

In what way does the first historical phase of systematic theology already presuppose the second, hermeneutical phase?

The first, historical phase of systematic theology already presupposes the second, hermeneutical phase in this way: One cannot determine what is to count both in principle and in fact as formally normative witness without understanding what has, in fact, so counted in the past. But in order to understand what has, in fact, so counted, one must be able correctly to interpret past witness; and just such correct interpretation is the work, not of the first, historical phase of systematic theology, but of its second, hermeneutical phase.

In what way does the second, hermeneutical phase of systematic theology already presuppose the third, philosophical phase?

The second, hermeneutical phase of systematic theology already presupposes the third, philosophical phase in this way: One cannot correctly interpret formally normative witness without employing a conceptuality in which the truth about human existence in at least its purely formal aspect is understandably expressed. But in order to employ such a conceptuality, some such must be available; and making it available is the work, not of the second, hermeneutical phase of systematic theology, but of its third, philosophical phase.

1 June 1990