

# SIMONE WEIL: A SENSE OF GOD

**Ranilo B. Hermida**

Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

*There is a reality outside of the world, that is to say, outside space and time, outside man's mental universe, outside any sphere of whatsoever that is accessible to human faculties.*

*Corresponding to this reality, at the center of the human heart, is the longing for an absolute good, a longing which is always there and is never appeased by any object in this world.*

SIMONE WEIL  
1909-1943

## Prologue

There is one thread of thought which a serious reader of Simone Weil cannot possibly miss from the variegated tapestry of her thinking. And that is her *sense of God* that is almost naturally embedded therein. She unfailingly elevates her every insight to a level that is at once metaphysical or theological. Indeed, Weil, considers all human concerns always “situated in the context of our relation to God.”<sup>1</sup> She excludes nothing for she believes that even those practices not readily recognized as religious contribute to our spiritual development and prepare us for loving God.<sup>2</sup>

It may strike as baffling therefore that Weil, who is likened to some of the greatest of the early Fathers of the Church,<sup>3</sup> makes this confession in her spiritual biography:

I may say that never at any moment in my life have I ‘sought for God.’ For this reason, which is probably too subjective, I do not like this expression and it strikes me as false. As soon as I reached adolescence, I saw the problem of God as a problem the data of

which could not be obtained here below, and I decided that the only way of being sure not to reach a wrong solution, which seemed to me the greatest possible evil, was to leave it alone. So I left it alone. I neither affirmed nor denied anything. It seemed to me useless to solve the problem, for I thought that, being in this world, our business was to adopt the best attitude with regard to the problems of this world, and that such an attitude did not depend upon the solution of the problem of God.<sup>4</sup>

To anyone who has a studied familiarity with Weil, however, this paradox is immediately recognizable as a distinctive character of her work, thought, and to her very life. Her penchant for integrating apparently contradictory elements constitutes her unique approach. As Christopher Frost and Rebecca Bell-Metereau pointed out:

... While the mainstream of Western thought may be concerned with consistency, in considerable contrast Simone Weil, long before postmodernist and deconstructionist ideas became current, was concerned with recognizing the absence of consistency in life, the continual presence of reversals and contradictions, and the unavoidable existence of these even within 'solutions' to problems of the human condition.<sup>5</sup>

That is not to say of course that all we encounter in the works of Weil are diverse and heterogeneous ideas. While, admittedly, Weil expressed herself in short essays, in thoughts randomly jotted in notebooks, and in reflections recorded in personal journals, there is, nonetheless, a clearly identifiable coherence that unites her positions on a range of subjects close to her heart.

The purpose of this paper is to draw from three of her writings the two main leitmotifs of what is undoubtedly one of her most defining viewpoints, namely, her *sense of God*. How central to her thinking this is may be inferred from her unwavering conviction that reality is only transcendent. Weil therefore contends that a true reading of reality can only be done from the perspective of the divine.

In what may be considered another irony of her colorful life, Weil did not come upon her *sense of God* by way of her family influence. It could not have been so, for, as a matter of fact, she was born into and grew up in an agnostic Jewish family. Weil herself professed no religion and did not practice any. Neither did she discover this *sense of God* from her readings of mystical works for which she claimed she never felt an attraction. As she wrote: “I had never read any mystical works because I had never felt any call to read them.” [WfG, 69] Indeed, as John Hellman distinctly put it, “she did not hit upon Christian scriptures and then make sense of the world through a prism formed by them.”<sup>6</sup>

We may perhaps trace the crystallization of such approach to her much beloved mentor, Emile Chartier better known by his pseudonym Alain, who taught her that “only those who believe think” and that “attention is religious, or it is not attention.”<sup>7</sup> Weil herself would undergo certain very personal experiences that would confirm her *sense of God* and dissuade her from the indifference, which she nurtured in her youth, to the question of God. In a moment of conversion, she had to concede: “In my arguments about the insolubility of the problem of God I had never foreseen the possibility of that, of a real contact, person to person, here below, between a human being and God.” [WfG, *ibid.*]

