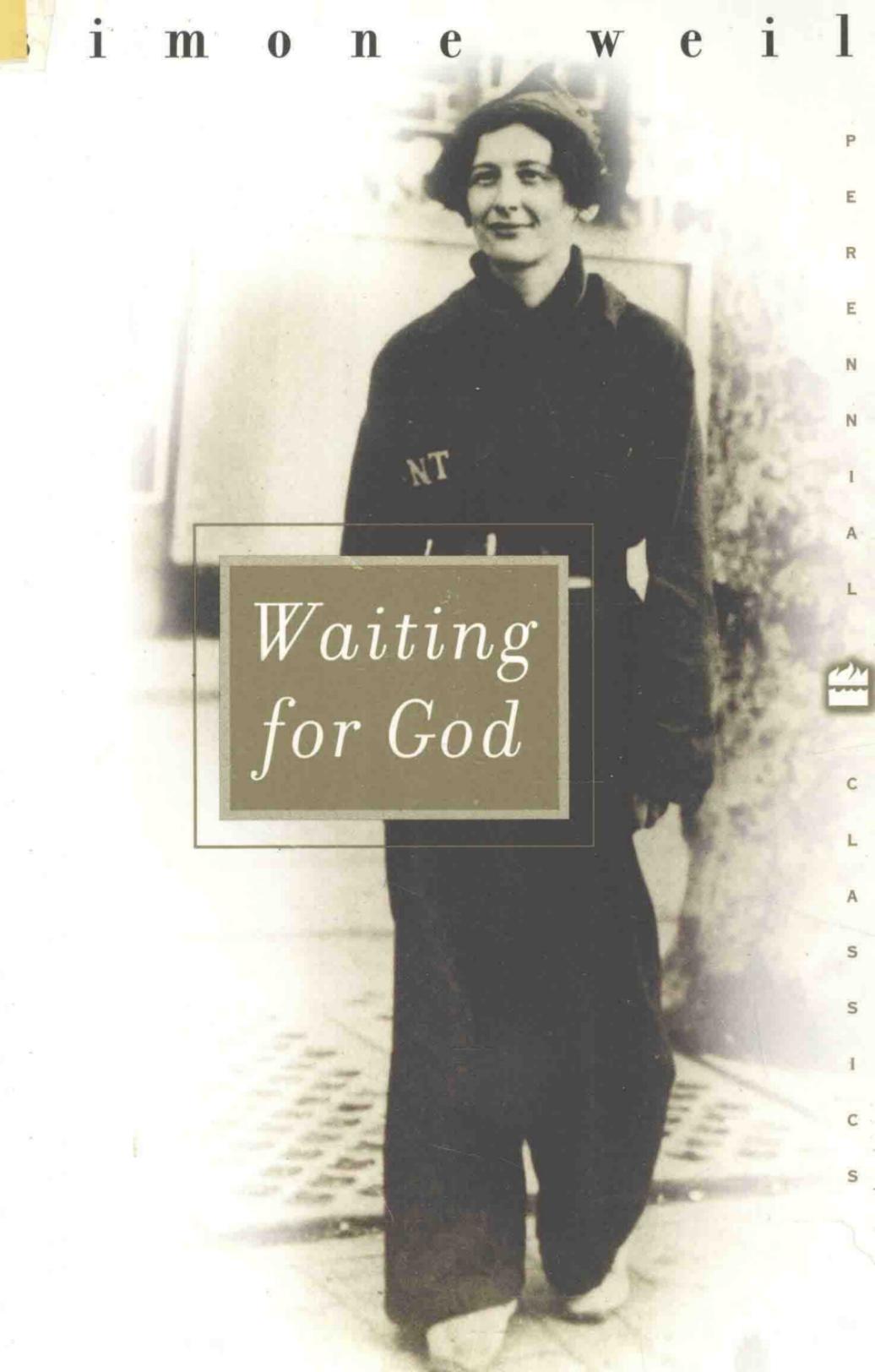


i m o n e w e i l



*Waiting
for God*

P

E

R

E

N

N

I

A

L



C

L

A

S

S

I

C

S

simone weil

WAITING
FOR GOD

TRANSLATED BY EMMA CRAUFURD

With an Introduction by Leslie A. Fiedler

P E R E N N I A L  C L A S S I C S

This book was originally published by G. P. Putnam's Sons and is here reprinted by permission.

