

I have argued elsewhere that an adequate analysis of just what is included in "necessary presuppositions of Christian faith" requires two distinctions: not only that between "presuppositions" and "implications," but also that between "formal" and "material presuppositions" (cf. Notebooks, 10 March 1997). But how, exactly, is this second distinction to be understood?

I'm inclined to answer, "Relatively, not absolutely," or, better, perhaps, "In practically all cases, relatively." By this I mean that whether x is a formal rather than a material presupposition in a given case depends on how it functions in *that* particular context, even though, in another, it might very well function as a material rather than a formal presupposition. The one apparent exception to this general rule is the case where the presupposition x is properly metaphysical, being either an existential or a transcendental. In that case, it may be said to function purely formally, not materially, although, relative to properly logical presuppositions in the usual narrow sense of "logic," as distinct from the broad sense that would include them, even existentials and transcendentals may be said to function, in their ways, as material rather than purely formal presuppositions.

For a parallel use of the same reasoning, see Notebooks, "On Implicit/Explicit Primal Authorizing Source," rev. 6 February 2001.

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