

The phenomenological openness of Revelation – Jean Luc Marion

The separation of the question of revelation from that of faith, plainly assumed in modern theology by the distinction between the two treatises *de revelatione* and *de fide*, afforded theology (or rather, as Kant lucidly amended it, afforded the *faculty* of theology) an advantage: the claim to be able to state rational theses, intelligible in themselves, and thus to establish itself as a science, or even to count itself among the “higher faculties” (to speak, again, like Kant), to the very point of claiming, by virtue of the operation of the subordination (or subalternation) of the sciences borrowed from Aristotle, to reign over all the other sciences. But this advantage had a price, which had to be paid in the end: because the scientificity laid claim to by theology remained unspecified and, above all, invalidated by the inaccessibility in this life of the *scientia Dei et beatorum* (which alone could ground it), revelation had to submit its supposedly “sufficient” propositions to the interpretation of the only reason actually available—the reason of the “natural light”, at least as it was made available by the metaphysical system. This counter-interpretation occupied the entire movement, first, of the English Enlightenment (from Herbert of Cherbury, beginning in 1624, to Locke with *The Reasonableness of Christianity* of 1695, and on to Hume, with his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* of 1779, not to mention John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious*, 1696, and Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation of the World, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature*, 1730), and then of the period of French *Lumières* (above all in *La confession de foi du vicaire savoyard*, in the fourth chapter of Rousseau’s *Emile, ou de l’éducation*, 1762), up to the *Aufklärung*, which closes the debate by raising it to the level of the concept (in Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* of 1793, which anticipates the conclusions that Kant, one year later, was bound to draw from his own critique of pure reason in the *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*). This counter-interpretation of revelation triumphed, at least apparently, because the most conservative defenders of “revelation” themselves came to invoke reason as a “natural revelation”. Apparently only, however, because at the very moment of this triumph, the victor revealed, in multiple ways, the imprecision of the very concept of “reason” it was employing to authorize its right to critique “revelation” (understood as a science).

This imprecision was revealed in “multiple ways”—or at least in two quite identifiable ways—particularly through the notions of “critique” and of “concept”. “Critique” lays claim to the limits of “reason”, either in order to challenge biblical affirmations (or affirmations supposed to be biblical) as irrational (Spinoza called them thoughts of the imagination, Hume mere beliefs), or

in order to reformulate them according to its norms (sometimes by consciously straining the texts, as Kant claimed the right to do¹). But, in thus laying claim to “reason”, the question arose of the status and the legitimacy of the very limits that “reason” was imposing on “religion” (understood as “revealed”), without, however, this polemical contrast fixing the concept of the one or the other. Of course, from the Kantian point of view, the limits that “reason alone” imposes on the biblical texts are justified because they come from the limits that pure reason imposes on itself in its own theoretical exercise: to claim to know nothing by concepts (a priori) except that which intuition (in the forms of space and time) can give and thus validate: reason imposes on the epistemological claim of revelation only the limits that it imposes on its own epistemological function. But this argument is overturned immediately. For by what right can reason, which only legislates by virtue of its essential finitude, and which, with respect to this finitude, strictly confines itself to knowing only *objects*, claim to impose its limits, these norms of its finitude, on that which, on principle, proposes itself as a transgression of finitude through the intervention of the infinite? We do not have to wait for Hegel to oppose the question of the infinite and of the absolute to the “critique”; it is enough to listen to Schleiermacher: “Everything that exists is necessary for religion, and everything that can be is for it a true indispensable image of the infinite.”² And moreover, when philosophy imposes, in the name of *its* “reason”, a strictly moral interpretation of “revelation”, does it still respect its own limits? Doesn’t it surpass them by qualifying in this way finite morality with the advantageous title of a “moral god”, crowning finitude through “the acknowledgment of God as moral lawgiver”?³ In a word, if “reason”, as exercised in the end by the system of metaphysics, remains finite and “reason alone”, can it still impose, or claim to impose, without any other justification, its limits on that which is defined formally by the absence of or indifference to limits? Is what appears impossible *for* “reason”, which is to say, *for us* mortals, still impossible for the gods, or for those taking their place, *for whom everyone agrees that, if there are any gods*, nothing is impossible?⁴ Thus “reason”, by extending

¹ Kant: “Diese Auslegung mag uns selbst in Ansehung des Texts (der Offenbarung) oft gezwungen scheinen, oft es auch wirklich sein, und doch muß sie, wenn es nur möglich ist, daß dieser sie annimmt, einer solchen buchstäblichen vorgezogen werden, die entweder schlechterdings nichts für die Moralität in sich enthält, oder dieser ihren Triebfedern wohl gar entgegen wirkt — This interpretation may often appear to us as forced, in view of the text (of the revelation), and be often forced in fact; yet, if the text can at all bear it, it must be preferred to a literal interpretation that either contains absolutely nothing for morality, or even works counter to its incentives” (*Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* [1907–; repr., Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968], vol. VI, p. 110 [hereafter, references to this edition of the works of Kant will be abbreviated “AA” followed by the volume number]; English translation in Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, And Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], p. 118).

² Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern, II* (Berlin: Unger, 1799), p. 65; ed. Hans-Joachim Rothert (Hamburg: Meiner, 1958, 1970), p. 37; English translation: *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 1996), p. 28.

³ J. G. Fichte, *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. I. H. Fichte (Berlin: Veit, 1845), V, p. 53; English translation: *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, ed. Allen Wood, trans. Garrett Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 40.

⁴ On this status of the impossible *for us*, which is yet possible *for the gods and for God*, see my analysis in *Certitudes négatives*, chapter II (Paris: Grasset, 2010), pp. 86–137; English translation: *Negative Certainties*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 51–82.

the jurisdiction of its finitude to that which at the very least claims to be free of it, namely the infinite, attests to the indecisiveness of its own concept.

Now, the concept we are left with when we question the concept of “reason”, namely the very concept of a “concept”, likewise offers a similar indetermination. Hegel, still more directly than Fichte and Schelling, had seen and wished to surmount the Kantian difficulty: finite reason can legislate only within the field of what it can know— finite objects—as well as its own intuitions, concepts, and apperception. In order to become actually universal, finite reason will have to embrace the infinite itself *through a concept*: an infinite henceforth real, actually known in an absolute knowledge. Solely on this condition will finite reason be able to take on the domain of the infinite as it unfolds, among other instances, in “religion”, which will thus be legitimately called “revealed”. Once again, revelation will reveal nothing other than what reason itself had known, but this time, rightly so, since with regard to “reason”, we are now dealing with an absolute knowledge. Still to be justified is the extension of the concept of the finite to the infinite. This crucial difficulty defines the ultimate ambition and the deep-seated ambiguity of this positive realization of the system of metaphysics attempted by Hegel, before it collapses beneath its own weight in a negative realization (triggered by Feuerbach and completed by Nietzsche). Linked to “revelation”, every “philosophy of religion” (Hegel) understood as the elevation of the concept of the “philosophy of revelation” (Schelling), allows for the ambiguity of uniting in the same concept two terms that are *almost* equivalent: *revealed* knowledge (*geoffenbarte*) and knowledge that is *revelatory* or *uncovered* (*offenbare*) [*découverte*], evident and certain, or, as Descartes would say, clear and distinct.⁵ But can the uncovering [*découvrement*], the unveiling, and the putting into light that revelation works still be registered, even as an utmost crowning and final variation, within the *same* arrangement as that which, in the “reason” of metaphysics (even as it is taken up by the speculative dialectic), results in the showing, or even the taking clear possession of a statement disclosed without remainder to the absolute spirit as a truth that is itself definitively established? Can and *must* whatever is *uncovered* by revelation still be registered within the field of what reason unfolds, *explains*, and *un-* conceals in the truth? When reason *unconceals* the truth (*alētheia*), does it proceed according to the same procedures and the

⁵ This equivalence, which is never explained, punctuates Hegel’s analyses; for example: “*In dieser Religion ist deswegen das göttliche Wesen geoffenbart. Sein Offenbarsein besteht offenbar darin, daß gewußt wird, was es ist. Es wird aber gewußt, eben indem es als Geist gewußt wird, als Wesen, das wesentlich selbst Selbstbewußtsein ist. . . . Dies — seinem Begriffe nach das Offenbare zu sein, — ist also die wahre Gestalt des Geistes*” (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. W. Bonsiepen and R. Heede, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9 [Hamburg: Meiner, 1980], p. 405 (eds. H.-F. Wessels and H. Clairmont, “Philosophische Bibliothek” no. 414 [Hamburg: Meiner 1998], p. 495). English translation: “Consequently, in this religion the divine Being is *revealed*. Its being revealed obviously consists in this, that what it is, is known. But it is known precisely in its being known as Spirit, as a Being that is essentially a *self-conscious Being*. . . . This—to be in accordance with its *Notion* that which is revealed—this is, then, the true shape of Spirit, and this its shape, the *Notion*, is likewise alone its essence and its substance” (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller [Oxford: Oxford University Press], 1977, pp. 459, 460).