WAITING FOR GOD. Copyright © 1951 by G. P. Putnam's Sons. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address G. P. Putnam's Sons, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

HarperCollins books may be purchased for educational, business, or sales promotional use. For information please write: Special Markets Department, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022.

First Harper Colophon edition published 1973.

First Perennial Classics edition published 2001.

Perennial Classics are published by Perennial, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Weil, Simone.

[Attente de Dieu. English]

Waiting for God / Simone Weil; translated by Emma Craufurd; with an introduction by Leslie A. Fiedler.

p. cm.

Correspondence, chiefly to J. M. Perrin, and essays.

Originally published: New York: Putnam, c1951.

ISBN 0-06-095970-3

1. God—Worship and love. 2. Weil, Simone, 1909–1943—

Correspondence. 3. Perrin, Joseph Marie, 1905—Correspondence.

I. Perrin, Joseph Marie, 1905—. II. Title.

B2430.W473A7713 2000

248—dc21

00-047271

Introduction



*Since her death, Simone Weil has come to seem more and more a special exemplar of sanctity for our time—the Outsider as Saint in an age of alienation, our kind of saint. In eight scant years, this young French-woman, whom scarcely anyone had heard of before her sacrificial death in exile at the age of 34, has come to possess the imagination of many in the Western world. Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Jew, agnostic and devout, we have all turned to her with the profound conviction that the meaning of her experience is our meaning, that she is really *ours*. Few of us, to be sure, would find nothing to dissent from in her religious thought; fewer still would be capable of emulating the terrible purity of her life; none could measure himself, without shame, against the absolute ethos toward which she aspired. And yet she does not seem strange to us, as other mystics and witnesses of God have seemed strange; for though on one side her life touches the remote mysteries of the Divine Encounter, on the other it is rooted in a world with which we are familiar.*

She speaks of the problems of belief in the vocabulary of the unbeliever, of the doctrines of the Church in the words of the unchurched. The *askesis*, the “dark night of the soul,” through which she passed to certitude, is the modern intellectual’s familiar pattern of attraction toward and disillusionment with Marxism, the disciple of contemporary politics. The day-to-day struggles of trade unionism, unemployment,

the Civil War in Spain, the role of the Soviet Union, anarchism, and pacifism—these are the determinants of her ideas, the unforeseen roads that led to her sanctity. Though she passed finally beyond politics, her thought bears to the end the mark of her early interests, as the teaching of St. Paul is influenced by his Rabbinical schooling, or that of St. Augustine by his training in rhetoric.

Before her death, scarcely any of Simone Weil's religious writings had been published. To those in France who thought of her still, in terms of her early political essays, as a somewhat unorthodox Marxist moving toward anarchism, the posthumous Christian books must have come as a shock. Surely, no "friend of God" in all history had moved more unwillingly toward the mystic encounter. There is in her earlier work no sense of a groping toward the divine, no promise of holiness, no pursuit of a purity beyond this world—only a conventionally left-wing concern with the problems of industrialization, rendered in a tone at once extraordinarily inflexible and wonderfully sensitive.

The particular note of conviction in Simone Weil's testimony arises from the feeling that her role as a mystic was so *unintended*, one for which she had not in any sense prepared. An undertone of incredulity persists beneath her astonishing honesty: quite suddenly God had taken her, radical, agnostic, contemptuous of religious life and practice as she had observed it! She clung always to her sense of being an Outsider among the religious, to a feeling that her improbable approach had given her a special vocation, as an "apostle to the Gentiles," planted at "the intersection of Christianity and everything that is not Christianity." She refused to become, in the typical compensatory excess of the convert, more of the Church than those born into it; she would not even be baptized, and it is her unique position, at once in and out of institutionalized Catholicism, that determines her special role and meaning.