It was this *sense of God* that served as her inspiration and provided the meaningful link among the many aspects of her personality and her several involvements – “her ascetic intellectualism, her love for mathematics, her concern for the poor and oppressed, her innovatively focused politics, and her unusually empathetic sensitivity.”<sup>8</sup> Weil embraced this *sense of God* to the very end of her life and imbibed it more and more deeply. Thus, in her “Last Thoughts,” written a year and three months before her death, she was able to write about her *sense of God* with absolute confidence and in an extremely personal way:

I do not need any hope or any promise in order to believe that God is rich in mercy. I know this wealth of his with the certainty of experience; I have touched it. What I know of it through actual contact is so far beyond my capacity of understanding and gratitude that even the promise of future bliss could add nothing to it for me... [WfG, 88]

## Decreation

To bear a *sense of God*, for Weil, is to go beyond a mere religious perception of reality. It is more than an intellectual stance but must spill instead onto the very conduct of life, onto a way of life that renounces the sense of self. And nowhere is this *sense of God* more pronounced than in her notion of decreation.

Through the creative act God, according to Weil, relinquished His exclusive hold on being in order to allow something other than Himself to exist: “There exists a ‘deifugal’ force. Otherwise all will be God.”<sup>9</sup> Creation is an act of divine surrender of His omnipotence. Weil therefore reckons it “not an act of self-expansion but of restraint and renunciation.” [WfG, 145]

Sylvie Courtine-Denamy has a beautiful way of explaining this view of Weil regarding the creative act of God:

So that the world might exist... God had to withdraw into Himself, leaving an empty space (*tehiru*). Creation is contradiction, self-limitation, abdication... Hence the creation by no means involves, for God, an extension of His being, the production of something beyond Himself; rather, by withdrawing, God enables a part of being to be “other than God.”<sup>10</sup>

Creation, in other words, is truly and totally a gratuitous act on the part of God. Man cannot possibly fathom the reason behind His act; he can only at best attribute to it the purest of motives. Creation for Weil is an epiphany of a divine-being-in-love; the whole universe being not a stage to showcase divine power as much as an arena for a loving God to limit Himself.

Weil does not deny the omnipotence of God; she fully understands that only with such magnitude of power can God call being forth *ex nihilo*. She asserts, however, that the exertion of His power is only one face of God manifested in creation. The other face, which is even more compelling, is His desertion of power. And it is this second face that Weil underlines in her *sense of God*. Creation is God wielding and then forsaking His power. More than anything, therefore, creation is an act of

sacrifice on the part of God; not an occasion for His growth but an outgrowth of His love and desire to give Himself to creatures. In his absolute perfection, God cannot grow further, He can only grow out of Himself and even that cannot be for His good. Miklos Vetö states it this way: “It is not the power of God that spills over into creation, but his love, and this overflow is a veritable diminution.”<sup>11</sup> Weil herself writes: “Creation is an act of love and it is perpetual. At each moment our existence is God’s love for us.” [GaG, 28]

The emphasis on the divine largesse, rather than on omnipotence, allows Weil to set forth her doctrine of decreation. Since creation involves a voluntary abdication done in love, a genuine sacrifice therefore on the part of God, man, in turn, propelled by a parallel love, can only replicate in a reverse way this abdication of God. This is the meaning of decreation. Vetö calls it “the self-annihilating vocation of human beings.”<sup>12</sup>

Decreation is the human participation in the creative action of God in the world; it is the complementary human response to God: “We participate in the creation of the world by decreasing ourselves.” [GaG, 29] Through the act of decreation, man, accordingly, renounces his apparent existence, affirms his oneness with God and thereby enters into the fullness of being. So, just as God renounced His exclusive ontological right, man must also be willing to commit an act of self-renunciation. Weil upholds this as the supreme religious act – “to make something created pass into the uncreated.” [GaG, 28]

The creative act, moreover, is not a calculated move on the part of God to gain profit for Himself. There is no contrivance in creation because, as Weil insists, God “renounces being everything.” [GaG, 29] For this reason, decreation, which is a reciprocal answer to creation, cannot but be total. Self-renunciation is to be done regardless of outcome; in other words, the willingness to empty the self must likewise be a willingness to be filled by remaining in a state of waiting. There is no *quid pro quo* transaction in creation and there can be none as well in decreation.

