

Work

There is always the danger that we may just do the work for the sake of the work. This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in—that we do it to God, to Christ, and that’s why we try to do it as beautifully as possible.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, “Imitation of Christ” (1975).

See also: [Careers](#) [Franklin on The Golden Rule](#) [The Office Kollwitz on Old Age](#) [Professions Trollope on Retirement](#)
[Voltaire on Self-sufficiency](#) [Ruskin on](#)

Abortion



Mother Teresa
Shone/Gamma Liaison

The greatest destroyer of peace is abortion because if a mother can kill her own child, what is left for me to kill you and you to kill me? There is nothing between.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary in India. Nobel Peace Prize Lecture, 1979. ¹[Slavery](#)²

Aid

Let us more and more insist on raising funds of love, of kindness, of understanding, of peace. Money will come if we seek first the Kingdom of God—the rest will be given.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, “Carriers of Christ’s Love” (1975). ³ **Mother Teresa** (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, “Carriers of Christ’s Love” (1975). ⁴

Hunger

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If sometimes our poor people have had to die of starvation, it is not that God didn't care for them, but because you and I didn't give, were not an instrument of love in the hands of God, to give them that bread, to give them that clothing; because we did not recognize him, when once more Christ came in distressing disguise, in the hungry man, in the lonely man, in the homeless child, and seeking for shelter.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Suffering" (1975).

See also: [Famine](#)⁵

Illness

Dearest Lord, may I see you today and every day in the person of your sick, and, whilst nursing them, minister unto you. Though you hide yourself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognize you, and say:

"Jesus, my patient, how sweet it is to serve you."

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Love to Pray" (1975).

See also: [Aids Cancer Disease Proust on Doctors Certeau on Hospitals](#)⁶

Jesus

Christ

There is but one love of Jesus, as there is but one person in the poor — Jesus. We take vows of chastity to love Christ with undivided love; to be able to love him with undivided love we take a vow of poverty which frees us from all material possessions, and with that freedom we can love him with undivided love, and from this vow of undivided love we surrender ourselves totally to him in the person who takes his place.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Carriers of Christ's Love" (1975).

See also: [Nichols on Fiction](#) [Brown on The Messiah](#) [O'Connor on The South](#)⁷

Joy

Joy is

prayer — Joy is strength — Joy is love — Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls. God loves a cheerful giver. She gives most who gives with joy. The best way to show our gratitude to God and the people is to accept everything with joy. A joyful heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love. Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the joy of the Christ risen.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Joy" (1975).⁸

Loneliness

When Christ said: "I was

hungry and you fed me," he didn't mean only the hunger for bread and for food; he also meant the hunger to be loved. Jesus himself experienced this loneliness. He came amongst his own and his own received him not, and it hurt him then and it has kept on hurting him. The same hunger, the same loneliness, the same having no one to be accepted by and to be loved and wanted by. Every human being in that case resembles Christ in his loneliness; and that is the hardest part, that's real hunger.

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Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Imitation of Christ" (1975).

See also: [Eliot on Suspicion](#)⁹

Missionaries

As each Sister is to become a Co-Worker of Christ in the slums, each ought to understand what God and the Missionaries of Charity expect from her. Let Christ radiate and live his life in her and through her in the slums. Let the poor, seeing her, be drawn to Christ and invite him to enter their homes and their lives. Let the sick and suffering find in her a real angel of comfort and consolation. Let the little ones of the streets cling to her because she reminds them of him, the friend of the little ones.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Carriers of Christ's Love" (1975).

See also: [Illich on Silence](#)¹⁰

Poverty

and the Poor

Our life of poverty is as necessary as the work itself. Only in heaven will we see how much we owe to the poor for helping us to love God better because of them.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Carriers of Christ's Love" (1975).