same operations as revelation (*apokalypsis*) when it *uncovers* what it gives to be known?⁶

This question has until now never been asked, because the epistemological interpretation of revelation has always seemed to be obvious. This obviousness has masked the originality and the difficulty of the concept (if it is still necessary to speak of it in this way) of *revelation*, since its *uncovering* has been assimilated, without any critical precaution, to what the truth works when it *explains and unconceals*. Up to now, because of the fact of the epistemological interpretation of revelation and its consequences (the *propositio sufficiens*), the proper character of revelation as *apokalypsis* is itself still missing, masked by the obviousness of the truth as *alētheia*. Here it is necessary to make a clarification and a choice. The confrontation cannot and must not, in a preliminary inquiry, take place between the Greek meaning of *alētheia*, such as Heidegger, in a still unique or almost unique example, attempted to stage it with regard to Aristotle, Plato, and earlier thinkers, and the Jewish and Christian meaning of *apokalypsis*. This cannot be the issue here, not only because it goes beyond what *I* can merely sketch, but also because it is not what is actually required. As we already saw, the ordinary (and undetermined) concept of revelation remains modern and the result of a recent polemic between theologians and metaphysicians; it follows, then, that what “revelation” was deployed against and, at the same time, what it obscured—because the obviousness of its antagonism with “reason” closed access to its own determination or, at best, left it fundamentally undetermined—is not found in *alētheia* in its original meaning, but in the figure that it took at the moment of the constitution of the polemic between “reason” and “revelation”. This is to say that the dissimulation of revelation as *apokalypsis* takes its origin from the interpretation of *alētheia* as truth, in the sense of certainty’s showing of a clear and distinct representation in evidence. This moment—that of philosophical modernity initiated by the last of the scholastics and the philosophy of the Cartesian period—is identified with and as the constitution of the metaphysical system. It defines truth according to the conditions of the possibility of bringing something to certain evidence, or the two principles of metaphysics, as fixed by Leibniz in their paradigmatic formulae: the principle of contradiction and the principle of sufficient reason.⁷ These two principles, like two doors of bronze, frame access to the true proposition, which is henceforth the object of a possession, at the very least possible, in evidence that is certain. The proposition henceforth known according to this metaphysical definition of the truth can then elicit assent, become a belief grounded in reason, and, in short, receive the sanction of the will, according to Descartes’s formula: “a great light in the intellect was followed by a great inclination in the will—*Ex magna luce in intellectu magna consequuta*

⁶ We borrow the thematisation of this opposition from J. Vioulac, *Apocalypse de la vérité*, Paris, As Solem, 2014.

⁷ G. W. Leibniz, *Les principes de la Philosophie, ou monadologie*, §§ 31–32 (English translation in *G. W. Leibniz’s Monadology: An Edition for Students*, trans. Nicholas Rescher [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991], p. 21; original French is found on pp. 113 and 116).

est propensio in voluntate.”⁸ If one extends this epistemological model to “revelation”, by following, for example, the drift of Suárez, one gains a *propositio sufficiens*, which proposes the “revealed truth” in all its evidence to a will that, provided that it remains in good faith, and thus in faith, should approve it and hold it for true, so as, potentially, to love it.

Yet there is another conceivable determination of revelation as *apokalypsis* that not only differs from the truth understood according to the system of metaphysics, but inverts its terms. Although apparently marginal in the texts, its tradition crops up rather regularly, and with a perfect coherence. Thus we find, for example in William of Saint-Thierry, the two Cartesian terms, yet perfectly reversed: “. . . *non tam ratio voluntatem, quam voluntas trahere videtur rationem ad fidem*— for it is not so much the reason that draws the will [toward the evidence], as the will that draws the reason toward faith.”⁹ This reversal was thematized with the utmost clarity by Pascal, who knew quite well how to oppose Descartes’s adage: “Hence, instead of speaking about human matters that they have to be known before they can be loved, which has become a proverb, the saints, speaking of divine matters, say that you have to love them in order to know them, and that you enter into truth only by charity, which they have made into one of their most useful pronouncements.”¹⁰ And in fact, these two authors were commenting on a noteworthy formula of St. Augustine, which we must read in its full context:

⁸ René Descartes, *Meditatio IV*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, ed. Ch. Adam and P. Tannery (1908; new edition, Paris: Vrin, 1996), VII, p. 59 (subsequent citations of this edition will be indicated by the abbreviation “AT”, followed by the volume number in Roman numerals and, in Arabic numerals, the page number and, in some cases, the line number[s]); English translation: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. II, eds. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 41.

⁹ William of Saint-Thierry, *Speculum Fidei*, §25, in Marie-Madeleine Davy, ed., *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, Deux traités sur la foi* (Paris: Vrin, 1959), p. 46; English translation in William of Saint-Thierry, *The Mirror of Divine Faith*, trans. Thomas X. Davis (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1979), p. 33, modified. Gregory the Great describes this quite precisely: “*Sed inter haec sciendum est quia saepe et pigras mentes amor ad opus excitat, et inquietas in contemplatione timor refrenat. . . . Unde necesse est ut quisquis ad contemplationis studia properat, semetipsum prius subtiliter interroget, quantum amat. Machina quippe mentis est vis amoris, quae hanc dum a mundo extrahit, in alta sustollit. Prius ergo discutat, si summa inquirens diligit, si diligens timit, si novit incognita aut amando comprehendere, aut non comprehensa timendo venerari. In contemplatione etenim mentem si amor non excitat, teporis sui torpor obscurat; si timor non aggravat, sensus hanc per inania ad nebulam erroris levat*” (*Moralia in Job*, Bk. VI, 58, PL 75, cols. 762, 763, emphases added); English translation: “But herein it is necessary to know, that often at one and the same time *love stimulates inactive souls to work*, and fear keeps back restless souls in the exercise of contemplation. . . . Whence it is necessary that whoever eagerly prosecutes the exercises of contemplation, *first question himself with particularity, how much he loves. For the force of love is an engine of the soul*, which, while it draws it out of the world, lifts it on high. Let him then *first examine whether in searching after the highest things he loves*, whether in loving he fears, whether he knows either how to apprehend unknown truths, while he loves them, or not being apprehended to reverence them in cherishing fear. For in contemplation, *if love does not stimulate the mind*, the dullness of its tepidity stupefies it. If fear does not weigh on it, sense lifts it by vain objects to the mist of error” (Saint Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, trans. Charles Marriot and James Bliss [Oxford: John Henry Parker, London: J.G. F. and J. Rivington, 1844], Vol. I, Parts I and II, p. 358, emphases added).

¹⁰ See Blaise Pascal, *De l’art de persuader*, in *Œuvres complètes*, p. 355: “Et de là vient qu’au lieu qu’en parlant des choses humaines, on dit qu’il faut les connaître avant que de les aimer, ce qui a passé en proverbe, les saints au contraire disent en parlant des choses divines qu’il faut les aimer pour les connaître et qu’on n’entre dans la vérité que par la charité, dont ils ont fait une de leurs plus utiles sentences”; English translation in *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Anthony Levi (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 1999), p. 193 (I have commented on this thesis in *Sur le prisme métaphysique de Descartes*, §25 [Paris: PUF, 1986], p. 360 and following, and in *Au lieu de soi. L’approche de saint Augustin*, ch. III, §21 [Paris: PUF, 2008], p. 190 and following, to which I refer for the whole Augustinian horizon of this reversal). Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 29, p. 139 also quotes this fundamental text, which should be completed by reference to a subsequent remark: “Scheler first made it clear, especially in the essay ‘Liebe und Erkenntnis,’ that intentional relations are quite diverse, and that even, for example, love and hatred ground knowing. Here Scheler picks up a theme of Pascal and Augustine” (Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik*, §9, *Gesamtausgabe* 26 [Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978], p. 169 [subsequent references to this edition of the works of Heidegger will be indicated by the abbreviation “GA” followed by the volume number]; English translation: *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press], 1984, p. 134).

*Probamus etiam ipsum [sc. Spiritum Sanctum] inducere in omnem veritatem, quia non intratur in veritatem, nisi per caritatem: “Caritas autem Dei diffusa est,” ait apostolus, “in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est nobis” (Ro. 5, 5).*¹¹

In other words: just as revealed truth does not in fact and by right emerge [*ne se découvre*] except because the Holy Spirit, poured out in our hearts (according to St. Paul), leads us to it (*inducere*, echoing the *entrer* of Pascal and the *trahere* of William of Saint-Thierry), so the condition of the possibility of *uncovering* [*découvrement*] is no longer assured by the conditions of possibility of the experience of *finite* objects (namely critique, the principles of metaphysics, clear and distinct ideas, evidence that is certain), but by charity, which hence- forth plays the role of a condition of knowledge of that which, for finite reason, continues to appear as inaccessible and *impossible*, or better: unthinkable, at least if one accepts it *as impossible*.