Weil restricts the idea of creation to autonomous beings. This has an important repercussion: from this position follows her view that only free beings are subject to the ontological requirement of decreation. Things that are not endowed with freedom are already always in perfect

unity with the Creator by the presence in them and their complete obedience to necessity. It is really only the case of human beings in whom lies the possibility of breaking away from God. They can declare independence and install their ego, the self, at the center of this separate existence. The bond between God and creature is ruptured by this defiant act. The decreative imperative, by which men participate in the work of Divinity and thus perfect creation, is frustrated.

We find then at the inmost core of Weil's doctrine of decreation this supreme paradox:

Our existence is made up only of his waiting for our acceptance not to exist... We should renounce being something. That is our only good. [GaG, 28-29]

Decreation is annihilation of existence within the self and consent to non-existence. It is the one act by which human beings can ironically affirm the authenticity of their autonomy; indeed, Weil maintains that "there is absolutely no other free act which it is given us to accomplish – only the destruction of the 'I.'" [GaG, 23]

The destruction of existence within oneself consists in self-effacement, that is, the renunciation of the sense of self or "the power to think of everything in the first person."<sup>13</sup> This entails the extinction of the desire to be the center of reference whereby everything else is supposed to be contributory and subservient to the wishes and wants of the self; otherwise, this extremely vicious sense of the self shall terminate in the negation of the others. Unless this "diabolical center in the human being"<sup>14</sup> is demolished man will not be able to recover a clear perception of reality and embrace the existence of others. Vetö amplifies this point:

The recognition and acceptance of the right of others to exist in the same way as we ourselves exist must be preceded by knowledge of the fact that they *are* and of the fact of *what* they are. Objective knowledge of an external reality is possible only insofar as one sets oneself aside, that is, insofar as one is reduced to nothingness. This means – at least in the case of pure

intelligence without relation to supernatural love – abandonment, the suspension of perspective.<sup>15</sup>

Weil is definitely resigned, and fully, to this act of detachment from the self:

God gave me being in order that I should give it back to him. It is like one of those traps whereby the characters are tested in fairy stories and tales of initiation. If I accept this gift it is bad and fatal; its virtue becomes apparent through my refusal of it. God allows me to exist outside himself. It is for me to refuse this authorization. [GaG, 35]

Weil forthwith reminds us that this work of decreation cannot be a purely human endeavor. She writes: “We only possess what we renounce; what we do not renounce escapes us. In this sense, we cannot possess anything whatever unless it passes through God.” [GaG, 29] And in another passage she continues: “Everything without exception which is of value in me comes from somewhere other than myself, not as a gift but as a loan which must be constantly renewed.” [GaG, 27] This signifies that in the decreed state man does not celebrate an accomplishment but rather encounters all the more plainly his finitude. The triumph over the sense of the self only exposes man to his nothingness, to the realization that one counts for nothing, as a human being and even more so as a creature. Weil entreats us to openly embrace and interiorize deeply this truth, which is the very definition of our ontological status:

Once we have understood we are nothing, the object of our efforts is to become nothing. It is for this that we suffer with resignation, *it is for this that we act*, it is for this that we pray. [GaG, 30]

The repudiation of the sense of the self, moreover, readily opens up an awareness of others as they are and not merely as a function of the self. The self must be diminished in favor of the existence of others. This sense of the other now becomes the mark of a truly decreed person. The supreme expression of decreation, in other words, is the

acknowledgment of coexistence after the example of God who through the creative act renounced Himself in order to allow the existence of something else. Through his own decreative act man gains *a sense of God*, indeed, he identifies himself with God.

