

Givenness and Revelation*Jean-Luc Marion*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016
(137 ss)

Questions about the notions of givenness and revelation, in our contemporary context, are being pushed further and further up the scale of significant theological and philosophical issues demanding fresh research. Jean-Luc Marion's thought-provoking book, comprised of the 2014 Gifford Lectures, engages with these massively important topics, but is hopefully just the beginning of an emerging interdisciplinary venture that will develop into a fuller project of exciting possibilities.

Marion deals, in chapter one, with some of the epistemological difficulties and complexities of the notion of revelation. He underscores historically, that is pre-Enlightenment, revelation, though important, was not necessarily a particular or systematic topic of investigation, largely due to patent assumptions about its character and content. Yet, in today's world, as Marion realizes, many of these conventions, previously taken for granted, have risen to the surface and thus created a host of uncertainties and queries. Just what is revelation? In order to get his bearings, Marion turns to the work of Thomas Aquinas. For Aquinas, Marion argues, God cannot be known through human reason alone, and thus knowledge of God is dependent on a revelation that originates with God. What ensues in this chapter is a fascinating discussion of revelation in a metaphysical and scientific context, which leaves the open question concerning the status of revelation. Depending

on one's response to this, one will either seek to validate or challenge the epistemological interpretation of revelation. Marion moves through Francisco Suárez, and Vatican I & II to develop this further and then draws out the first conclusion. Knowledge of God takes place within the context of revelation and revelation is neither merely a complement to nor a substitute for knowledge.

Marion next unpacks, in chapter two, the dense discussion of revelation and reason or might we say between the natural and supernatural. He interacts with philosophers, including Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger, as well as various biblical texts. The author argues that revelation is the attraction of the Father toward the Son and seeing Jesus as the Son of God, by the grace of God's revealing. Yet, Marion suggests that this knowledge for oneself only comes about through faith. At this stage, Marion develops a more theological direction, though not without a phenomenological dimension, which focuses on Logos and the resurrection of Christ, as what he calls saturated phenomena. He seeks to establish this through the biblical text and then returns to the notion of revelation at the close of the chapter.

The author devotes chapter three to Christ as saturated phenomena. This includes a lengthy and valuable discussion of mystery in the biblical text. Marion spends a fair amount of time in Paul's writings and the Gospels. He concludes that Christ is indeed the mystery of God. For Marion, this mystery is the saturated phenomena = Christ. Of course, whether

this is exegetically satisfying or not remains an open question for the reader to work out. Towards the end of the chapter, Marion raises, in particular through several verses in the Gospel of John, the notion of the Trinity, which he turns to next.

In chapter four, keeping with the phenomenological and theological concerns of the previous chapters, Marion explores various objections to the Trinity, notably those of Kant. He responds to these while defending the triune God through revelation and an appeal to several theologians, including Barth. The author moves from here to the essential issue of what he refers to as *the icon* as he discusses the configuration of God as Trinity, particularly in the formulation of Basil of Caesarea. Marion adds to this his delightful and profound view of the Holy Spirit, which unfolds in the closing pages of the chapter.

A short two pages, under the guise of conclusion, finishes the book. Marion suggests that aiming for a Conclusion is not very plausible. Neither philosophy nor theology, he argues, can offer closure on the issue of God. But where does that leave us? Marion has an intriguing reply, which sums up the notions of Givenness and Revelation.

This little book dealing with huge issues is a thick text and well worth reading. I highly recommend it.

Gregory J. Laughery

Christ in Evolution

Ilia Delio

Maryknoll, Orbis, 2014, (228 ss).

The Unbearable Wholeness of Being.

God, Evolution, and the Power of Love

Ilia Delio

Maryknoll, Orbis, 2015, (230 ss).

This is an innovative and enriching book. While not all will agree with Delio, *Christ in Evolution* offers a creative proposal of how to begin to integrate evolution and theology. How does evolution impact the theological enterprise? In other words, if evolution is true, which in her view is the case, how does this affect theology? According to Delio, Christianity can no longer ignore or set aside these types of questions. In fact, she argues, addressing them is central to an active and robust faith. Many aim to keep evolution and theology in separate compartments. No need for a dialogue between them. Such a ‘safeguard’ is often put in place to protect theology from any natural world challenges that might cause it to have to hit the ‘reset’ button. Delio, however, writing from a theistic and Christian perspective, removes these types of unhelpful barriers and embraces evolution *and* theology. Thus, she sets out in her book to explore something of what a ‘reset’ might look like. “Christ is the purpose of this universe and, as exemplar of creation, the model of what is intended for this universe, that is, union and transformation in God.” p. 8.

Delio is well aware of the heightening force of naturalism represented by Dawkins, Harris, and others. They hold that all can be explained naturalistically. She, by contrast, is careful to remain scientific, without being reductionistic. Her claim is that there’s much more than naturalism alone has to offer. Yet, it should not be