To those who consider themselves on the safe side of belief, she teaches the uncomfortable truth that the unbelief of many atheists is closer to a true love of God and a true sense of his nature, than the

kind of easy faith which, never having *experienced* God, hangs a label bearing his name on some childish fantasy or projection of the ego. Like Kierkegaard, she preached the paradox of its being easier for a non-Christian to become a Christian, than for a "Christian" to become one. To those who believe in a single Revelation, and enjoy the warm sensation of being saved in a cozy circle of friends, she expounded the doctrine of a gospel spread in many "languages," of a divine Word shared among rival myths, in each of which certain important truths, implicit elsewhere, are made explicit. For those to whom religion means comfort and peace of mind, she brings the terrible reminder that Christ promised not peace but the sword, and that his own last words were a cry of absolute despair, the "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!*" which is the true glory of Christianity.

But she always considered that her chief mission was to those still "submerged in materialism," that is, to most of us in a chaotic and disenchanted world. To the unbeliever who has rather smugly despised the churchgoer for seeking an easy consolation, she reveals the secret of his own cowardice, suggesting that his agnosticism may itself be only an opiate, a dodge to avoid facing the terror of God's reality and the awful burden of his love.

She refused to cut herself off from anyone, by refusing to identify herself completely with anyone or any cause. She rejected the temptation to withdraw into a congenial group, once associated with which, she could be disowned by all outside of it. She rather took upon herself the task of sustaining all possible beliefs in their infinite contradictions and on their endless levels of relevance; the smugness of the false elect, the materialism of the shallowly rebellious, self-deceit and hypocrisy, parochialism and atheism—from each she extracted its partial truth, and endured the larger portion of error. She chose to submit to a kind of perpetual invisible crucifixion; her final relationship to all those she would not disown became that of the crucified to the cross.

The French editors of Simone Weil's works, Gustave Thibon, a lay theologian who was also her friend, and Father Perrin, the nearest

thing to a confessor she ever had, have both spoken of Simone Weil's refusal to be baptized as a mere stage in her development, a nonessential flaw in her thinking, which, had she only lived longer, would probably have been remedied. M. Thibon and Father Perrin are, of course, Catholics, and speak as they must out of their great love for Mlle Weil, and their understandable conviction that such holiness could not permanently have stayed outside of the Church; but from Simone Weil's own point of view, her outsideness was the very *essence* of her position. This is made especially clear in the present volume.

"I feel," she wrote once, "that it is necessary for me, prescribed for me, to be alone, an outsider and alienated from every human context whatsoever." And on another occasion, she jotted in her journal the self-reminder, "Preserve your solitude!" What motivated her was no selfish desire to withdraw from the ordinary concourse of men, but precisely the opposite impulse. She knew that one remains alienated from a particular allegiance, not by vainly attempting to deny all beliefs, but precisely by sharing them all. To have become rooted in the context of a particular religion, Simone Weil felt, would, on the one hand, have exposed her to what she calls "the Church patriotism," with a consequent blindness to the faults of her own group and the virtues of others, and would, on the other hand, have separated her from the common condition here below, which finds us all "outsiders, uprooted, in exile." The most terrible of crimes is to collaborate in the uprooting of others in an already alienated world; but the greatest of virtues is to uproot oneself for the sake of one's neighbors and of God. "It is necessary to uproot oneself. Cut down the tree and make a cross and carry it forever after."

Especially at the moment when the majority of mankind is "submerged in materialism," Simone Weil felt she could not detach herself from them by undergoing baptism. To be able to love them as they were, in all their blindness, she would have to know them as they were; and to know them, she would have to go among them disguised in the garments of their own disbelief. In so far as Christianity had become an exclusive sect, it would have to be remade into a "total In-

carnation of faith," have to become truly "catholic," catholic enough to include the myths of the dark-skinned peoples from a world untouched by the Churches of the West, as well as the insights of post-Enlightenment liberals, who could see in organized religion only oppression and bitterness and pride.

"... in our present situation," she wrote, "universality . . . has to be fully explicit." And that explicit universality, she felt, must find a mouthpiece in a new kind of saint, for "today it is not nearly enough merely to be a saint, but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment, a new saintliness, itself also without precedent." The new kind of saint must possess a special "genius," capable of blending Christianity and Stoicism, the love of God and "filial piety for the city of the world"; a passive sort of "genius" that would enable him to act as a "neutral medium," like water, "indifferent to all ideas without exception, even atheism and materialism."