### **Malheur**

No one can read Weil with attention without being seized by this unusually forceful insight:

It is human misery and not pleasure which contains the secret of the divine wisdom. All pleasure-seeking is the search for an artificial paradise, an intoxication, an enlargement. But it gives us nothing except the experience that it is vain. Only the contemplation of our limitations and our misery puts us on a higher plane. [GaG, 84]

Weil acknowledges the reality of misery or affliction, *malheur*, as an integral part of the human experience. She asserts, moreover, that it is more in this experience of affliction that the real truth about our existence is to be sought: “To be aware of this in the depth of one’s soul is to experience non-being. It is the state of extreme and total humiliation which is also the condition for passing over into truth.”<sup>16</sup>

No more manifestly than in affliction are we made aware of the fragility of our existence. Susan Taubes puts it this way: “The uprootedness, the nakedness, and the hopelessness of man today reveal him in his ultimate *essence*.”<sup>17</sup> It is really in this encounter with affliction, Weil says, that the self comes to a full awakening into the true nature of his existence:

I may lose at any moment, through the play of circumstances over which I have no control, anything whatsoever that I possess, including those things which are so intimately mine that I consider them as being myself. There is nothing that I might not lose. It could happen at any moment that what I

am might be abolished and replaced by anything whatsoever of the filthiest and most contemptible sort.

This is the stark truth about being human, *to be nothing*, and of being in the world, *to be an exile from paradise*. [GaG, 72]

It is important at this point to have a clear understanding of what Weil means by affliction. She maintains that it is inseparably associated with, but quite different from, physical suffering. Unlike corporal pain, which is temporary, affliction is permanent; it takes possession of the soul and leaves therein its permanent trace. It is “an uprooting of life, a more or less attenuated equivalent of death, made irresistibly present to the soul by the attack or immediate apprehension of physical pain.” [WfG, 118] She further qualifies that it is not real affliction unless the uprooting affects all aspects of life: physical and psychological as well as social. This last element, the social debasement, is *the* essential factor: “There is not really affliction unless there is social degradation or the fear of it in some form or another.” [WfG, 119]

Affliction tears the fabric of social relations so that the afflicted man no longer counts for anything. Weil paints a grim picture below of the extensive damage that it inflicts:

... Affliction is essentially a destruction of personality, a lapse into anonymity... In affliction, that misfortune itself becomes a man's whole existence and in every other respect he loses all significance in everybody's eyes including his own. There is something in him that would like to exist, but it is continually pushed back into nothingness, like a drowning man whose head is pushed under the water. He may be a pauper, a refugee, a negro, an invalid, an ex-convict, or anything of the kind; in any case, whether he is an object of ill usage or of charity he will in either case be treated as a cipher, as one item among many others in the statistics of a certain type of affliction. So both good and bad treatment will have the same effect of compelling him to remain anonymous.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, the afflicted man bears the brunt of the contempt and disgust that others fling toward one who is a social outcast while, within himself, he feels scorn, disgust, self-hatred, and the sense of guilt and defilement, the severity of which is inversely proportional to his innocence. Affliction thus “degrades whomever it touches and can evoke only the revulsion of those who behold it.”<sup>19</sup>

The effect of affliction upon a person is so devastating that anyone who is unprepared to bear it can be destroyed almost beyond any hope for redemption. Even the person, who may be ready to suffer affliction, soon finds out that he is bereft of the inner wherewithal to overcome it. It perturbs Weil therefore “that God should have given affliction the power to seize the very souls of the innocent and to take possession of them as their sovereign lord.” [WfG, 119-20]

Affliction is so absurd that Weil shudders at how it makes God “appear to be absent for a time, more absent than a dead man, more absent than light in the utter darkness of a cell.” [WfG, 120] And even worse, as if the blows were not yet enough, it is at this lowest point that the most pernicious effect of affliction sets in, the final test of the self, the ultimate temptation to turn away from and to stop to love God. When this happens, the absence of God becomes final and the self drowns in unsalvageable perdition. Weil regrets that this is usually the case; and, frankly, she admits: “Often, one could weep tears of blood to think how many unfortunates are crushed by affliction without knowing how to make use of it.” [GtG, 102] And she mourns some more over the fate of its victims:

... As for those who have been struck by one of those blows that leave a being struggling on the ground like a half-crushed worm, they have no words to express what is happening to them. Among the people they meet, those who have never had contact with affliction in its true sense can have no idea of what it is, even though they may have suffered a great deal... And as for those who have themselves been mutilated by affliction, they are in no state to help anyone at all, and they are almost incapable of even wishing to do so. [WfG, 120]

And so the afflicted man asks and demands an answer, his voice as loud and plaintive as the cry that reverberated throughout the whole universe from the Cross. Weil spells out this question:

This question is: Why? Why are things as they are? The afflicted man naïvely seeks an answer, from men, from things, from God, even if he disbelieves in him, from anything or everything. Why is it necessary precisely that he should have nothing to eat, or be worn out with fatigue and brutal treatment, or be about to be executed, or be ill, or be in prison? If one explained to him the causes which have produced his present situation, and this is in any case seldom possible because of the complex interaction of circumstances, it will not seem to him to be an answer. For his question ‘Why?’ does not mean ‘By what cause?’ but ‘For what purpose?’ [GtG, 100]

There is no answer, alas, that is forthcoming, ever, because as Weil explains it, “the world is necessity and not purpose;” [GtG, 101] hence, if we are looking for a reason then we should not seek it in this world. There is a reason, she assures us, but it resides outside our universe.

Eric Springsted and Diogenes Allen describe this outward trajectory of our quest for purpose in these words:

We are thus driven in our demand for finality to a reality that is not this cosmos of necessity. If everything added to harmony in this world, we would never look beyond this world for light. If everything added up in this world, the world’s lack of purpose for affliction would not function to *lever* us beyond the world. That is, to raise us to a supernatural level.<sup>20</sup>

It turns out therefore that affliction possesses a redemptive character. In a confounding paradox, the absence of God is also the mode of His presence which corresponds to affliction. When affliction is genuine, when it leads to the complete dissolution of the self, when the self disappears from the center, then God can fill the vacated space and assume His rightful place in the human soul. For as Weil maintains:

“God can love in us only this consent to withdraw in order to make way for him, just as he himself, our creator, withdrew in order that we might come into being.” [GaG, 35]

This brings us full circle around the enigma of affliction: the very experience of the absence of God is at the same time the locus for discovering His love in its fullest meaning. Indeed, as Weil concludes, “the contemplation of human misery wrenches us in the direction of God.” [GaG, 70] Affliction becomes a gateway of the soul to God.

There lurks the constant danger, however, of affliction remaining a useless and no more than a degrading experience. This is the case when affliction is just a purely external destruction of the soul without its consent and cooperation. This consent is to be distinguished though from deliberate choice or an active seeking of affliction. Weil warns against this because it is tantamount to tempting God: “It is wrong to desire affliction; it is against nature, and it is a perversion; and moreover it is the essence of affliction that it is suffered unwillingly.” [GtG, 88] To inflict violence upon the self is also not the affliction that is “the marvel of divine technique... (the) simple and ingenious device which introduces into the soul of a finite creature the immensity of force, blind, brutal, and cold.” [WfG, 135]

To consent is to acquiesce to the fact that one is subject to the blind necessity that envelops the infinity of space and time and which in given circumstances can be concentrated upon the self and totally dissolve it. Weil observes that there is nothing in the self that is not exposed to the possibility of affliction:

Our flesh is fragile; it can be pierced or torn or crushed, or one of its internal mechanisms can be permanently deranged, by any piece of matter in motion. Our soul is vulnerable, being subject to fits of depression without cause and pitifully dependent upon all sorts of objects, inanimate and animate, which are themselves fragile and capricious. Our social personality, upon which our sense of existence almost depends, is always and entirely exposed to every hazard. These three parts of us are linked with the very center of our being in such a way that it bleeds for any wound of the slightest consequence which they suffer. [GtG, 96]