We must measure the radical yet strange impact of such an overturning of the terms, wherein going forward the will should command the understanding: for the issue here is no longer the mere usage of reason in practice, where no one (especially not Kant¹²) contests the precedence of the will over the understanding: I make a decision according to what I will, then I apply my intelligence to the means of attaining the chosen goal. Instead, it has to do with the use of reason within theory, assuming that a *theoria* still remains conceivable when it passes under the control of the will. It remains to be seen whether this overturning truly and explicitly concerns the notion of revelation, in particular in St. Augustine, who—it has frequently been noted¹³— does not often speak of it. The beginning of an answer to these two questions could emerge from an attentive reading of one of the rare Augustinian formulations of revelation, one that is rather

¹¹ St. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, XXXII, 18, PL 42, 507; English translation: Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Vol. IV: St. Augustine, The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists* (1887; repr. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 338, modified: “. . . He [the Holy Spirit] leads into all truth, for the only way to truth is by love, and ‘the love of God’, says the apostle, ‘has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us’.”

¹² Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, AA, V, pp. 31–2: “Reine Vernunft ist für sich allein praktisch, und gibt (dem Menschen) ein allgemeines Gesetz, welches wir das Sittengesetz nennen. . . . einen Willen, d.h. ein Vermögen haben ihre [sc. die Menschen] Kausalität durch die Vorstellung von Regeln zu bestimmen”; English translation: “Pure reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the moral law. . . . a will, that is, the ability to determine their [sc. rational beings] causality by the representation of rules” (Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 165). Or: “Mit dem praktischen Gebrauche der Vernunft verhält es sich schon anders. In diesem beschäftigt sich die Vernunft mit Bestimmungsgründungen des Willens, welche rein Vermögen ist, den Vorstellungen entsprechende Gegenstände entweder hervorzubringen, oder doch sich selbst zur Bewirkung derselben. . . . d.h. seine Kausalität zu bestimmen”—“It is quite different with the practical use of reason. In this, reason is concerned with the determining grounds of the will, which is a faculty either of producing objects corresponding to representations or of determining itself to effect such objects . . . , that is, of determining its causality” (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, AA, V, p. 15; Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor, p. 148).

¹³ “No more than the other Fathers did St. Augustine deal *ex professo* with the idea of revelation,” notes René Latourelle (1963, p. 151). But how, then, are we to understand that “Incontestably, the theme of revelation is in the forefront of the Christian consciousness of the first three centuries” (Latourelle [1963], p. 152)? Would the *idea* be lacking when the *consciousness* of it was “incontestable”? Unless it is precisely the case that what is retrospectively called the (modern) *idea* of revelation has but little in common with that of which the Fathers had an “incontestably” clear *consciousness*: it would be fitting, then, to reform our idea of revelation on the basis of this consciousness.

surprising: “*Ista attractio, ipsa est revelatio*—This revelation itself is what draws.”¹⁴ This formula is grasped only as the result of a rather detailed commentary on John 6: 44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, *halkysē auton, traxerit eum.*” Yet an objection seems necessary: aren’t those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” the ones who, according to the Beatitudes, “shall be satisfied” (Mt. 5:6)? A desire, then, that is, a will, is indeed necessary if God is to fill it. In this case, how can one believe passively, through drawing and attraction (“*Nemo venit nisi tractatus*”), since we all experience that we believe only if we will it (“*credere non potest nisi volens*”¹⁵), and since if we do not will it, in fact we do not believe and, inversely, “to confess is to say what you have in your heart—*Hoc est enim confiteri, dicere quod habes in corde*”¹⁶ Yet there remains the declaration of John 6:44, which can be confirmed by the experience that “the soul is drawn also by love – *trahitur animus et amore*”.¹⁷ This aporia nevertheless opens the way to its surpassing: for in fact I am drawn very little through my will, and instead and above all through the desire for my pleasure (“*parum est voluntate, etiam voluptate traheris*”).¹⁸ This is verified not only by experience (“*Da amantem, et sentit quod dico* – Give me a man that loves, and he understands what I say”), nor even by Virgil’s authority (“*Trahit sua quemque voluptas*—Every man is drawn by his own pleasure”¹⁹), but by the Psalms themselves: “Take pleasure in the Lord (*delectare in Domine*), and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 36:4), or even, “. . . they shall be well satisfied with the fullness of Thy house; and Thou shalt give them drink from the river of Thy pleasure, for with Thee is the fountain of life” (Ps. 35:8–10). Not only are we permitted (*licet*), but we must (*debemus*) admit that we are “drawn”, swept along, pulled by the desire for pleasure when we love.²⁰ In the experience of being drawn, we experience nothing less than the logic of love: “*Amando trahitur*—By loving, one is drawn”.²¹ And yet, this attraction remains free, for without it we absolutely could not love. What is more: the spreading of this attraction into hearts (through the Holy Spirit) must be understood as what is proper to God in loving and causing love, for Christ would not draw if he did not make manifest the Father in himself, that is, if he did not reveal the Father: “*trahit revelatus Christus a Patre*—Christ revealed by the Father draws starting from the Father” (for the ablative concerns the two verbs,

¹⁴ St. Augustine, *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, ed. H. F. Berrouard, “Bibliothèque Augustinienne,” vol. 72 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1977), XXVI, 5, p. 496. English translation in *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11–27*, trans. John W. Rettig. The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation (Patristic Series), vol. 79 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), p. 264.

¹⁵ *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 2, p. 486; *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11–27*, p. 261 (modified).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 486; *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹⁷ *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 4, p. 490; *ibid.*, p. 262 (modified).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Virgil, *Eclogues* 2, p. 65.

²⁰ *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 4, p. 490 and 492; *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11–27*, p. 262.

²¹ *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 5, p. 496; *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11–27*, p. 264 (modified).

revelari/revelatus and *trahere*). Or again: “*Trahit Pater ad Filium eos qui propterea credunt in Filium, quia eum cogitant Patrem habere Deum*—The Father draws to the Son those who believe in the Son, who consider him the Son having such a Father / the Father having such a Son” (for the two accusatives can each govern the verb).²²

From this, two consequences, two essential features of a theological grasp of revelation, follow. (a) Revelation consists only in the attraction by the Father toward the Son, in order to see the Father in him: “*Ista revelatio, ipsa est attractio*”.²³ Whether this attraction is felt as gentle or violent²⁴ changes nothing: revelation exerts these two effects, simply because it brings itself to bear. We believe in God when we will it, clearly; but we will it only when we love that which we desire; and in the case of God, we receive this desire (desire for pleasure) from God alone: “A person is drawn to Christ who is given the gift to believe in Christ. . . . Unless this power is given by God, it cannot arise from free choice, because it will not be free for what is good if the deliverer has not set it free.”²⁵ Revelation assumes a plot, in which the attraction acts first on the will, which then makes the reason choose to see what it would otherwise not will to see. Seeing is the result of the decision to see, and this decision, made by me, nevertheless comes to me from elsewhere. I must make the decision to make a decision, will to be willing, in order to arrive at seeing. Revelation comes to me *from elsewhere*. (b) Nevertheless, the attraction holds as revelation only because it allows seeing Jesus as the Christ, that is to say, as the Son of the Father, as the visibility of the invisible. There is nothing to add: “*Nisi ergo revelet ille qui intus est, quid dico, aut quid loquor?*—Unless he who is within should uncover, what do I say, or what do I speak?”²⁶ Thus we understand better why vision (uncovering) depends on a will (decision): I see the Father only if I interpret (in “the Holy Spirit poured out in our hearts”) Jesus as the Son of God—if I *am willing* to interpret him in this way. Here we do not allow for any *propositio sufficiens objecti revelati*, known even without being believed (*sive credatur [...] sive non*²⁷), for without the

²² *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 5, pp. 496 and 494; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 11–27, pp. 263 and 264 (modified).

²³ *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 5, p. 496; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 11–27, p. 264. See: “*Revelare se voluit quid esset*” (*Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 10, p. 504).

²⁴ *Sermo* 131, 2, 2, PL 38, col. 730. See the “*potestatem adducendi et trahendi*—the power to lead and to draw” (*Contra Julianum*, V, 14, PL 44, col. 793; English translation in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Answer to the Pelagians, II: Marriage and Desire, Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians, Answer to Julian*, 1/24, trans. Roland J. Teske, SJ [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1998], p. 443).