See also: [Pound on Bohemia](#) - [Harrington on Dress](#) - [O'Connor on Fiction](#) - [Chatham on Home And Houses](#)

[Disraeli on Inequality](#) - [Butler on Money](#) - [Wilde on Money](#) - [Friel on Repression](#) - [Johnson on Unemployment](#)

[Johnson on Welfare](#)¹¹

Reform

If there are people who feel that God wants them to change the structures of society, that is something between them and their God. We must serve him in whatever way we are called. I am called to help the individual; to love each poor person. Not to deal with institutions. I am in no position to judge.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Carriers of Christ's Love" (1975). See also:

[Hooker on Change](#) - [Burke on Innovation](#) - [Crisp on Prejudice](#) - [Shaw on Revolution](#) - [Burke on](#)

[The State](#)¹²

Saints

We must have a real living determination to reach holiness. "I will be a saint" means I will despoil myself of all that is not God; I will strip my heart of all created things; I will live in poverty and detachment; I will renounce my will, my inclinations, my whims and fancies, and make myself a willing slave to the will of God.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Willing Slaves to the Will of God" (1975).

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See also: [Cowper on The Devil](#)¹³

Silence

We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. ... We need silence to be able to touch souls.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Willing Slaves to the Will of God" (1975).

See also: [King on Acceptance](#) - [Emerson on Applause](#) - [De Gaulle on Authority](#) - [Steiner on Language](#)

[Stevenson on Lies And Lying](#)¹⁴

Success

God doesn't require us to succeed; he only requires that you try.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Roman Catholic missionary in India. Quoted by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. in: *Rolling Stone* (New York, Dec. 1992).

See also: [Marcus on Clichés](#) - [Twain on Fools And Follies](#) - [Baker on Socialism](#)¹⁵

Suffering

Without out suffering, our work would just be social work, very good and helpful, but it would not be the work of Jesus Christ, not part of the Redemption. ... All the desolation of the poor people, not only their material poverty, but their spiritual destitution, must be redeemed. And we must share it, for only by being one with them can we redeem them by bringing God into their lives and bringing them to God.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Suffering" (1975).

See also: [Weil on Dissatisfaction](#) - [Byatt on Grief](#) - [Austen on Places](#) - [Weil on Punishment](#) - [Hoffer on Purpose](#)¹⁶

The Rich

Even the rich are hungry for love, for being cared for, for being wanted, for having someone to call their own.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Carriers of Christ's Love" (1975).

See also: [Dobell on Funerals](#) - [Saki on Gifts And Giving](#) - [Disraeli on Inequality](#) - [France on Laws And The Law](#)

[Goldsmith on Laws And The Law – Luxury](#) - [Bagehot on Poverty And The Poor – Tycoons](#) - [Wealth](#)¹⁷

The Rich

The trouble is that rich people, well-to-do people, very often don't really know who the poor are; and that is why we can forgive them, for knowledge can only lead to love, and love to service. And so, if they are not touched by them, it's because they do not know them.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Riches" (1975).

See also: [Dobell on Funerals](#) - [Saki on Gifts And Giving](#) - [Disraeli on Inequality](#) - [France on Laws And The Law](#)

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Vocation

Sweetest Lord, make me appreciative of the dignity of my high vocation, and its many responsibilities. Never permit me to disgrace it by giving way to coldness, unkindness, or impatience.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Love to Pray" (1975).¹⁹

Wealth

There must be a reason why some people can afford to live well. They must have worked for it. I only feel angry when I see waste. When I see people throwing away things that we could use.

Mother Teresa (1910–97), Albanian-born Roman Catholic missionary. *A Gift for God*, "Riches" (1975).

See also: [Burke on Business And Commerce – Luxury - Smith on Money - The Rich - Tycoons](#)²⁰

Abortion

It is not possible to speak of the right to choose when a clear moral evil is involved, when what is at stake is the commandment *Do not kill!* **Pope John Paul II** [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* "The Defense of Every Life" (1994).²¹

Abortion



Pope John Paul II
Cynthia
Johnson/Gamma Liaison

The cemetery of the victims of human cruelty in our century is extended to include yet another vast cemetery, that of the unborn.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, pope. Quoted in: *Observer* (London, 9 June 1991).²²

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Communism

It would be simplistic to say that Divine Providence caused the fall of Communism. In a certain sense Communism as a system fell by itself. It fell as a consequence of its own mistakes and abuses. *It proved to be a medicine more dangerous than the disease itself.* It did not bring about true social reform, yet it did become a powerful threat and challenge to the entire world. But *it fell by itself, because of its own inherent weakness.*

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* "Was God at Work in the Fall of Communism?" (1994).

