

That historical theology is indeed first among the theological disciplines is clear. While an answer to its question is necessarily presupposed by both systematic and practical theology, it does not presuppose answers to either of their questions. On the other hand, it anticipates answers to both of their questions.

Equally clear is why practical theology is last among the three disciplines. While it necessarily presupposes answers to the questions of both systematic and historical theology, neither of them presupposes an answer to its question. On the other hand, both of them anticipate such an answer.

But no less clear is why systematic theology is central among the three disciplines. Without answering its question, as well as the question of historical theology, practical theology is impossible. At the same time, answering its question, as well as the question of practical theology, is the whole point of historical theology. In other words, systematic theology presupposes an answer to the question of historical theology, while historical theology anticipates an answer to the question of systematic theology; and systematic theology anticipates an answer to the question of practical theology, while practical theology presupposes an answer to the question of systematic theology.



Historical theology is first because it presupposes neither systematic nor practical theology, but anticipates both.

Practical theology is last because it presupposes both systematic and historical theology, but anticipates neither.

Systematic theology is central because it presupposes only historical theology, which anticipates it as well as practical theology, while it anticipates only practical theology, which presupposes it as well as historical theology.