Simone Weil felt that she could be only the forerunner and foreteller of such a saint; for her, humility forbade her thinking of herself as one capable of a "new revelation of the universe and human destiny . . . the unveiling of a large portion of truth and beauty hitherto hidden." Yet she is precisely the saint she prophesied!

Despite her modesty, she spoke sometimes as if she were aware that there was manifest in the circumstances of her birth (she had been born into an agnostic family of Jewish descent) a special providence, a clue to a special mission. While it was true, she argued in her letters to Catholic friends, that the earlier Saints had all loved the Church and had been baptized into it, on the other hand, they had all been born and brought up in the Church, as she had *not*. "... I should betray the truth," she protested, "that is to say the aspect of truth that I see, if I left the point, where I have been since my birth, at the intersection of Christianity and everything that is not Christianity."

It must not be thought that she was even troubled by the question of formally becoming a Christian; it vexed her devout Catholic friends and for *their* sakes she returned again and again to the problem; but, as for herself, she was at peace. Toward the end of her life, the mystic vi-

sion came to her almost daily, and she did not have to wonder (in such matters, she liked to say, one does not believe or disbelieve; one *knows* or does not know) if there were salvation outside an organized sect; she was a living witness that the visible Church and the invisible congregation of the saints are never one. "I have never once had, even for a moment, the feeling that God wants me to be in the Church. I have never even once had a feeling of uncertainty. I think that at the present time we can finally conclude that he does not want me in the Church."

It is because she was capable of remaining on the threshold of organized religion, "without moving, quite still . . . indefinitely . . ." that Simone Weil speaks to all of us with special authority, an Outsider to outsiders, our kind of saint, whom we have needed (whether we have known it or not) "as a plague-stricken town needs doctors."

To what then does she bear witness? To the uses of exile and suffering, to the glory of annihilation and absurdity, to the unforeseen miracle of love. Her life and work form a single document, a document which we can still not read clearly, though clearly enough, perhaps, for our needs. On the one hand, the story of Simone Weil's life is still guarded by reticence; and on the other hand, her thought comes to us in fragmentary form. She completed no large-scale work; she published in her lifetime no intimate testimony to the secret religious life that made of her last few years a series of experiences perhaps unequaled since St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross. If she has left any detailed account of those experiences we have not yet seen it.

Since her death, four volumes of her work have been published in France. *La Pesanteur et la Grâce* (*Gravity and Grace*) is a selection from her diaries, chosen and topically rearranged by Gustave Thibon; the effect is that of a modern *Pensées*—no whole vision, but a related, loosely linked body of aphorisms, always illuminating and direct, sometimes extraordinarily acute. We do not know, of course, what M. Thibon has chosen to omit; and he has not even told us how large a proportion of the notebooks he has included in his selection.

L'Enracinement (*The Need for Roots*) is the longest single piece left

by Simone Weil. Begun at the request of the Free French Government in exile, it takes off from a consideration of the religious and social principles upon which a truly Christian French nation might be built and touches upon such subjects as the humanizing of factory work, the need for freedom of purely speculative thought, and the necessity for expunging from our books a false notion of the heroic which makes us all guilty of the rise of Hitler. It is a fascinating though uneven book, in parts ridiculous, in parts profound, but motivated throughout by the pity and love Simone Weil felt in contemplating a society that had made of the apparatus of government an oppressive machine by separating the secular and religious.

The third book, of which the present volume is a translation, is in many ways the most representative and appealing of the three. It is not, of course, a whole, but a chance collection, entrusted to Father Perrin during the time just before Simone Weil's departure for America. It includes some material originally written as early as 1937, though recast in the final years of her life; but in the main it represents the typical concerns of the end of Simone Weil's life, after she had reached a haven of certainty. Among the documents (which survived a confiscation by the Gestapo) are six letters, all but one written to Father Perrin, of which letter IV, the "Spiritual Autobiography," is of special importance. Among the essays, the meditation on the *Pater Noster* possesses great interest, for this was the single prayer by which Simone Weil attained almost daily the Divine Vision of God; and the second section of the study called "Forms of the Implicit Love of God," I find the most moving and beautiful piece of writing Simone Weil ever did.