See also: [Marxism - Koestler on Russia And The Russians – Socialism - Khrushchev on The Ussr - Koestler on The Ussr - Solzhenitsyn on The Ussr](#)²³

Family

As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, pope. Quoted in: *Observer* (London, 7 Dec. 1986).

See also: [Wilde on Dinner Parties – Fathers - Dickens on Greatness - Crisp on Living Together – Mothers - Parents Elizabeth II on Royalty](#)²⁴

Lebanon

A process

of genocide is being carried out before the eyes of the world.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, pope. Quoted in: *Independent* (London, 16 Aug. 1989), of the situation in Beirut.

See also: [The Middle East](#)²⁵

Marriage

Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family—a domestic church.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, pope. Quoted in: *Observer* (London, 31 Jan. 1982).

See also: [Clewlow on Adultery - Shakespeare on Adultery - Molière on Books - Herbert on Breakfast - Butler on Thomas Carlyle - Stevenson on Compatibility – Divorce – Elopement - Jong on Friends - Butler on Friendship – Husbands - Keats on John Keats - Rowland on Men, Single - Shaw on The Nineteenth Century - Longfellow on Sects Shaw on Virtue - Wives](#)²⁶

Nationalism

Pervading nationalism

imposes its dominion on man today in many different forms and with an aggressiveness that spares no one. ... The challenge that is already with us is the temptation to accept as true freedom what in reality is only a new form of slavery.

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Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, Pope. Address, 29 Sept. 1979, Dublin, Ireland. ²⁷

The Church

and Society

The question

confronting the Church today is not any longer whether the man in the street can grasp a religious message, but how to employ the communications media so as to let him have the full impact of the Gospel message.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, Pope. *International Herald Tribune* (Paris, 8 May 1989). ²⁸

Truth

Truth must be the foundation stone, the cement to solidify the entire social edifice.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic, pope. *Times* (London, 18 May 1988).

See also: [Keats on Beauty](#) - [Huxley on Common Sense](#) - [Brookner on Confession](#) - [Voltaire on The Dead](#) - [Arnold on Death And Dying](#) - [Daumal on Error](#) - [Hugo on Exaggeration](#) - [Lichtenberg on Fashion](#) - [Johnson on Freedom Of Speech](#) - [Hazlitt on Injury](#) - [Byron on Lies And Lying](#) - [Galbraith on The Majority](#) - [Murdoch on Moralists](#)

[Scott on Newspapers And Magazines](#) - [Hegel on Originality](#) - [Chesterfield on Ridicule](#)²⁹

Youth

We need the enthusiasm of the young. We need their joie de vivre. In it is reflected something of the original joy God had in creating man. The young experience this same joy within themselves. This joy is the same everywhere, but it is also ever new and original.

The young know how to express this joy in their own special way.

Pope John Paul II [Karol Wojtyła] (b. 1920), Polish ecclesiastic. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* "Is There Really Hope in the Young?" (1994).

See also: [Adolescence – Childhood – Children](#) - [Burgess on Delinquency](#) - [Disraeli on Genius](#) - [Carlyle on Students](#)³⁰

Science



Pope John XXIII
Archive Photos

Nevertheless, in order to imbue civilization with sound principles and enliven it with the spirit of the gospel, it is not enough to be

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illuminated with the gift of faith and enkindled with the desire of forwarding a good cause. For this end it is necessary to take an active part in the various organizations and influence them from within. And since our present age is one of outstanding scientific and technical progress and excellence, one will not be able to enter these organizations and work effectively from within unless he is scientifically competent, technically capable and skilled in the practice of his own profession.

Pope John XXIII (1881–1963). Encyclical, 10 April 1963 (published in *Pacem in Terris*, pt. 5).

See also: [Huxley on Books – Chemistry - Lamb on The Cosmos – Engineering - Huxley on Experts - Bronowski on Nature – Physics - Lichtenberg on Preaching - Shaw on Problems - Wilde on Religion – Scientists - The Social Sciences - Technology](#)³¹

Technology

The Church welcomes technological progress and receives it with love, for it is an indubitable fact that technological progress comes from God and, therefore, can and must lead to Him.

