

The key to understanding the relation of the three theological disciplines to one another is the distinction between anticipating and presupposing.

Thus historical theology anticipates both systematic theology and practical theology, both of which presuppose it. This is why it can quite properly be said to be the first theological discipline.

On the other hand, practical theology presupposes both systematic and historical theology, both of which anticipate it. This is why it can quite properly be said to be the last theological discipline.

As for systematic theology, it presupposes historical theology, which anticipates it (as well as practical theology), even as it anticipates practical theology, which presupposes it (as well as historical theology). For this reason it can quite properly be said to be the central theological discipline.

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