²⁵ “*Ille quippe trahitur ad Christum, cui datur ut credat in Christum. . . . Quae potestas nisi detur a Deo, nulla esse potest ex libero arbitrio: quia nec liberum in bono erit, quod liberator non liberavit*” (*Contra duas epistolas Pelagiorum*, III, 6, PL 44, col. 553; English translation in *The Works of Saint Augustine: Answer to the Pelagians, II: Marriage and Desire, Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians, Answer to Julian*, 1/24, trans. Roland J. Teske, SJ [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1998], p. 119). See: “*Nemo igitur potest habere voluntatem justam, nisi nullis praecedentibus meritis acceperit veram, hoc est, gratuitam desuper gratiam*—None, then, can have a righteous will unless they have received true grace without any preceding merits, that is, grace which has been gratuitously given from on high” (*ibid.*, I, 7, col. 554; English translation: p. 119).

²⁶ *Commentaire de l'évangile de Jean*, XXVI, 7, p. 500; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 11–27, p. 265.

²⁷ F. Suarez, *De Trinitate* I, c.12, n.4, *Opera omnia*, éd. Berton, Paris, 1860, t.1, p. 372).

hermeneutic decision, there is nothing to see, nothing to believe, and nothing revealed. As regards revelation, the one who wants to see without yet having to believe sees nothing. Clement of Alexandria conceived of genuine *gnosis* in this way: “There is no knowledge without faith, nor faith without knowledge, no more than there is the Father without the Son—*oute g’ gnōsis aneu pisteōs, outh’ hēpistis aneu gnōseōs ou mēn oude ho patēr aneu uiou.*”²⁸ Revelation happens to me through hermeneutics, which is to say, through the *conversion* of one intentionality into another.²⁹

A direct heir of St. Augustine, William of Saint-Thierry contributes to the reinforcement of the theological understanding of revelation. (a) Taking up (freely) the Augustinian adage drawn from Isaiah 7:9, “If you will not believe, surely you shall not understand”, he contests, in terms that are already like those of Pascal, the notion that one could know the “divine things” without having first believed: “*In eis vero quae sunt ad Deum, sensus mentis amor est*—In those things which pertain to God, the sense that allows the mind to attain them is love”.³⁰ Here, “this science consists only in a mode or disposition of the mind for receiving [and taking up] those things which derive properly from faith”³¹; consequently, it is first necessary to believe, and therefore first to love, for the same operation is at play in both acts (*idipsum*): “Who knows without loving? Surely God is one and the same (*idipsum*)! To ponder him and to love him is the same (*idipsum*)! I say ponder *him* and not ponder *about* him. Many persons [only] ponder *about* him, because they do not love him. But no one ponders *him* without loving him.”³² Thus, to claim to know a *propositio sufficiens* without believing it would be equivalent to agreeing to be cared for and healed without trusting or loving one’s doctor.³³ There follows, then, this first conclusion: *no one can see that*

²⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromates*, V, 1, 1, ed. A. Le Boulluec, “Sources chrétiennes” no. 278 (Paris: Cerf, 1981), p. 25.

²⁹ This is what is confirmed indirectly by the use of the word *revelare* in the discussion about the error committed by St. Cyprian regarding the possibility of re-baptizing heretics: the lack of revelation that impacts him gives him an opportunity for humility and conversion (St. Augustine, *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, V, 6, PL 43, cols. 129–30). The argument is all the more significant in that St. Cyprian himself used it to explain how Paul was right against the initial position of Peter regarding the baptism of pagans (St. Cyprian, *Epistolae LXXI*, PL 4, cols. 410–11).

³⁰ William of Saint Thierry, *Speculum fidei*, §64, in Marie-Madeleine Davy, ed., *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, Deux traités sur la foi*, p. 76; English trans.: *The Mirror of Faith*, trans. Thomas X. Davis (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1979), p. 71, modified. See: “*fides voluntarius est assensus mentis, in eis quae fidei sunt; credere vero cum assensu de eis cogitare*—faith is a voluntary assent of the mind to matters of faith, but to believe is to deliberate on, while assenting to them” (ibid., § 23, p. 44; English trans., p. 31).

³¹ “*Scientia vero haec modus quidam est vel habitus mentis, ad suscipienda ea, quae proprie fidei sunt*” (*Speculum fidei*, § 50, p. 66; English trans. Davis, p. 58, modified).

³² “*Quis cogitat, et non amat? Nimirum Deus est idipsum est, quod cogitare et amare idipsum est. Ipsum dico, non de ipso. De ipso enim multi cogitant, qui non amant, ipsum autem nemo cogitat, et non amat*” (*Speculum fidei*, § 73, p. 84, emphases added; English trans. Davis, p. 81, modified).—This rule is so important that William does not hesitate to correct a verse from John 2:23, “... *quia credebant* [sc. certain hearers] *in eum quem non diligebant*” (in fact an unfounded amalgam of two verses from the Vulgate: v. 23, “... *multi crediderunt*...” and v. 24, “*Ipse autem Iesus non credebat semetipsum eis*”, where it is not the listeners who believe without loving, but Jesus who refuses his trust in those who say they believe and nothing more). William comments, “*Abusive quippe dictum de illis est, quia credebant in eum, quem non diligebant. Credere enim in eum, amando in eum ire est*—It has been said of them [those of whom it is said in the gospels that they believed in Jesus but he did not believe in them], incorrectly, that they believed in him whom they did not love. But to believe in him is to go to him by loving him” (*Speculum fidei*, § 43, p. 60; English translation, Davis, pp. 50–1).

³³ *Speculum fidei*, § 2, p. 26. In other words, “*Non credis, qui non diligis et non diligis, quia non credis* – You do not believe because you do not love; you do not love because you do not believe” (*Speculum fidei*, § 12, p. 36; English trans. Davis, p. 18).

which is uncovered (*apokalypsis*) unless she believes it.

(b) Next, taking up the Augustinian commentary on John 6:44 on revelation as attraction (“... nisi Pater traxerit eum”), William of Saint-Thierry repeats its logic: “If you do not will to believe, you do not believe. Yet you believe if you will it; but you do not will it unless you are first helped by grace. For ‘no one comes to the Son unless the Father draws him.’ . . . But you do not will to [believe] unless you are drawn by the Father; and if you will it, you will it because you are drawn by the Father.”³⁴ From this paradox he draws a significant consequence: willing consists in loving, and signifies nothing else. The will only wills if it finds and experiences an attraction that puts it into operation; now, this attraction, always coming *from elsewhere* (generally, from the thing willed), comes, in the case of God, from that which gives itself all the more to be loved as it itself loves, and consists only in love. From this point I can only will by loving, by a universal rule, but all the more so because what is *here* loved identifies itself with love: “*Voluntas enim haec aliquantus jam amor Christi est*—this will is in a certain sense already the love of Christ.”³⁵ This maxim, above all, must not be understood as a medieval anticipation of the implicit faith of the “anonymous Christian”, as if every will were unconsciously oriented toward Christ; rather, precisely the opposite: as the recognition of the fact that no will comes to will except in proportion to what attracts it, and thus to what it loves; we understand, then, that it wills more the more it loves Christ, who is God revealing himself as loving. In this way William of Saint-Thierry is able to take up, and even deepen, the Augustinian definition of love: “*Voluntas enim initium amoris est. Amor siquidem vehemens voluntas est*—The will is the beginning of love. Love then is a vehement will.”³⁶ Or: “*Nichil enim aliud est amor, quam vehemens et bene ordinata voluntas . . . bone voluntatis vehementia amor in nobis dicitur*— Love is nothing other than a will that is vehement and well-ordered—. . . we call love the vehemence of a good will.”³⁷ From this, a second conclusion follows: no one can see that which is uncovered (*apokalypsis*) unless he believes it; but no one can believe if he does not will it, and *no one can will unless he loves what he believes and*

³⁴ “*Equidem si non vis credere, non credis; credis autem, si vis; sed non vis, nisi a gratia preveniaris; quia ‘nemo venit ad Filium, nisi Pater traxerit eum.’ . . . Sed si vis credis, sed non vis nisi a Patre traheris; et si utique vis, quia Pater traxeris*” (*Speculum fidei*, §12, p. 34; English trans. Davis, pp. 17–18, modified).

³⁵ *Speculum fidei*, § 12, p. 36; English trans. Davis, p. 18 (modified).

³⁶ *Speculum fidei*, § 12, p. 36; English trans. Davis, p. 18. St. Augustine said: “. . . voluntatem nostram, vel amorem seu dilectionem, quae valentior est voluntas—our will, or love or dilection, which is only a stronger will” (*De Trinitate*, XV, 21, 41, ‘Bibliothèque Augustinienne,’ vol. 16, p. 532; English trans. Hill, p. 427, modified). See “. . . si tam violentia est [sc. voluntas], ut possit vocari amor; aut cupiditas, aut libido. . . if it [the will] is violent enough that one can name it a love, a desire, or a concupis- cence” (XI, 2, 5, p. 172; English trans. Hill, p. 307, modified). Complementary material to this doctrine can be found in *Au lieu de soi*, IV, § 28, pp. 250–1; *In the Self’s Place*, pp. 181–2. In this sense, one can rightly say that “*Amore quippe illuminatus, caritas est*—love enlightened is charity” (William of Saint Thierry, *De Natura et dignitate amoris*, § 15, PL 184, col. 387, and in ed. M. M. Davy, *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Deux traités de l’amour de Dieu: De la contemplation de Dieu. De la nature et de la dignité de l’amour* [Paris: Vrin, 1953], p. 88; English translation: William of St. Thierry, *The Nature and Dignity of Love*, trans. Thomas X. Davis [Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1981], 67).