Pope Pius XII [Eugenio Pacelli] (1876–1958), Italian ecclesiastic, pope. Christmas message, 1953.

See also: [Fischer on Machinery – Science – Tools - Gallo on Socialism](#)³²

Adversity

Misfortunes leave wounds which bleed drop by drop even in sleep; thus little by little they train man by force and dispose him to wisdom in spite of himself. Man must learn to think of himself as a limited and dependent being; and only suffering teaches him this.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *La Source Grecque*, pt. 1, ch. 2 (1953).

See also: [Bible: New Testament on Contentment - Hoffer on Opportunity](#)³³

Aid

The needs of a human being are sacred. Their satisfaction cannot be subordinated either to reasons of state, or to any consideration of money, nationality, race, or color, or to the moral or other value attributed to the human being in question, or to any consideration whatsoever.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Draft for a Statement of Human Obligation" (1943; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).³⁴ **Art**

Art is the symbol of the two noblest human efforts: to construct ... and to refrain from destruction.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *The Pre-War Notebook* (1933–39; published in *First and Last Notebooks*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1970).

See also: [Aesthetics - Warhol on Business And Commerce - Klee on Cartoons And Drawing - Picasso on Censorship](#)

[Rilke on Color - Auden on Creativity - Shaw on Creeds - Grosz on Culture - Hockney on Design - Cather on Editing](#)

[Browning on Effort - Martin on Entertainment - Woolf on Excellence - Fischer on Humankind - Dali on Image](#)

[Reade on Imitation - Stein on Imitation - Klee on Life And Living - Wolfe on Modernism And Postmodernism](#)

[Picasso on Museums And Galleries - Blake on Nudity - Wilde on Obscenity – Opinion – Painting - Gauguin on Philosophy - Sontag on](#)

[Photography - Sondheim on Popular Culture - Wilde on Popularity – Portraits - Wilde on The Public - Wilde on Republicanism -](#)

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[Rosenberg on Revolution](#) - [Baudelaire on Romanticism](#) - [Klee on Sacrifice](#)

[Science And Art](#) - [Thurber on Speed](#) - [Picasso on Taste](#) – [Surrealism](#) - [Wilde on Taste](#) - [Murdoch on Virtue](#)³⁵

Atheism

An atheist may be simply one

whose faith and love are concentrated on the impersonal aspects of God. **Simone Weil**

(1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. Quoted in: W. H. Auden, *A Certain World*, "God" (1970). See also: [Oliphant](#)

[on The Afterlife](#) - [Dickinson on Belief](#) - [Muggeridge on Credulity](#) - [Hemingway on Prayer](#)³⁶

Christianity and the Christians

I am not a Catholic; but I consider the Christian idea, which has its roots in Greek thought and in the course of the centuries has nourished all of our European civilization, as something that one cannot renounce without becoming degraded.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. Letter, March 1937 (published in Simone Pétrement, *Vie de Simone Weil*, vol. 2, ch. 3, 1976).

See also: [Catholicism](#) - [The Church](#) - [Zhuravlyov on Communism](#) - [De Quincey on Flowers – God](#) - [Tocqueville on Islam And The Muslims](#) - [Lennon on Jesus Christ](#) - [Pound on Jesus Christ](#) - [Shaw on Judaism And The Jews](#) - [Farquhar on Sects](#) - [Hazlitt on Sects](#) - [O'Brien on Sects](#)³⁷

Colonialism

Just as a person who is always asserting that he is too good-natured is the very one from whom to expect, on some occasion, the coldest and most unconcerned cruelty, so when any group sees itself as the bearer of civilization this very belief will betray it into behaving barbarously at the first opportunity.

Simone Weil (1910–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Hitler and Roman Foreign Policy," in *Nouveaux Cahiers* (1 Jan. 1940).

See also: [Decolonization](#) - [Empire](#)³⁸

Communication

Two prisoners whose cells adjoin communicate with each other by knocking on the wall. The wall is the thing which separates them but is also their means of communication. It is the same with us and God. Every separation is a link.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Gravity and Grace*, "Metaxu" (1947; tr. 1952).

