

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY



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Editorial

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This issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* is devoted to the topic of “Historical Theology.” The benefits of studying history are many. It can be of tremendous assistance to us in the present day. For example, history helps us to understand and gain perspective on our current situation and thinking. It can answer questions like: “How did we get to where we are now?” “Where did that idea or line of thought originate?” “From what tradition did that opinion stem?” In other words, history provides us with fresh insights from past knowledge as we evaluate and make sense of our present. History also helps us learn not to repeat the mistakes of the past and enables us to see how people long ago met challenges and dealt with the crises, problems, and obstacles that came their way. History is especially valuable when studying theology because it gives us a look at the specific contexts in which theologies were created, developed, and defined. This describes historical theology.

This journal volume features seven insightful articles. Madison Grace, assistant professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, presents the first article, “Early English Baptists’ View of the Lord’s Supper,” in which he seeks to discern the earliest understanding of the Lord’s Supper for seventeenth-century English Baptists. Malcolm Yarnell, professor of Systematic Theology, director of the Oxford Study Program, and director of the Center for Theological Research at Southwestern, also contributes a paper entitled, “Christopher Blackwood: Exemplar of the Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptists,” in which he engages in historiography using Blackwood and his thought as a paradigmatic test case to evaluate the competing histories of seventeenth-century Baptists. Andrew Spencer, Ph.D. student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, provides an essay entitled, “Andrew Fuller and the Doctrine of Revelation,” in which he puts together Fuller’s doctrine of revelation from his available published works and shows its essentiality and relevance to his ministry. Steve Lemke, provost and professor of Philosophy and Ethics at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, furnishes an article called “History or Revisionist History?” in which he explores claims as to whether the overwhelming majority of Baptists were five-point Calvinists, and also whether Baptist confessions in the South were five-point Calvinist confessions until the twentieth century. Rodney Orr, associate professor of World

Missions and Intercultural Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Shane Angland, Th.M. student at Dallas Theological Seminary, contribute an essay called, "Easter Celebration in Seventh-Century Britain: Resolving Conflict within the Church," in which they discuss the Easter debates of the seventh century and other deliberations on ecclesiological authority, cultural understanding, and early church traditions concerning the date of the celebration of Easter. Eugene Merrill, distinguished professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, contributes an article, "The Lifespans of the EB-MB Patriarchs: A Hermeneutical and Historical Conundrum," in which he considers the lifespans of the Early Bronze-Middle Bronze era patriarchs and asks how the lifespans of biblical figures need to be understood in light of their extra-biblical contemporaries which, as recorded in their writings, are at odds with those in Scripture. Lastly, Matthew Emerson, currently assistant professor of Christian Ministries and Chair of Arts and Sciences at California Baptist University, contributes an essay entitled, "Does God Own a Death Star? The Destruction of the Cosmos in 2 Peter 3:1-13," in which he provides an interpretation of 2 Peter 3:1-13 that counters the popular assumption that teaches that the universe will be annihilated at Christ's return. This issue also contains for your perusal several book reviews and abstracts of recent doctoral dissertations completed at Southwestern.

This issue will be the last one for me as the editor of *SWJT*. The seminary has graciously entrusted to me other important responsibilities that will not permit me to continue overseeing the journal's production as well. Madison Grace will become the new editor of *SWJT* and will serve you well in this role. It has been my privilege to serve you.

We pray that the articles in this issue will help to equip you in your preparation for engagement in ministry. If you would like to have any of our faculty members or students speak in your church, please do not hesitate to contact us. We aim to serve the church and are more than happy to serve you. Further, if God has called you into his service, please consider allowing us the privilege of preparing you at Southwestern for a lifetime of ministry. God bless you.