

Jean-Luc Marion, *Givenness and Revelation* (Gifford Lectures) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Jean-Luc Marion's Gifford Lectures, delivered in 2014 at the University of Glasgow and published under the title *Givenness and Revelation*, not only treat the event of revelation, but themselves become an event. To speak in Marion's terms, they saturate our hitherto knowledge and notions with a new look and content. Marion begins such with the words: "*Givenness and Revelation*: this title may provoke, or rather *must* provoke, a certain amount of surprise" (p. 1) - and indeed it is astonishment, shock, and surprise that are the first heraldings of an event.

In line with Lord Gifford's original intent, the lectures named after him are meant to explore natural theology and broaden knowledge of God. This is indeed the case with Marion's lectures, as he undertakes to develop the notion of revelation by way of his phenomenological tools, such as givenness (*donation*), anamorphosis, and the saturation of phenomena. Over the course of approximately 130 pages in four chapters, we receive a poignant analysis of the possibility of the phenomenon of revelation. This is not yet theology, although the phenomenology of revelation outlined therein might become a method for a new, more adequate theology. Already in the 1970s, Marion had noted that theology cannot be cultivated within the shackles of metaphysics, that is as onto-theology. Ever since, he has developed such categories as distance, the non-being of God, love, and now revelation. The latter notion has long been at work: it already appeared in Marion's 1992 article "Le phénomène saturé" and subsequently in the book *Being Given* from 1997. The lectures that make up the volume *Givenness and Revelation* testify to an ever-deeper immersion into this issue that would ultimately break out in Marion's 2020 work *D'ailleurs, la révélation*.

Taking revelation to be a philosophical or even phenomenological category might cause surprise - after all, revelation is considered to be a basic theological category. However, just as the very content of revelation, its "effectedness," is important to theology, so does the phenomenologist strive to investigate the very possibility of revelation. For Marion, it is obvious that it is not the subject that constitutes phenomena, but rather the latter come from elsewhere, on their own terms, proceeding forth from themselves, i.e., revealing themselves. Moreover, this phenomenon, coming from elsewhere and revealing itself, brings its own selfhood to the receiving subject (as witness?).

In the first two chapters of his work, Marion engages the epistemological interpretation of revelation, whose main representative is St. Thomas Aquinas, and demonstrates the need for a phenomenological framework. In a word, we do not know God, for then He would be an idol; instead, we accept Him as He is given. The paradigm of revelation is Jesus Christ, whom Marion describes in the third chapter as the icon of the invisible God. In the fourth chapter, the philosopher at last takes up the logic of the manifestation of the Holy Trinity. The main message and principle of the work is expressed in the affirmation that "Revelation manifests God insofar as he gives himself" (p. 117). Although manifestation is inherent in the logic of oversaturated phenomena, or paradoxes,

it is still a gifting of itself, i.e., love. The authors of the wonderful preface to the book under consideration are right on this account: "Discourse begins and ends in love and (...) God is known and therefore loved, by revelation" (p. xi). Theology, then, cannot be cultivated otherwise than within an erotic paradigm. And Marion's showing of this is a genuine event.