See also: [Bernstein on technique](#) - [Rosen on The Twentieth Century: The 1970s](#)³⁹

Despotism

The real stumbling-block of totalitarian régimes is not the spiritual need of men for freedom of thought; it is men's inability to stand the physical and nervous strain of a permanent state of excitement, except during a few years of their youth.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Cold War Policy in 1939" (written 1939; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

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See also: [Chamfort on History - Byron on Politics - Tyranny](#)⁴⁰

Doctrine

A doctrine serves no purpose in itself, but it is indispensable to have one if only to avoid being deceived by false doctrines.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Ecrits de Londres*, ch. 10, "Fragments et Notes" (1957).⁴¹

Equality

Equality is the public recognition, effectively expressed in institutions and manners, of the principle that an equal degree of attention is due to the needs of all human beings.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Draft for a Statement of Human Obligations" (published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also: [France on Laws And The Law](#)⁴²

Faith

The mysteries of faith are degraded if they are made into an object of affirmation and negation, when in reality they should be an object of contemplation.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Gravity and Grace*, "Intelligence and Grace" (1947; tr. 1952).

See also: [Johnson on The Afterlife - Benn on Doctrine - Hoffer on Technology](#)⁴³

Force

Force is as pitiless to the man who possesses it, or thinks he does, as it is to its victims; the second it crushes, the first it intoxicates. The truth is, nobody really possesses it.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "The *Iliad* or the Poem of Force," in *Cahiers du Sud* (Marseilles, Dec. 1940/Jan. 1941; repr. in *Simone Weil: An Anthology*, ed. by Sian Miles, tr. by Mary McCarthy, 1986).⁴⁴

Friendship

Learn to reject friendship, or rather the dream of friendship. To want friendship is a great fault. Friendship ought to be a gratuitous joy, like the joys afforded by art, or life (like aesthetic joys). I must refuse it in order to be worthy to receive it.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *The Pre-War Notebook* (1933–39; published in *First and Last Notebooks*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1970).

See also: [Acquaintance - Chinese proverb on Ceremony - Colette on Courtesy - Pope on Death And Dying - Lessing on Hate - Woolf](#)

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[on Intimacy - Hazlitt on Punctuality](#)⁴⁵

Genius

Real genius is nothing else but the supernatural virtue of humility in the domain of thought.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Human Personality," published in *La Table Ronde* (Dec. 1950; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also: [Lichtenberg on Adversity - Picasso on Childhood - Lichtenberg on Greatness - Browning on Respectability](#)
[Pope on Science - Wilde on Self-image - Hazlitt on William Shakespeare - Longfellow on Sociability - Picasso on Success](#)⁴⁶

God

In relation to God, we are like a thief who has burgled the house of a kindly householder and been allowed to keep some of the gold. From the point of view of the lawful owner this gold is a gift; From the point of view of the burglar it is a theft. He must go and give it back. It is the same with our existence. We have stolen a little of God's being to make it ours. God has made us a gift of it. But we have stolen it. We must return it.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *New York Notebook* (1950; repr. in *First and Last Notebooks*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1970).

See also: [Allen on Agnostics](#)

[Schreiner on Atheism](#)

[Shaw on The British](#)

[Angelou on Children](#)

[The Creation](#)

[Grimké on Education](#)

[Pascal on Faith](#)

[Heine on Forgiveness](#)

[Maistre on Free Will](#)

[O'Neill on Gods And Goddesses](#)

[Butler on Humankind](#)

[Miller on Imagination](#)

[Walker on Jesus Christ](#)

[Greek Proverb on Luck](#)

[Cary on Miracles](#)

[James on Miracles](#)

[Bible: New Testament on Privilege](#)

[Anouilh on The Rich](#)

[De Vries on Salvation](#)

[Joubert on Space](#)

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[Renan on Spirituality](#)

[Bible: New Testament on The Status Quo](#)⁴⁷**God**

It is only the impossible that is possible for God. He has given over the possible to the mechanics of matter and the autonomy of his creatures.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "A War of Religions" (written 1943; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Allen on Agnostics](#)

[Schreiner on Atheism](#)

[Shaw on The British](#)

[Angelou on Children](#)

[The Creation](#)

[Grimké on Education](#)

[Pascal on Faith](#)

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[James on Miracles](#)

[Bible: New Testament on Privilege](#)

[Anouilh on The Rich](#)

[De Vries on Salvation](#)

[Joubert on Space](#)

[Renan on Spirituality](#)

[Bible: New Testament on The Status Quo](#)⁴⁸**God**

We can only know one thing about God—that he is what we are not. Our wretchedness alone is an image of this. The more we contemplate it, the more we contemplate him.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Gravity and Grace*, "Attention and Will" (1947; tr. 1952).