Another volume of her collected essays and meditations, under the title *La Connaissance Surnaturelle* (*Supernatural Knowledge*), has recently appeared in France, and several other volumes made up of extracts from her notebooks are to be published soon. Simone Weil apparently left behind her a large body of fragments, drafts, and unrevised sketches, which a world that finds in her most casual words insights and illuminations will not be content to leave in manuscript.

Several of her poems and prose pieces, not included in any of these volumes, have been published in various French magazines (notably in *Cahiers de Sud*) and three or four of her political essays have appeared in this country in *Politics*. But the only really consequential study, aside from those in the three books, is her splendid, though absurdly and deliberately partial, interpretation of the *Iliad*, which has been excellently translated into English by Mary McCarthy and published in pamphlet form under the title of *The Iliad: or, the Poem of Force*.

These are the chief sources of her thought; and the introductions to the volumes edited by M. Thibon and Father Perrin provide, along with briefer personal tributes printed at the time of her death, the basic information we have about her life. In a profound sense, her life is her chief work, and without some notion of her biography it is impossible to know her total meaning. On the other hand, her books are extensions of her life; they are not *literature*, not even in the sense that the writings of a theologically oriented author like Kierkegaard are literature. They are confessions and testimonies—sometimes agonized cries or dazzled exclamations—motivated by the desire to say just how it was with her, regardless of all questions of form and beauty of style. They have, however, a charm of directness, an appealing purity of tone that makes it possible to read them (Simone Weil would have hated to acknowledge it!) for the sheer pleasure of watching a subtle mind capture in words the most elusive of paradoxes, or of contemplating an absolute love striving to communicate itself in spite of the clumsiness of language.

Her Life

We do not know, as yet, a great deal about the actual facts of Simone Weil's life. Any attempt at biographical reconstruction runs up against the reticence and reserve of her parents, who are still living, and even more critically, it encounters her own desire to be anonymous—to deny precisely those elements in her experience, which to the biogra-

pher are most interesting. She was born in 1909, into a family apparently socially secure (her father was a doctor) and “brought up . . . in a complete agnosticism.” Though her ancestors had been Jewish, the faith had quite disappeared in her immediate family, and where it flourished still among remoter relatives, it had become something cold, oppressive, and meaninglessly legalistic to a degree that made Simone Weil all of her life incapable of judging fairly the merits of Judaism. She appeared to have no sense of alienation from the general community connected with her Jewishness (though in appearance she seems to have fitted exactly a popular stereotype of the Jewish face), but grew up with a feeling of belonging quite firmly to a world whose values were simply “French,” that is to say, a combination of Greek and secularized Christian elements.

Even as a child, she seems to have troubled her parents, to whom being comfortable was an end of life, and who refused to or could not understand her mission. They frustrated again and again, with the greatest of warmth and good will, her attempts to immolate herself for the love of God. Her father and mother came to represent, in an almost archetypal struggle with her, the whole solid bourgeois world, to whom a hair shirt is a scandal, and suffering only a blight to be eliminated by science and proper familial care. Yet she loved her parents as dearly as they loved her, though she was from childhood quite incapable of overt demonstrations of affection.

At the age of five, she refused to eat sugar, as long as the soldiers at the front were not able to get it. The war had brought the sense of human misery into her protected milieu for the first time, and her typical pattern of response was already set: to deny herself what the most unfortunate were unable to enjoy. There is in her reaction, of course, something of the hopeless guilt of one born into a favored position in a society with sharp class distinctions. Throughout her career, there was to be a touch of the absurd in her effort to identify herself utterly with the most exploited groups in society (whose own major desire was to rise up into the class from which she was trying to abdicate), and being continually “rescued” from the suffering she sought by par-

ents and friends. A little later in her childhood, she declared that she would no longer wear socks, while the children of workers had to go without them. This particular gesture, she was later to admit in a typically scrupulous bit of self-analysis, might have been prompted as much by an urge to tease her mother as by an unselfish desire to share the lot of the poor.