It is only in our illusions we can imagine that some part of our being is exempt or must be spared from affliction. This being so, we must love affliction, which is the natural corollary of necessity in our only universe. We have to recognize affliction not as evil but rather as good, the good that attends to our ontological status. Weil enjoins us to respond to our createdness with our love for it and she gives us her reason: It is our function in this world to consent to the existence of the universe. God is not satisfied with finding his creation good; he wants it also to find itself good. That is the purpose of the souls which are attached to minute fragments of this world; and it is the purpose of affliction to provide the occasion for judging that God's creation is good. Because, so long as the play of circumstances around us leaves our being almost intact, or only half impaired, we more or less believe that the world is created and controlled by ourselves. It is affliction that reveals, suddenly and to our very great surprise, that we are totally mistaken. [GtG, 97]

To consent to affliction, therefore, is to consent to the will of God for affliction is inflicted by God. What brings it about is necessity or the complete obedience of matter. And man is also matter. Weil underscores this point: "Man can never escape from obedience to God. A creature cannot but obey." [WfG, 129] This fact should not be disregarded or forgotten, otherwise, as Weil cautions: "If I thought that God sent me suffering by an act of his will and for my good, I should think that I was something, and I should miss the chief use of suffering which is to teach me that I am nothing." [GaG, 101]

Affliction is His instrument to reveal to us the wretchedness of our natural attachments. Weil therefore admonishes us to accept affliction in this welcoming attitude: "Each time that we have some pain to go through, we can say to ourselves quite truly that it is the universe, the order, and beauty of the world and the obedience of creation to God that are entering our body." [WfG, 131-132] Then we can rightly appreciate it as in fact a gift and thereby learn "to bless with tenderest gratitude" the Love that is its Source.

The imperative for man is to resist, and never to yield, to the temptation to cease to love and, instead, to hold on but "to go on loving in the emptiness, or at least to go on wanting to love, though it may only be with an infinitesimal part of the self." [WfG, 121] This is the decreative

demand and beatitude that accompany the experience of affliction. Weil expounds this as follows:

He whose soul remains ever toward God though the nail pierces it finds himself nailed to the very center of the universe. It is the true center; it is not in the middle; it is beyond space and time; it is God... In this marvelous dimension, the soul, without leaving the place and the instant where the body to which it is united is situated, can cross the totality of space and time and come into the very essence of God. [WfG, 135-136]

This crossing of the infinite gulf that separates man from God can only be the work of God. God comes down to draw man to Himself. The love that propels man back to God is divine love. It is “the love of God for God” that passes through the soul of man for “God alone is capable of loving God.” [WfG, 133] What man can and must do is to “diminish those things in us that impede the flow of the divine stream.”<sup>21</sup>

## **Epilogue**

Much had been made of the fact that Weil refused baptism, the only obstacle that stood in the way of her official admission to the Church. She surely had her reasons for remaining an outsider all her life, not the least of which is Christianity itself, which she scored for being catholic only “by right but not in fact.” [WfG, 10] Be that as it may, her candid admission of where her religious proclivities lay is noticeably clear. She wrote:

... I never hesitated in my choice of attitude; I always adopted the Christian attitude as the only possible one. I might say that I was born, I grew up, and I always remained within the Christian inspiration. While the very name of God had no part in my thoughts, with regard to the problems of this world and this life I shared the Christian conception in an explicit and rigorous manner, with the most specific notions it involves. [WfG, 62-63]

Most philosophers of religion commonly agree that to be religious is not so much a matter of assenting to a series of doctrines as cleaving to a form of life. If that were so, then it can be argued that Weil is one of the most religious personages who ever walked the face of this earth.

To be religious, for Weil, means to have a *sense of God*, which she understood to be more than just a hermeneutics of human existence from a metaphysics of transcendence or the perspective of the divine. To be religious it to verily incarnate uninhibited obedience to God who is not so much the omnipotent source of all being or the infinite reality who transcends all conceivable boundaries, but the God who is absent, who emptied himself into the world and transformed His substance in the blind necessity of that world, who died in the inconsolable pits of affliction.<sup>22</sup>

This is what she conveyed in her doctrine of decreation and her reconstruction of *malheur*, both of which translate to a full scale struggle on our part for nothing is more difficult in our existence than to stare at our mortality and accept our fundamental misfortune which is that we are nothing because we are not God. Nothing indeed is more difficult than to have a *sense of God*, that is, to follow unhesitatingly the God who asks us to love Him with an exclusivity that entails renouncing all attachments to life, the God whose example invites that “even if we could be like God it would be better to be mud which obeys God.” [GaG, 35]

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Miklos Vetö, *The Religious Metaphysics of Simone Weil*, trans. Joan Dargan (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>2</sup>Diogenes Allen. *Three Outsiders: Pascal, Kierkegaard, Simone Weil* (Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1983), 99.