See also:

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[Allen on Agnostics](#)
[Schreiner on Atheism](#)
[Shaw on The British](#)
[Angelou on Children](#)
[The Creation](#)
[Grimké on Education](#)
[Pascal on Faith](#)
[Heine on Forgiveness](#)
[Maistre on Free Will](#)
[O'Neill on Gods And Goddesses](#)
[Butler on Humankind](#)
[Miller on Imagination](#)
[Walker on Jesus Christ](#)
[Greek Proverb on Luck](#)
[Cary on Miracles](#)
[James on Miracles](#)
[Bible: New Testament on Privilege](#)
[Anouilh on The Rich](#)
[De Vries on Salvation](#)
[Joubert on Space](#)
[Renan on Spirituality](#)

[Bible: New Testament on The Status Quo](#)⁴⁹**Goodness**

At the bottom of the heart of every human being, from earliest infancy until the tomb, there is something that goes on indomitably expecting, in the teeth of all experience of crimes committed, suffered, and witnessed, that good and not evil will be done to him. It is this above all that is sacred in every human being.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Human Personality," in *La Table Ronde* (written 1943; published Dec. 1950; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Byron on Humankind](#)
[Kindness](#)⁵⁰**Humanism**

Humanism was not wrong in thinking that truth, beauty, liberty, and equality are of infinite value, but in thinking that man can get them for himself without grace.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "The Romanesque Renaissance," in *Cahiers du Sud* (Marseilles, 1941 or 1942; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

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[Jefferson on Agnostics](#)

[O'Rourke on Free Will](#)⁵¹**Intelligence**

The role of the intelligence—that part of us which affirms and denies and formulates opinions—is merely to submit.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Gravity and Grace*, "Intelligence and Grace" (1947; tr. 1952).

See also:

[Keats on Adversity](#)

[Crisp on Character](#)

[La Rochefoucauld on Self-deception](#)⁵²**Killing**

As soon as men know that they can kill without fear of punishment or blame, they kill; or at least they encourage killers with approving smiles.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. Letter, c. 1938, to author Georges Bernanos (published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Assassination](#)

[Murder](#)⁵³**Liberty**

It would seem that man was born a slave, and that slavery is his natural condition. At the same time nothing on earth can stop man from feeling himself born for liberty. Never, whatever may happen, can he accept servitude; for he is a thinking creature.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Oppression and Liberty*, ch. 4 (1958).

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See also:

[Burke on Corruption](#)
[Gibbon on Corruption](#)
[Freedom](#)
[Latin Phrase of Unknown Authorship on Patriotism](#)
[Mamet on Principles](#)
[Guizot on Revolution](#)
[Wilde on Terrorism](#)⁵⁴**Morality**

To set up as a standard of public morality a notion which can neither be defined nor conceived is to open the door to every kind of tyranny.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Human Personality," in *La Table Ronde* (Dec. 1950; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Butler on Alcohol: Drunkenness](#)
[Twain on Animals](#)
[Smith on Conscience](#)
[Spencer on Health](#)
[Blake on Liberty](#)
[Taylor on Punishment](#)
[Arnold on Religion](#)
[Shaw on Religion](#)
[Whitlam on Self-interest](#)
[Stevenson on Taboo](#)⁵⁵**Murder**

When once a certain class of people has been placed by the temporal and spiritual authorities outside the ranks of those whose life has value, then nothing comes more naturally to men than murder.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. Letter, c. 1938, to author Georges Bernanos (published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

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[Assassination](#)
[Porteus on Generals](#)
[Killing](#)

[Hitchcock on Television](#)⁵⁶**Obedience**

There can be a true grandeur in any degree of submissiveness, because it springs from loyalty to the laws and to an oath, and not from baseness of soul.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. “The Great Beast,” pt. 3, in *Selected Essays* (ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).⁵⁷
Oppression

Human beings are so made that the ones who do the crushing feel nothing; it is the person crushed who feels what is happening. Unless one has placed oneself on the side of the oppressed, to feel with them, one cannot understand.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Lectures on Philosophy*, pt. 3, ch. 2 (1978).

