

A MESSAGE BEQUEATHED TO HUMANITY

Very near the end of her life, Simone Weil wrote to her mother that she had a message of pure gold for humankind but feared that no one would be inclined to hear it. She had sought confirmation for this perceived message in the physical universe, in human psychology, and in classic and sacred texts. Her experiences had shown her that recognition of the potent self-perpetuating capacity of force, inherent in human relationships, would require new social strategies in view of a more comprehensive understanding of the spiritual dimension in human beings. She wanted others to be aware of this reality.

Her mystical encounters with Christ had revealed to her the impersonal sacredness of every individual, which dwells invisibly within every person and does not depend on any personal or random attributes. Although this sacred part of every human being that goes through life expecting good to be done to it is vulnerable, it is within this sacred aspect of every human being that obedient consent to God's love occurs. The community must protect this fragile center of the individual, which can be reduced to impotence by cold indifferent force. Because knowledge of the supernatural is transmitted through all the great traditional religions and their cultures, concern for the well-being of one's neighbor means that everyone has the obligation to preserve these civilizations from annihilation.

Weil's message dealt with the constant imperative of keeping force checked because individuals' lives were at risk, as were the traditions of civilizations that transmitted valuable facets of the supernatural. The churning violence could be quelled only by persons who acted selflessly for a higher good and who accepted the sacrifices required. From her anguish for others' suffering, Weil brought out a new understanding of the human condition. She desperately hoped her message would be heard. This study follows her tortuous path from her early recognition of the self-perpetuating autonomy of violence to her final resolution of the continual struggle to constrain brute force from destroying humankind's vital bridges to the supernatural.