<sup>3</sup>George A. Panichas, ed., *The Simone Weil Reader* (New York: David McKay, 1977), xviii.

<sup>4</sup>Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, trans. Emma Craufurd (New York: Capricorn Books, 1951), 62. [Henceforth all references to this work will be abbreviated WfG and added at the end of the text.]

<sup>5</sup>Christopher Frost and Rebecca Bell-Metereau, *Simone Weil on Politics, Religion and Society*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.

<sup>6</sup>John Hellman, *Simone Weil: An Introduction to Her Thought* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982), 83.

<sup>7</sup>Sylvie Courtine-Denamy, *Three Women in Dark Times: Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 34.

<sup>8</sup>Hellman, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, trans. Emma Craufurd (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), 28. [Henceforth all references to this work will be abbreviated GaG and added at the end of the text.]

<sup>10</sup>Courtine-Denamy, 213.

<sup>11</sup>Vetö, 12.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>13</sup>Courtine-Denamy, 214.

<sup>14</sup>Vetö, 21

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>16</sup>Panichas, 332.

<sup>17</sup>Susan A. Taubes, "The Absent God," *The Journal of Religion*, 35, 1 (January 1955), 7.

<sup>18</sup>Simone Weil, *Gateway to God*, ed. David Raper et al. (Glasgow: Fontana Books, 1974), 94. [Henceforth all references to this work will be abbreviated GtG and added at the end of the text.]

<sup>19</sup>Taubes, 8.

<sup>20</sup>Eric Springsted and Diogenes Allen, *Spirit, Nature and Community: Issues in the Thought of Simone Weil* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 102-103.

<sup>21</sup>John M. Dunaway, *Simone Weil* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 40.

<sup>22</sup>Taubes, 13.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

- Weil, Simone. *Gateway to God*. Edited by David Raper et al. Glasgow: Fontana Books, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Gravity and Grace*. Translated by Emma Craufurd. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Waiting for God*. Translated by Emma Craufurd. New York: Capricorn Books, 1959.

### SECONDARY SOURCES

- Allen, Diogenes. *Three Outsiders: Pascal, Kierkegaard, Simone Weil*. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Simone Weil on Suffering and 'Reading.'" *Communio*, X (Fall 1984): 297-304.
- Coles, Robert. *Simone Weil: A Modern Pilgrimage*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1987.
- Courtine-Denamy, Sylvie. *Three Women in Dark Times: Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil*. Translated by G. M. Goshgarian. London: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Dunaway, John M. *Simone Weil*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1984.
- Frost, Christopher and Rebecca Bell-Metereau. *Simone Weil on Politics, Religion and Society*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Hellman, John. *Simone Weil: An Introduction to Her Thought*. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982.
- Panichas, George A., ed. *The Simone Weil Reader*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977.
- Paulsell, William O. *Tough Minds, Tender Hearts: Six Prophets of Social Justice*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1990.
- Rees, Richard. *Simone Weil: A Sketch for a Portrait*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966.
- Springsted, Eric and Diogenes Allen. *Spirit, Nature and Community: Issues in the Thought of Simone Weil*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1994.
- Taubes, Susan A. "The Absent God." *The Journal of Religion*, 35, 1 (January 1955): 6-16.
- Vetö, Miklos. *The Religious Metaphysics of Simone Weil*. Translated by Joan Dargan. New York: State University of New York Press, 1994.
- Winch, Peter. *Simone Weil: "The Just Balance."* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Wolfteich, Claire. "Attention or Destruction: Simone Weil and the Paradox of the Eucharist." *The Journal of Religion*, 81, 3 (July 2001): 359-376.