At fourteen, she passed through the darkest spiritual crisis of her life, feeling herself pushed to the very verge of suicide by an acute sense of her absolute unworthiness, and by the onslaught of migraine headaches of an unbearable intensity. The headaches never left her afterward, not even in her moments of extremest joy; her very experiences of Divine Love would come to her strained through that omnipresent pain which attacked her, as she liked to say, “at the intersection of body and soul.” She came later to think of that torment, intensified by the physical hardships to which she compulsively exposed herself, as a special gift; but in early adolescence, it was to her only a visible and outward sign of her inner misery at her own total lack of talent.

The root of her troubles seems to have been her relationship with her brother, a mathematical prodigy, beside whose brilliance she felt herself stumbling and stupid. Her later academic successes and the almost universal respect accorded her real intelligence seem never to have convinced her that she had any intellectual talent. The chance phrase of a visitor to her mother, overheard when she was quite young, had brought the whole problem to a head. Simone Weil never forgot the words. “One is genius itself,” the woman had said, pointing to the boy; and then, indicating Simone, “the other beauty!” It is hard to say whether she was more profoundly disturbed by the imputation of a beauty she did not possess, or by the implicit denial of genius.

Certainly, forever afterward, she did her best to destroy what in her was “beautiful” and superficially charming, to turn herself into the antimask of the appealing young girl. The face in her photographs is absolute in its refusal to be charming, an exaggeration, almost a cari-

capture of the intellectual Jewess. In a sentence or two, Father Perrin recreates her for us in her typical costume: the oversize brown beret, the shapeless cape, the large, floppy shoes, and emerging from this disguise, the clumsy, imperious gestures. We hear, too, the unmusical voice that completes the ensemble, monotonous, almost merciless in its insistence. Only in her writing is Simone Weil betrayed into charm; in her life, she made a principle of avoiding it. "A beautiful woman," she writes, "looking at her image in the mirror may very well believe the image is herself. An ugly woman knows it is not."

But though her very appearance declares her physical humility, we are likely to be misled about Simone Weil's attitude toward her own intelligence. Father Perrin tells us that he never saw her yield a point in an argument with anybody, but on the other hand, he is aware, as we should be, too, of her immense humbleness in the realm of ideas. Never was she able to believe that she truly possessed the quality she saw so spectacularly in her own brother, the kind of "genius" that was honestly to be envied in so far as it promised not merely "exterior success" but also access to the very "kingdom of truth."

She did not commit suicide, but she passed beyond the temptation without abandoning her abysmal sense of her own stupidity. Instead, she learned painfully the *uses* of stupidity. To look at a mathematical problem one has inexcusably missed, she writes, is to learn the true discipline of humility. In the contemplation of our crimes or our sins, even of our essential proneness to evil, there are temptations to pride, but in the contemplation of the failures of our intelligence, there is only degradation and the sense of shame. To know that one is mediocre is "to be on the true way."

Besides, when one has no flair for geometry (it is interesting that her examples come always from the field of her brother's special competence) the working of a problem becomes not the really irrelevant pursuit of an "answer," but a training in "attention," which is the essence of prayer. And this in turn opens to us the source of a higher kind of genius, which has nothing to do with natural talent and everything to do with Grace. "Only a kind of perversity can oblige God's

friends to deprive themselves of having genius, since to receive it in superabundance they only need to ask their Father for it in Christ's name." Yet even this final consideration never brought her absolute peace. She wrote toward the end of her life that she could never read the parable of the "barren fig tree" without a shudder, seeing in the figure always a possible portrait of herself, naturally impotent, and yet somehow, in the inscrutable plan of God, cursed for that impotence.

However she may have failed her own absolute standards, she always seems to have pleased her teachers. At the *École Normale Supérieure*, where she studied from 1928 to 1931, finally attaining her *agrégée de philosophie* at the age of 22, she was a student of the philosopher Alain, who simply would not believe the report of her early death years afterward. "She will come back surely," he kept repeating. "It isn't true!" It was, perhaps, under his instruction that the love of Plato, so important in her thought, was confirmed in her once and for all.