³⁷ *De contemplando Deo*, § 18: *Deux traités de l’amour de Dieu*, pp. 52, 54. See: “. . . vehementer velle, quod est amare” (§ 21, *Deux traités de l’amour de Dieu*, p. 56).

wills to will.

This leads to the third and most decisive conclusion. No one can see that which is uncovered (*apokalypsis*) unless she believes it; but if no one can believe if she does not will to do so, and no one can will if she does not love, then no one can see unless she loves—and thus, in the end, *in a situation of revelation (apokalypsis, uncovering), knowing is the same as loving*, which is the contrary of the situation of truth (*alētheia, unconcealment*), where knowing means seeing and knowing directly: “*Ratio docet amorem, et amor illuminat rationem*—reason teaches love and love illuminates reason.”³⁸ Or further: “. . . *amor ex fide spe mediante per cognitionem oritur; et fides itidem in amore per cognitionem solidetur*— . . . love arises from faith through the knowledge that hope mediates.”³⁹ Love knows and makes itself known, but on *one* condition: that its freedom to set the conditions of *its* knowledge be recognized; that is, that it be free to begin with the will, insofar as it can first be converted and convert the mind. This condition defines what going forward we shall call *uncovering*, or in other words *apokalypsis*. Such an uncovering of love by itself puts into operation a rule known by the Church Fathers: “to learn one’s knowledge *about* God *starting from* God, *para theou peri theou . . . mathein*.” Put another way: “The Lord taught us that no one can know God unless God himself is the Teacher; that is to say, without God, God is not to be known—*Edocuit autem Dominus quoniam Deum scire nemo potest nisi Deo docente, hoc est, sine Deo non cognosci Deum*.”⁴⁰

Nevertheless, an objection arises here, all the more forceful in that it does not challenge the logic of uncovering (*apokalypsis*), but seems simply to draw from it the consequence that what is at stake here is the logic of faith, which assumes as secured the discourse that it affirms, according to its definition; this discourse and this logic in themselves remain legitimate, but they cannot be joined to concepts or to reason, which, for their part, must directly see in order to know, and know in order to will, according to the logic of unconcealment (*alētheia*). And yet, this division, traditional as it may seem, is not obvious; nor can it be accepted, even from the point of view of

³⁸ *De Natura et dignitate amoris*, § 25, p. 102. See: “*Voluntas crescit in amorem, amor in caritatem, caritas in sapientia*—the will . . . grows into love, love into charity and charity into wisdom” (§ 4, p. 74; English trans. Davis, p. 53).

³⁹ *Speculum fidei*, § 36, p. 54; English trans. Davis, p. 42, modified.

⁴⁰ Respectively: Athenagoras of Athens, *Legatio*, VII, 2, ed. W. R. Schoedel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 14; and Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 6, 4, ed. Adelin Rousseau, “Sources chrétiennes”, no. 100, vol. 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1965), p. 446. See also Clement of Alexandria: “it is only through divine grace and through the Logos alone, which is with Him, that one knows the unknown, *monô tô par’ autou logô to agnôston noein*” (*Stromates*, V, 82, 4, p. 160); Gregory the Great: “*When we love the supercelestial things we have heard about, we already know the things we love, because love itself is knowledge*—*Dum enim audita supercoelestia amamus, amata jam novimus, quia amor ipse notitia est*” (*Homilia in evangelia*, II, 27, 4, PL 76, col. 1207, emphasis added; English translation: Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. Dom David Hurst [Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1990], p. 215); and John of Damascus: “No one can know God unless God instructs him; that is, God is not known without God—*aneu theou mē ginē skesthai ton theon*,” *Sacra Parallela* (ed. Pierre Halloix, *Illustrium Ecclesiae Orientalium scriptorum secundi saeculi vitae et documenta*, vol. 2, [Douai: Bogardi, 1633], p. 483, and Karl Holl, *Fragmenta voricänischer Kirchenväter aus den Sacra Parallela* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899], p. 61, quoted by Adelin Rousseau, in Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses*, p. 446; see also “Sources chrétiennes” no. 100, vol. 1, p. 54 and following). And of course, see Pascal: “God can well speak of God” (*Pensées*, ed. Lafuma, § 303; trans. A. J. Krailsheimer [London: Penguin, 1995], p. 95).

faith, without comment. For at issue here are two *logics*, each deriving from a *logos*; and the *logos tou staurou* (1 Cor. 1:18) is a *logos*, as well, to the point that God himself appears under the title of *Logos* (Jn. 1:1). Moreover the “wisdom of the world” could not contradict the “wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:20-21), nor could the two overturn each other in a “foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:18, 20, 24) if they were not first confronting one another under a single logic. In fact, the “foolishness” arises only because the logic does not succeed in consolidating itself; and it does not succeed because we, as “the world”, as the Greeks that we pride ourselves on following in *our* understanding of logic, “look for wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:22), just as Aristotle searched for it; we never ask why the “ever sought-for science” still remains “aporetic” for us (*aei zetoumenon kai aei aporoumenon*)⁴¹; we never question the evidence of our conception of either wisdom or logic. The *apokalypsis* of the uncovering does not appear without logic, as we have seen; but it places another logic, which it claims is more powerful, yet still logical, in opposition to the unconcealment of *alētheia*. The question of the relation between uncovering and unconcealment, between *apokalypsis* and *alētheia*, takes place not outside but inside of logic. Or, more precisely, the question is whether *our* conception of logic can lord it over every other *logos*, even the *logos* of the *Logos*, or if instead it can and must allow itself to be reshaped by the logic of the *Logos*.

Reformulated in this way, the weight of the question thus bears first of all on philosophy and on the limits of its logic. At issue is whether philosophical logic must reform its principles in order to avoid becoming foolish in front of the *Logos*. For, at least as the biblical event claims, the *Logos* uncovers itself, it phenomenalizes itself. But what philosophy, or rather logic as developed by the system of metaphysics, understands by a phenomenon does not allow us to conceive of the *Logos* phenomenalizing itself. Where does the difficulty lie? In the fact that the *Logos*, even and above all when it manifests itself (“coming in the likeness of men and found *as* a man in his figure, *skēmati heuretheis hōs anthrōpos*” Phil. 2:7), manifests itself precisely *as* a man, not as an object. Metaphysics, however, conceives the phenomenon first of all as an object, which appears according to the conditions of experience: “The *a priori* conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time [*zugleich*] conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience.”⁴² That the phenomenon does not reduce to the object means that it does not necessarily appear based on the gaze that foresees it (in the pure forms of its intuition), which conceives it in advance (according to the *a priori* concepts of its understanding), and which synthesizes it (in terms of its active apperception); rather, it appears or *may* appear based on

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z, 1, 1, 1028b3 (Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Books I–IX*, with an English translation by Hugh Tredennic [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968], p. 312, modified).

⁴² Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 111; *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 234. On the interpretation (including, among others, the Kantian interpretation) of the phenomenon as an object, see my *Certitudes négatives*, ch. V, §26, p. 253 and following; *Negative Certainties*, p. 162 and following.

itself. Thus the phenomenon, or at least certain phenomena, would not only have to appear in the opening of the visible, but would have to appear there by imposing themselves in terms of themselves. And indeed, in its most radical ambitions, philosophy, in the form of phenomenology, has had no other goal than this one: to allow the phenomenon to broaden out itself in itself, and to show itself from itself (*das Sich-an-ihm-selbst Zeigende*).⁴³ But in order that the phenomenon show itself in itself and from itself—that is, in principle, in order that it abolish the Kantian interdiction that reserved the *in-itself* to the thing insofar as it *does not appear*—it is necessary that this appearing not owe its appearing to the conditions of possibility of a foreign experience (that of the transcendental *ego*), but that it draw its appearing from itself, and itself alone; it thus must happen from itself—in a word, it must give itself. Put another way, the phenomenon proposes itself (*sich darbietet*) in intuition and, in the limits of this intuition, it claims in principle that we receive it and accept it (*annehmen*) as it gives itself (*wie es sich gibt*).⁴⁴ The phenomenon *shows itself*, then, from itself and in itself, because and in as much as it *gives itself* in person from itself. From a synthesized or constituted object, it *transforms* itself into an event, sprung up from nowhere else than from its own abandonment to itself. Such a transformation, such a passage from one form to another can happen within the strict field of philosophy, and phenomenology aims at nothing other than describing such phenomena in general that veer from object to event. Phenomenology designates them under the name of saturated phenomena. It so happens that Christ, taken in his “figure as a man” (Phil. 2:7), also shows himself insofar as he gives himself. For Christ, once resurrected, shows himself in full phenomenality (*ephanerōthē*)⁴⁵ “among” men (Jn. 20:19). But exegesis has rightly remarked that he shows himself from himself, that he bursts forth into the visible on his own initiative, as the passive aorist (*ōphthē*) indicates: he *rendered himself visible, made himself seen*.⁴⁶ But this visibility comes from beyond death, since he *gave and thus received* his life absolutely, because freely: “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down [*tithēmi*] my life, that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down [*tithēmi*] of my own accord. I have power to put it down [*theinai*], and I have power to take it up again” (Jn. 10: 17–18).⁴⁷ As resurrected, and thus as the pre-eminent phenomenon, because out of the ordinary, Christ shows himself in such an exceptional way because and insofar as he gave himself

⁴³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 19th ed. (1927; repr., Tübingen, Germany: Max Niemeyer, 2006), § 7, p. 28.

