is the chapter entitled.."Church History Revisited."

I.7.a

Components of History

In approaching history one must be mindful of components, the stuff that makes it up. The following is not a complete categorization but touches the major areas:

1) records: written and oral..and they will include some things that are matters of fact,