But at that point of her career she had been influenced by Marx as well as the Greek philosophers; and it was as an earnest and committed radical, though one who had never joined a particular political party, that she took up her first teaching job at Le Puy. It was a time for radicals—those utterly bleak years at the pit of a world-wide depression. She seems, in a way not untypical of the left-wing intellectual in a small town, to have horrified the good citizens of Le Puy by joining the workers in their sports, marching with them in their picket lines, taking part with the unemployed in their pick and shovel work, and refusing to eat more than the rations of those on relief, distributing her surplus food to the needy. The bourgeois mind seems to have found it as absurd for this awkward girl to be playing ball with workers, as to be half-starving herself because of principles hard to understand. As for crying for a Revolution—!

A superintendent of instruction was called in to threaten Simone Weil with revocation of her teacher's license, at which she declared proudly that she would consider such a revocation "the crown of her

career!" There is a note of false bravado in the response, betraying a desire to become a "cause," to attain a spectacular martyrdom. It is a common flaw in the revolutionary activity of the young; but fortunately for Simone Weil, this kind of *dénouement*, of which she would have been ashamed later, was denied her. She was only a young girl, harmless, and her license was not revoked. Irrked at the implied slur, perhaps, and certainly dissatisfied in general with halfway participation in the class struggle of a teacher-sympathizer, she decided to become a worker once and for all, by taking a job at the Renault auto plant.

It is hard to know how to judge the venture. Undoubtedly, there is in it something a little ridiculous: the resolve of the Vassar girl of all lands to "share the experience" of the working class; and the inevitable refusal behind that resolve to face up to the fact that the freedom to *choose* a worker's life, and the consciousness of that choice, which can never be sloughed off, make the dreamed-of total identification impossible. And yet for the sake of that absurd vision, Simone Weil suffered under conditions exacerbated by her sensibility and physical weakness beyond anything the ordinary worker had to bear; the job "entered into her body," and the ennui and misery of working-class life entered into her soul, making of her a "slave," in a sense she could only understand fully later, when her religious illumination had come.

She was always willing to take the step beyond the trivially silly; and the ridiculous pushed far enough, absurdity compounded, becomes something else—the Absurd as a religious category, the madness of the Holy fool beside which the wisdom of this world is revealed as folly. This point Simone Weil came to understand quite clearly. Of the implicit forms of the love of God, she said, ". . . in a sense they are absurd, they are mad," and this she knew to be their special claim. Even unhappiness, she learned, in order to be pure must be a little absurd. The very superiority of Christ over all the martyrs is that he is not anything so solemn as a martyr at all, but a "slave," a criminal among criminals, "only a little more ridiculous. For affliction is ridiculous."

An attack of pleurisy finally brought Simone Weil's factory experience to an end (there were always her parents waiting to rescue her), but having rested for a while, just long enough to regain some slight measure of strength, she set off for Spain to support the Loyalists, vowing all the while that she would not ever learn to use the gun they gave her. She talked about Spain with the greatest reluctance in later years, despite the fact, or perhaps because it was undoubtedly for her, as for many in her generation, a critical experience: the efflorescence and the destruction of the revolutionary dream. From within and without the Marxist hope was defeated in a kind of model demonstration, a paradigm for believers. Simone Weil was fond of quoting the Homeric phrase about "justice, that fugitive from the camp of the victors" but in those years it was absent from the camp of victor and vanquished alike. Not even defeat could purify the revolution!

While the struggle in Spain sputtered toward its close, Simone Weil endured a personal catastrophe even more anticlimactic; she was wounded—by accident! The fate that preserved her throughout her life for the antiheroic heroism of her actual death, brought this episode, too, to a bathetic conclusion. Concerned with the possibilities of combining participation and nonviolence, pondering the eternal, she forgot the "real" world of missteps and boiling oil, and ineptly burned herself, a victim of that clumsiness which seems to have been an essential aspect of her denial of the physical self. Badly hurt and poorly cared for, she was rescued from a field hospital by her parents—once more coming between her and her desired agony!

The Spanish adventure was her last purely political gesture; afterward, during the Second World War, she was to work up some utterly impractical plan for being parachuted into France to carry spiritual solace to the fighters in the underground resistance; and she was even to consider at one point going to the Soviet Union, where she could doubtless not have lived in freedom for a month. Among the Communists in France she had been known as a Trotskyite, and had once been threatened with physical violence for delivering an anti-Stalinist