⁴⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie: Erstes Buch, Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, vol. III of *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl Gesammelte Werke* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950–), p. 52, hereafter designated by the abbreviation “Hua”; English trans. F. Kersten, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book, General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 44.

⁴⁵ Mk. 16:12 and 14; Jn. 14: 21, 22 and 21:1, 14; 1 Jn. 1:1.

⁴⁶ See Mt. 17:3; Mk. 9:4; Lk. 9:30 and 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:6, 7, 8.

⁴⁷ See also Jn. 5:26. It is from within this frame that one must hear, “he who loses his life [his soul, *psykhēn*] for my sake will find it” (Mt. 10:39; see Mk. 8:35; Lk. 9:24). And again, Jn. 12:25: “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

in an exceptional way. Thus, in the central phenomenon of biblical uncovering, we find the two characteristics of the phenomenon in its properly phenomenological (not metaphysical) definition: as event, and no longer as object.

It remains, then, to clarify this description of the One who is risen as a saturated phenomenon. I will limit myself to the succinct examination of three determinations. According to the first, the *saturated phenomenon*⁴⁸ is defined by the excess within it of intuition over the concept or signification, and contrasts with the common-law phenomenon (and even more, the poor phenomenon), which, according to metaphysical phenomenality, only allows two other relations among the terms: either the deficit of intuition with regard to signification, which intuition only validates partially (but sufficiently for the usage, or even the knowledge, of the technological object), or the equality between them (in the case of evidence, the intuition of the true which fills the whole signification). When on the contrary intuition, far from being exhausted in the concept, submerges the signification that it formalizes, as in the cases of an event, an idol (or, the maximum of the visible for a given gaze), my flesh, and the icon (the face of the other), the one who sees the phenomenon must accept to see it without foreseeing it (through an already known concept), without explaining it (through a relation, whether causal or otherwise), and without repeating it (by fabrication). She must take note, with incontestable empirical evidence, of that which imposes itself without letting itself be understood. In this way the event leaves us speechless and with no way out, because in the event we are deprived of every signification that would make it conceivable, which is to say possible (in the metaphysical sense), and it imposes on us an actuality which, having never been possible or thinkable in advance, merits precisely the title of impossible. “That’s impossible!” This cry in front of what nevertheless imposes itself on us as a fact rightly characterizes the saturated phenomenon. It leaves us literally without speech, without words for saying it, without concepts for understanding it. Of course, we will as a result talk about it all the more, but always after the fact, in order to find for it, or rather to find *again* for it hypothetical explanations, debatable causes, all drawn from effects that, alone, are indisputable. In short, we will talk about it, using endless hermeneutics that are ever in need of correction or completion, and without saying anything—or more precisely, without significations adequate to the excess of the given over what we might understand of it, or to the excess of the given over what we can organize as a visible that shows itself. This situation of the excess of the given *in itself*, over the showable as visible *for us*, which is already banal in common experience, is verified impeccably and paradigmatically in front of the phenomenon of the manifestation of Christ.

Thus at the Transfiguration, the disciples who were permitted to glimpse by anticipation the glory of the resurrection not only did not doubt that his “countenance became altered” (Lk. 9:29) “like the sun” (Mt. 17:2), and his garments “like light” (Mt. 17:3) “of a whiteness so intense [*lian*], as no fuller on earth could

⁴⁸ I refer the reader to the more detailed analysis provided in *Etant donné. Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1997) IV, §§ 21–23, p. 329 and following; *Being Given*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 199–233.

bleach them” (Mk. 9:3). Not only is intuition not lacking, but the difficulty in seeing on the contrary arises from its excess: the disciples fall on their faces, unable to bear the intensity of the vision, and they “are exceedingly (*sphodra*) afraid” (Mt. 17:6).⁴⁹ Consequently, the real difficulty in front of this saturated phenomenon arises from the “lack of divine names” (Hölderlin), or at the least, the lack of words appropriate to this manifestation of divinity. When Peter tries to say something (about the three booths that it would be “well” to set up for Christ and the two figures assumed to be Moses and Elijah), he borrows a traditional concept, one at his disposal: probably the *philoxenia* of Abraham (Gen. 18:1–15), which is completely inadequate; and the texts specify immediately that “he did not know what to say, *mēeidōs ho legei*” (Lk. 9:33; Mk. 9:6). The adequate signification will not come from those who see the phenomenon but, in the end, from the phenomenon itself, since it is “a voice coming from the cloud”⁵⁰ that delivers the signification that is adequate to this excess of intuition, that is, a signification that is itself excessive and, literally, incomprehensible: “This is my beloved Son, listen to him.” A signification that was already delivered at the time of the baptism in the Jordan,⁵¹ but not truly understood by its hearers. A signification that was taken up again at the last public manifestation, at the Temple before the Passion (Jn. 12:27–8), and similarly misunderstood, or squarely refused. The quasi-impossibility of naming Jesus, of giving him a name, His Name, is the result, at least at the level of a phenomenological analysis, of a deficit of the concept at the very moment of the superabundance of intuition. Thus Herod wonders, in response to the report of “all that was done” by him: “Who is he?” (Lk. 9:7–9). Likewise, the man born blind healed at the pool of Siloam is astonished that the priests of the Temple, to whom, in accordance with the Law, he had made known his healing, and who accuse him, do not know how to identify his healer: “In all of this, what is so astonishing is that you do not know where this man comes from, *ouk oidate pothen estin*” (Jn. 9:30). After the Resurrection, the disciples on the road to Emmaus are not lacking in intuition (“. . . Jesus himself drew near and went with them”)⁵²; but, because they lack adequate significations (those, precisely, that Jesus gives them by interpreting to them the Scriptures in order to show how they apply to him and the events in Jerusalem), they understand nothing (*anoetoi*), and thus they *see nothing* (*bradeis tē kardia tou pisteuein*, Lk. 24:25). Only with a final signification, the sign of the eucharistic bread, will they understand: the uncovering takes place only when the signification come from *elsewhere* allows the intuition of the one who already gave himself from himself to show itself in a complete phenomenon. In fact, the same goes for Mary Magdalene, who certainly “sees, *theorei*” Jesus, but without recognizing him, at least before the adequate signification—the very voice of Jesus, who names her: “Mary!”—comes upon her and in this way he makes himself recognized

⁴⁹ See Mk. 7:7. Moreover, this is like the women at the tomb after the Resurrection, in Mk. 16:8.

⁵⁰ Mt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35.

⁵¹ Mt. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22.

⁵² On this episode, see a more complete commentary in “Ils le reconnurent et lui-même leur devint invisible”, in Marion, *Le croire pour le voir*, chapter IV (Paris: Parole et silence, 2010), pp. 195–205; English translation: “They recognized him; and he became invisible to them”, trans. Stephen E. Lewis. *Modern Theology* 18:2 (April 2002), pp. 145–52.

(Jn. 20:14, 16). And likewise for the disciples who, having returned to being fishers of fish, see him on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias and “did not recognize him” (Jn. 21:4), until he gave them, with the grilled fish, the sign of the missing signification. As saturated phenomenon, and pre-eminently so because arising radically *from elsewhere*, the unveiling of Christ imposes an excess of intuition that provokes the deficit of signification that is in him: his very name becomes either the index of the absurdity of the phenomenon, or the signification itself that is come *from elsewhere*, heard, and yet inconceivable (“This is my Son, listen to him!”, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”). This name can only be heard as an inconceivable absurdity, or as the Name itself. As a result, this signification is literally defined as a sign that contradicts what *we* consider as *our logic*, the “sign of contradiction, *sēmeion antilegomenon*” (Lk. 2:34–5), the *logos* which, in the name of the *Logos*, goes against the *logos*.