See also:

[Konrád on Courage](#)
[Despotism](#)
[Tolstoy on Liberals](#)
[Szasz on Madness](#)
[Repression](#)

[Tyranny](#)⁵⁸**Oppression**

Oppression that is clearly inexorable and invincible does not give rise to revolt but to submission.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Factory Journal*, “The Mystery of the Factory” (1934–35; repr. in *La Condition Ouvrière*, 1951).

See also:

[Konrád on Courage](#)
[Despotism](#)
[Tolstoy on Liberals](#)

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[Szasz on Madness](#)
[Repression](#)

[Tyranny](#)⁵⁹ **Outcasts**

In this world, only those people who have fallen to the lowest degree of humiliation, far below beggary, who are not just without any social consideration but are regarded by all as being deprived of that foremost human dignity, reason itself—only those people, in fact, are capable of telling the truth. All the others lie.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. Letter, 4 Aug. 1943, to her parents (published in *Seventy Letters*, 1965).

⁶⁰ **Pain**

There is no detachment where there is no pain. And there is no pain endured without hatred or lying unless detachment is present too.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Gravity and Grace*, “Illusions” (1947; tr. 1952).

See also:

[Arendt on Effort](#)

[Nietzsche on Illness](#)⁶¹ **Philosophy**

The proper method of philosophy consists in clearly conceiving the insoluble problems in all their insolubility and then in simply contemplating them, fixedly and tirelessly, year after year, without any hope, patiently waiting.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. “London Notebook” (1943; published in *First and Last Notebooks*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1970).

See also:

[Marx on Greece And The Greeks](#)
[Seneca on Invention](#)

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[Logic](#)

[Metaphysics](#)⁶²**Power**

To get power over is to defile. To possess is to defile.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *New York Notebook* (written 1942; published 1950; repr. in *First and Last Notebooks*, pt. 3, ed. by Richard Rees, 1970).

See also:

[Hoffer on God](#)

[Nietzsche on Goodness](#)

[Korean proverb on Influence](#)

[Acton on Leadership](#)

[Adams on The President](#)

[Baldwin on The Press](#)⁶³**Punishment**

Whenever a human being, through the commission of a crime, has become exiled from good, he needs to be reintegrated with it through suffering. The suffering should be inflicted with the aim of bringing the soul to recognize freely some day that its infliction was just.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Draft for a Statement of Human Obligations" (written 1943; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Capital Punishment](#)

[Zedong on Error](#)⁶⁴**Science**

To us, men of the West, a very strange thing happened at the turn of the century; without noticing it, we lost science, or at least the thing that had been called by that name for the last four centuries. What we now have in place of it is something different, radically different, and we don't know what it is. Nobody knows what it is.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Classical Science and After" (written 1941; published in *On Science, Necessity,*

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and the Love of God, ed. by Richard Rees, 1968).

See also:

[Huxley on Books](#)
[Chemistry](#)
[Lamb on The Cosmos](#)
[Engineering](#)
[Huxley on Experts](#)
[Bronowski on Nature](#)
[Physics](#)
[Lichtenberg on Preaching](#)
[Shaw on Problems](#)
[Wilde on Religion](#)
[Scientists](#)
[The Social Sciences](#)
[Technology](#)⁶⁵ **Socialism**

The only hope of socialism resides in those who have already brought about in themselves, as far as is possible in the society of today, that union between manual and intellectual labor which characterizes the society we are aiming at.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Oppression and Liberty*, ch. 1 (1958).

See also:

[Communism](#)
[Galbraith on Economics](#)
[Gorbachev on Jesus Christ](#)
[Marxism](#)⁶⁶ **Solitude**

In solitude we are in the presence of mere matter (even the sky, the stars, the moon, trees in blossom), things of less value (perhaps) than a human spirit. Its value lies in the greater possibility of attention. If we could be attentive to the same degree in the presence of a human being ...

