

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

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- 411 Historical Theology. A study of the progress of the understanding of doctrine through the centuries, as expressed in writings of individual Christians and in church creeds. Prescribed, first year, two hours, interim.

I. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

A. The Nature of the Course

1. Character of the Subject

Subject
Matter

Historical Theology is a rather happy study in that it does concentrate on the fruits of theology rather than the problems. The problems are mentioned chiefly as they give rise to new developments and since these are, for the most part, edifying, the course can have an uplifting effect. If, at one time, we are appalled by the disclaimers of some -heretic, rationalist, or modernist, we are later rewarded by the character of the truth. In this way, historical theology has an advantage over direct church history, since in that discipline we are almost totally taken up with the foibles of men while in this discipline we are involved with what is known or apprehended of the truth. We are studying the progress of the understanding of truth and that is an enriching experience

Methods of
Study

The overall material may be approached in one of two ways. We may take a single doctrine and see how it is gripped throughout the entire passage of history. This is called the vertical approach. On the other hand, we may take the periods of history and see the character of comprehension of all or many doctrines during that time. This, if you can't guess it, is called the "horizontal" approach. We use something of a combination in this course although we lean towards the latter with our eventual synthesis being after the ideas of the former. Usually in a course like this if we speak of something being horizontal we are referring to a student who has gone to sleep.

You will quickly discover that the subject is large and it is not possible to get it all in mind quickly. But it is a happy study and one that becomes progressively more comprehensive and useful.