A second determination of the manifestation of Christ as saturated phenomenon now becomes conceivable: here the *I* takes on the status of a *witness*.⁵³ Under *alētheia* or unconcealment, the *I* always determines the phenomenon through anticipation, whether this is the anticipation of its apperception, or that of its intentionality; by definition, the phenomenon will be known to the *I*, since the *I* will organize its entire possible intuition according to the concept or signification that it will have assigned to it *in advance*. The *I* knows of what it speaks, since in a radical sense it speaks of what it has itself rendered visible (if not already produced in visibility) on the basis of its aim. The concept or the intentional signification, moreover, would not sometimes turn out to be empty unless, precisely, it had not first been laid out in advance over the phenomenon that then might be given to sight (by sufficient intuition), or not. The *I* always knows more of its intentional object than it sees of it, since it has no need truly to see it (in full intuition) in order to know it, at least in its signification (or concept). The *I* knows (or can know) its phenomenon without the phenomenon fully appearing, or appearing as such. But in front of a saturated phenomenon, this posture becomes untenable for the *I*: indeed, the excess of intuition over the signification or significations (or concepts) available forbids not only knowing without having to see (everything), but above all knowing adequately, precisely because one foresees all too well. Without question, the witness sees, but without managing to inscribe the superabundant intuition in the synthesis (through recognition) of the concept, or in the (noematic) constitution of the signification. The witness knows what he says, quite certainly and surely, since he speaks of what he has received through intuition (sight, audition etc.); but he *does not understand* what he says, since he cannot unify it in a comprehensive concept, or identify it in a sufficient signification (*propositio sufficiens*). What is more, when the witness (in the policing and judicial sense of the term) is interrogated, what he is asked to report and what he knows without understanding it helps the investigator to understand something else, which he, unlike the witness, foresees, guesses, and, to begin with, seeks: the concept, the signification,

⁵³ Here I refer the reader to Marion, *Etant donné. Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*, V, § 22, “Le paradoxe et le témoin,” pp. 302–5; *Being Given*, pp. 216–19.

the last word of the affair (the crime, the guilty one, etc.). The investigator tries to re-qualify the saturated phenomenon, which has reduced the *I* to the role of witness, into an objectifiable phenomenon, one of common-law, where a concept would make the totality of the event understandable.⁵⁴ The witness, by contrast, in the posture, for example, of the man born blind, takes note, and makes all those around him take note, of the intuitive fact of his healing (from that moment he, the one blind from birth, can see), but he does not know its origin, or its signification, nor does he claim to know these at any moment: “They said to him, ‘Where is he?’ He said, ‘I do not know, *Ouk oida*’” (Jn. 9:12). Similarly, all the interlocutors of this first witness, the cured blind man, go about repeating that they know even less (*ouk oidamen*, Jn. 9:21, 22, 30). What we have here is the phenomenologically normal and inevitable posture that every *I* in front of a saturated phenomenon must take, especially in front of the saturated phenomenon of the event type, indeed in front of the eventness of every saturated phenomenon. The posture of the witness proves itself to be so essential to uncovering that it marks the difference between the devil, “a murderer from the beginning” who, “when he says what is false, speaks from his own depths, because he is a liar” (Jn. 8:44), and Christ, who does not speak from himself (“The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority,” Jn. 14:10). And so, the witness may *also* end up by saying the genuine signification, but it does not come from him, and thus it makes the saturated phenomenon appear precisely on the basis not of an intentional *I* but on that of this phenomenon itself. Karl Barth stated it quite well: “Why and in what respect does the biblical witness have authority? Because and in the fact that he claims no authority for himself, that his witness amounts to letting that other itself be its own authority.”⁵⁵ Thus the man born blind ends up saying, “Lord, I believe”, because Christ answers his question, “Who is the Son of God, that I may believe in him?” in the first person: “Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you’” (Jn. 9:36–7). In this way the centurion at the foot of the cross ends up recognizing that “Certainly this man was innocent” (Lk. 23:48), and even that “Truly this man was the Son of God” (Mt. 27:54; Mk. 15:40), because he “sees”⁵⁶ “the sign and the events that took place, *ton seismon kai ta genomena*” (Mt. 27:54, *ta genomena*, Lk. 23:48) of themselves, like an event bursting forth from itself and in itself. And it is clearly not by chance that Christ’s death, as a saturated phenomenon visible only to the witnesses who receive it without claiming to understand it, leads Luke to make the only usage, in the entire New Testament, of the word *theōria*: “And all the

⁵⁴ Re-transforming an apparently saturated phenomenon into a common-law phenomenon is the method of every detective, and pre-eminently of Sherlock Holmes: “This process,” he says in laying out his method, “starts upon the supposition that, *when you have eliminated all which is impossible*, then whatever remains, however *improbable*, must be *truth*. It may well be that several explanations remain, in which case one tries test after test until one or other of them has a *convincing* amount of support” (“The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier,” in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Complete Novels and Stories* [New York: Bantam Classics, 2003], vol. II, p. 556, emphasis added). Clearly, Sherlock Holmes runs up against the difficulties that Hume faced: how to draw a distinction between the impossible and the improbable, how to evaluate conviction, and even how to define the impossible? A good *Christian* exegete thus should define himself as an anti-Sherlock Holmes, as the one who knows how to recognize the impossible in the improbable, when at least he *sees* the signification of this impossible.

⁵⁵ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik, VI, Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes. Prolegomena zur kirchlichen Dogmatik* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1935), p. 115; English translation: *Church Dogmatics, I.1, The Doctrine of the Word of God, § 1–7*, Study Edition, trans. F. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, Harold Knight (London: T&T Clark, 2010), p. 110.

⁵⁶ Mt. 27:54: *idontes*; Mk. 15:40 and Lk. 23:48: *idōn*.

multitudes who assembled to see the sight (*theōrian*), seeing (*theōrēsantes*) these events (*genomena*), returned home beating their breasts” (Lk. 23:48).

Finally, there is a third determination of the manifestation of Christ as saturated phenomenon: this manifestation as the *paradox* that brings about counter-experience. A paradox is not the same thing as a logical contradiction of a proposition (or non-sense), nor is it an (empirical) impossibility of knowledge, nor an obscurity (a confusion) in phenomenality, which one could, by means of powerful elucidations, reductions, or corrections, lead back to an objective or ontic (in the metaphysical sense) scheme of manifestation.⁵⁷ Among the phenomena that I unquestionably experience, paradox defines those that happen (like events) only by *contra*-dicting the conditions of my experience, and therefore that impose themselves only by imposing on me a *counter*-experience. Here again we must follow Kierkegaard: “This seems to be a paradox. But one must not think ill of the paradox, for the paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion: a mediocre fellow. . . . This, then, is the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.”⁵⁸ Transposed into the terms of phenomenality, this warning points out that the paradox offers the logical category that allows for the formulation of saturated phenomena, those phenomena, indeed, that no signification or concept can constitute as an object. Or, as Henri de Lubac rightly notes, it is necessary to distinguish between “the paradoxes of expression: one exaggerates in order to ‘be striking’”, and the “real paradoxes”, which imply a resistant antinomy; thus the paradox is not the result of a logical difficulty in describing the phenomena, but alone describes logically the particularity of certain phenomena: “Paradoxes: the word thus designates above all the things themselves, not the way of saying them.”⁵⁹ Or again: the paradox constitutes the correct logical form for describing the (saturated) phenomena that appear in experience by *contra*-dicting the (finite) conditions of the possibility of experience. Thus the paradox does not cancel experience, but renders it bearable and describable, even when a proven and experienced phenomenality refuses to take on the status of an object and of a common-law phenomenon (in which the intuition allows itself to be understood in the concept and the signification). The paradox thus extends experience, far from excluding it or excluding itself from experience; but it extends it by allowing us to describe an experience that is non-objectifiable and thus all the *more* manifest in that it comes from phenomena that manifest themselves in themselves, because they

⁵⁷ As in the tradition of Bertrand Russell, in *On Denoting* (1905, collected in *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901–1950*, ed. R. C. Marsh [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956]), or of W. V. O. Quine, *The Ways of Paradox, and Other Essays* (New York: Random House, 1966): in each of these cases, the paradox is to be dispelled through a logical distinction (for example, of classes) in order to bring it back into common rationality. On the contrary, it is necessary to save and reinforce the paradox in the strong sense, so that it introduces us into an uncommon logic.

⁵⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophiske Smuler eller En Smule Philosophie*, in *Samlede Vaerker*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1920–1936), vol. IV, p. 230; English translation: *Philosophical Fragments and Johannes Climacus*, in *Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. VII., trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 37.