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Gravity and Grace*, "Attention and Will" (1947; tr. 1952).

See also:

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[Osborne on Atheism](#)
[Cather on Friendship](#)
[Garbo on Greta Garbo](#)
[Eliot on Hell](#)
[Hermits](#)
[Hobos](#)
[Vaughan on Old Age](#)

[Byron on Sociability](#)⁶⁷ **Suffering**

The afflicted are not listened to. They are like someone whose tongue has been cut out and who occasionally forgets the fact. When they move their lips no ear perceives any sound. And they themselves soon sink into impotence in the use of language, because of the certainty of not being heard.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Human Personality" (written 1943; published in *La Table Ronde*, Dec. 1950; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Weil on Dissatisfaction](#)
[Byatt on Grief](#)
[Austen on Places](#)
[Weil on Punishment](#)

[Hoffer on Purpose](#)⁶⁸ **Sympathy**

The capacity to give one's attention to a sufferer is a very rare and difficult thing; it is almost a miracle; it *is* a miracle. Nearly all those who think they have this capacity do not possess it. Warmth of heart, impulsiveness, pity are not enough.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. *Waiting on God*, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies" (1950).

See also:

[Phelps on Grief](#)

[Russell on Society](#)⁶⁹ **The State**

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Every new development for the last three centuries has brought men closer to a state of affairs in which absolutely nothing would be recognized in the whole world as possessing a claim to obedience except the authority of the State. The majority of people in Europe obey nothing else.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. “The Great Beast: Conclusion” (written 1939–40; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Cromwell on Public Office](#)

[Lewis on Family](#)

[Kaunda on Force](#)

[Thoreau on Protest](#)⁷⁰**Trust**

At the bottom of the heart of every human being from earliest infancy until the tomb, there is something that goes on indomitably expecting, in the teeth of all experience of crimes committed, suffered, and witnessed, that good and not evil will be done to him. It is this above all that is sacred in every human being.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. “Human Personality” (written 1943; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Hebrew Bible on Royalty](#)

[Aeschylus on Tyranny](#)

[Wilde on Wives](#)⁷¹**Truth**

The only way into truth is through one’s own annihilation; through dwelling a long time in a state of extreme and total humiliation.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. “Human Personality” (written 1943; published in *La Table Ronde*, Dec. 1950; repr. in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

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[Keats on Beauty](#)
[Huxley on Common Sense](#)
[Brookner on Confession](#)
[Voltaire on The Dead](#)
[Arnold on Death And Dying](#)
[Daumal on Error](#)
[Hugo on Exaggeration](#)
[Lichtenberg on Fashion](#)
[Johnson on Freedom Of Speech](#)
[Hazlitt on Injury](#)
[Byron on Lies And Lying](#)
[Galbraith on The Majority](#)
[Murdoch on Moralists](#)
[Scott on Newspapers And Magazines](#)
[Hegel on Originality](#)
[Chesterfield on Ridicule](#)⁷²**Unhappiness**

Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in this world but people capable of giving them their attention.

Simone Weil (1909–1943), French philosopher and mystic. *Waiting on God*, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies" (1950).

See [Weil on Sympathy](#).

See also:

[James on Depression](#)
[Despair](#)
[Grief](#)
[Sorrow](#)⁷³**Victims**

When a man's life is destroyed or damaged by some wound or privation of soul or body, which is due to other men's actions or negligence, it is not only his sensibility that suffers but also his aspiration toward the good. Therefore there has been sacrilege towards that which is sacred in him.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "Draft for a Statement of Human Obligation" (written 1943; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).⁷⁴**Victory**

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It is not the cause for which men took up arms that makes a victory more just or less, it is the order that is established when arms have been laid down.

Simone Weil (1909–43), French philosopher, mystic. "The Great Beast: Conclusion" (written 1939–40; published in *Selected Essays*, ed. by Richard Rees, 1962).

See also:

[Saint-Exupéry on Defeat](#)

[Smith on Song](#)

[Winning](#)⁷⁵

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