⁵⁹ Henri de Lubac, *Paradoxes*, in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. XXXI (Paris: Cerf, 1999), p. 13 and p. 72, respectively. See: “Whence the necessity of the paradox; or rather, the perpetual flavor of paradox that truth in its newness has for the one who attaches himself to a truth that is turning into a lie” (p. 153). See also Simone Weil: “The contradictions with which the mind collides, the sole realities, the *criterium* of the real” (*La pesanteur et la grâce*, ed. G. Thibon [Paris: Plon, 1948, UGE, 1962], p. 103).

give themselves from themselves. This experience can be called counter-experience.

This logical figure of phenomenality and experience that contradicts the conditions of experience of course cannot keep us from thinking of the radical description of Revelation that Karl Barth as theologian made widely known: the auto-manifestation of God by himself enters into the experience of men like a suddenly falling rock, undoing everything with its impact.⁶⁰ And yet, this legitimate brutality says not too much, but rather too little, and for two reasons. First, because it goes without saying that Revelation, in the sense of the irruption of God into that which is finite, limited, and without holiness, by definition cannot make itself received, conceived, or seen there. It cannot and *must never* find a dwelling place, an opening, or a temple fitting to its holiness in the world without holiness (*immonde*). No misinterpretation of Revelation could surpass that of Heidegger, in this respect a paradigm of the *Aufklärung* and more Hegelian than might seem to be the case, who wanted to submit the Revelation of God to the manifestation of the gods, that manifestation to the dwelling of the divine, that dwelling to the opening of the sacred, and that opening to the intact open region of Being.⁶¹ There is Revelation not *because* the paths have been made straight, the valleys filled, the hills made low, and everything straightened that was wind- ing (Lk. 3:4–5, quoting Is. 40:3–5), as just so many preliminary conditions to be filled before God *can* manifest himself. No: there is Revelation precisely *while* these paths remain twisted—or even *so as* to show that they are. If God shows himself as God, who can stand before him, who can see him without dying, who can hear him? And if one could hear him, and see him without dying, and stand before him, would it be God we were dealing with, or an idolatry? The conditions of possibility of Revelation not only are not and never shall be brought together, but they must never be, if this revelation is to merit the title of the Revelation of God by himself: “It does not stand, therefore, under any condition—one can say this only of our knowledge of Revelation—but is itself the condition”; in effect, “[a]bove this act there is nothing other or higher on which it might be based or from which it might be derived. . . . It is the condition which conditions all things without itself being conditioned. This is what we are saying when we call it Revelation.”⁶² Thus in theology, the question does not consist in knowing *whether* Revelation

⁶⁰ One may still think of Rudolf Bultmann, characterizing Revelation as the “*dab*” of the sending of the Word in the fact of Christ (“Der Begriff der Offenbarung im Neuen Testament” [1929], in *Glauben und Verstehen*, vol. III [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1960, 1965], pp. 1–34). See my sketch, “Remarques sur le concept de Révélation chez Rudolf Bultmann,” *Résurrection*, no. 27, Paris, 1968.

⁶¹ See, among other texts, the *Briefüber den “Humanismus,”* in *Wegmarken*, GA 9, pp. 338–9 and 351; Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, Revised and Expanded edition, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), pp. 242, 253–4. See the parallels and my diagnosis in *Dieu sans l’être*, chap. II, §§ 4–5, Paris, 1982, corrected and augmented “Quadrige” ed. 2014, pp. 58 and following; *God Without Being*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991; second edition 2012), pp. 37–52.—The refutation that Karl Barth made of the claim presented by F. Gogarten (“Karl Barth’s Dogmatik,” *Theologische Rundschau*, 1929) of preparing the knowledge of God through “*eine existential-philosophische Begründung der Theologie*—a grounding of theology in existential philosophy” (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I/1, p. 129; English translation: *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, § 1–7, Study Edition, trans. G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, Harold Knight [London: T&T Clark, 2010], p. 124) in fact applies just as well to Heidegger.

⁶² Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I/1, pp. 121, 122; English translation: *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, § 1–7, Study Edition, trans. G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, Harold Knight (London: T&T Clark, 2010), pp. 115, 116, modified [capitalization of “Revelation”]. See also: “*Offenbarung wird von keinem Anderen her wirklich und wahr, weder in sich noch für uns. Sie ist es in sich und für uns durch sie selbst*—Revelation is not real and true from the standpoint of anything else, either in itself or for us. It is so in itself, and for us through itself” (*op. cit.*, p. 322; English translation: *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, } 8–12, Study Edition 2, trans. G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, Harold Knight [London: T&T Clark, 2010], p. 11). Or: “*Gott offenbart sich. Er offenbart sich durch sich selbst. Er offenbart sich selbst – God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself through Himself. He reveals Himself*” (Barth

contradicts the conditions of finite experience—this contradiction characterizes it analytically, by definition and a priori—but in conceiving *how* it contradicts them, and *how* it nevertheless succeeds in perfectly and definitively being manifested. It may be that so-called dialectical theology, with all of its avatars, did not see or even catch a glimpse of this question. The second reason follows from the first. This new question, the most incisive, is unappreciated for a fairly clear reason: it derives first of all from the study of phenomena in general and imposes itself only in a phenomenological approach to Revelation as a phenomenon—an exceptional phenomenon, but one which remains formally a case of a saturated phenomenon, or more exactly of a phenomenon of revelation, combining in it the four types of phenomenological saturation (the event, the idol, the flesh, and the icon).⁶³ How does Revelation make itself manifest by contradicting, as it *must*, the a priori conditions of experience? By what paradoxes is this counter-experience accomplished? These theological questions cannot be confronted without mastering the possibility of a phenomenality of saturated phenomena. And we must not claim to resolve them *too quickly*, by mobilizing, under the cover of theological categories, concepts and formulas that are derived directly from philosophy in its metaphysical state.⁶⁴

Therefore we must try to describe the counter-experience of Revelation as a paradigmatic saturated phenomenon. And in making this attempt we shall respect two already secured certainties. First: we will never leave the position and the status imposed on the *I* by the saturated phenomenon, namely that of the witness. This implies always keeping in mind Christ's warning that "there are many other things to tell you, that you cannot yet bear, *ou dynasthe bastazein*" (Jn. 16:12). Not only keeping in mind "all the other things" (Jn 20:30, 21:25) that were not written in the biblical texts, but above all, among those things already reported, those whose excess of evidence our lack of concepts and our ignorance of the significations of God (*anoetoi*, Lk. 24:25) prevent us from bearing. Absolutely required, therefore, is "the Spirit of truth to open for us the path to all truth, *hodegēsei hymas en tēn alētheia pasē*" (Jn. 16:13); but showing the path defines the *method*: the Holy Spirit sets the method of interpretation for the saturation of the phenomenon of Revelation. A second certainty follows: we must always consider that that which reveals itself in the saturated phenomenon of Revelation involves, as its *alpha* and its *omega*, a single and unique excess: that of charity. The only concern is "to grasp with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, [or in other words] to

[1935] p. 312; English translation: *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, § 8–12, Study Edition 2, trans. G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, Harold Knight [London: T&T Clark, 2010], p. 1).

⁶³ On the distinction between the phenomenon/phenomena of *revelation*, and *Revelation* as a phenomenon, see Marion, *Etant donné*, IV, ¶24, p. 383 and following; *Being Given*, pp. 234–47.

⁶⁴ The marginal and much-criticized attempt by Louis Charlier to conceive Revelation in terms of a "given" ("The revealed is above all a given reality [*une réalité donnée*]," *Essai sur le problème théologique*, Bibliothèque Orientations—Section Scientifique, 1 [Thuillies: Ramgal, 1938], p. 50) would have accomplished a genuine breakthrough only if this "given" had itself been questioned and defined, instead of reducing it implicitly from the outset to the bare factuality of a problem set [*une donnée de problème*] or a given of consciousness, or even a sensation. But, since givenness is not seriously considered as such, one falls quickly into the false alternative of the "given-revealed-knowledge" and the "given-revealed-reality", where each term derives from the most common, the most settled, and the most fragile metaphysics. What does "reality" mean? What does "knowledge" signify? And what relation do they have with the "revealed", itself left completely undetermined, except by its epistemological interpretation and its modern philosophical origin?

know the hyperbolic charity of Christ, which surpasses knowledge (*gnōnai te tēn hyperballousan tēs gnōseōs*), so that you may be filled with God to the point of total saturation (*plērōthēte eis pan to plērōma tou theou*)” (Eph. 3:17–19). But in order to come to this, in order to *sustain* this saturation and this hyperbole, it is first necessary to allow oneself to be “rooted in and grounded on the foundations of charity” (Eph. 3:17). Thus Christ sets out the element with which the phenomenon of Revelation is both saturated and saturating: charity. Provided that these two certainties of method are respected, it becomes possible not only to free the concept of theology from every metaphysical hold and every epistemological interpretation, but also, by making use of its resources, to manage at times to rectify them, and to contemplate Revelation as a phenomenon in the very details of the biblical texts.