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Simone Weil's 'Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God': A Comment

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to provide a comment on Simone Weil's brief but seminal essay 'Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God.' It complements an earlier one on Weil's *Lectures on Philosophy*. The essay was sent via a letter to her friend and mentor, the Catholic priest, and Dominican friar, Father Joseph-Marie Perrin O.P. It set out her belief that school studies should provide the individual pupil or student with an education in the value and acquisition of attention. This, Weil believed, would be of fundamental value when reaching out to God through prayer. Such a capacity for attention would also enhance the student's general academic and social learning providing a basis for authentic dialogue with others, and not only teachers and schoolfellows. The article introduces her as a religious philosopher, explains the origins of the essay, and Weil's friendship with Father Perrin, who was her Christian religious mentor, examines the text itself, considers some critical commentaries, and assesses its relevance to the philosophy and practice of education today.

Keywords: Simone Weil; School Studies; Attention; Prayer; God

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Introduction

The work of the French religious philosopher, mystic, and political and social activist Simone Weil (1909—1943), relatively neglected during her short life¹, has stimulated much academic philosophical and theological comment. Until the early 1950s, her writing was to be found only in obscure magazines, political, and religious, or in personal notebooks, letters, and other unpublished documents. It was the English publisher and critic Richard Rees² who, alongside Arthur Wills, a well-known translator from the French, first brought Simone Weil to the attention of the English-speaking world, culminating in their independent translations of Simone Weil's notebooks [3; 4]³.

There have also been attempts at biography ranging from work based on close personal knowledge, such as that of her student friend Simone Petrement [6], or the memoir provided by her Catholic friends and mentors, the Dominican priest Father Joseph-Marie Perrin O.P., and Gustave Thibon who was both an agriculturalist and a lay theologian [7], through the early impressions of others, again Richard Rees [8], and scholarly assessment, of her life by David McLellan [9], and thought by Peter Winch (1985) [10] and by Robert Chenavier (2012) [11], through to general introductions, such as by Francine du Plessix Gray [12]. There are also articles, book chapters, and reviews, too numerous to detail here. Such comment has frequently been eulogistic, especially when Weil's opinions and concerns reflected the enthusiasms of the writer, or where there was a rush to declare her a genius, a saint, or both.

It is essential to distinguish between myth and reality. There have also been assessments which, while recognizing the sincere and often brilliant polymathic insights of her work, have identified its antinomies and her rarefied position as a privileged French intellectual; despite her temporary forays into plebeian environments, the factory, the farm, or the anarchist militia, from which her family always stood ready to rescue her [6]. In considering her life and work it is worth noting the comment of T.S. Eliot that '... in those like Simone Weil in whom one detects no sense of humour—egotism and selflessness can resemble each other so closely that we may mistake the one for the other.' [14. VIII], and to give her the benefit of the doubt. The purpose of this article, intended to complement an earlier one on Simone Weil's *Lectures on Philosophy* [1], is to provide a comment on a

¹ Simone Weil was born in Paris to a secular and highly cultured Jewish family which pampered her. The well-known mathematician André Weil was her elder brother. The basic facts which are well known are summarized in [1].

² See Richard Rees' pioneering study first published by Victor Gollancz with the unfortunate title of *Brave Men: A study of D.H. Lawrence and Simone Weil* (1958) [2].

³ Arthur Wills' translation of *The Need for Roots: prelude towards a declaration of duties towards mankind* first published in 1952 had the benefit of a Preface by the famous Anglo-Catholic poet and critic T.S. Eliot [5]. Simone Weil's initial and posthumous reception and reputation in France and the francophone world is necessarily the subject of another paper.

specific aspect of her thought, the brief but seminal essay: ‘Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God’.

The Source of the Essay

Simone Weil qualified as a teacher through her *agrégation* in philosophy from the *École normale supérieure*, Paris, one of the most prestigious of French institutions of higher education. This is a competitive examination for entry to the French civil service and system of public education. The *professeurs agrégés* as they are known are recruited to teach at the *lycées* or high schools or universities. It was by this route that Simone Weil came to teach philosophy at girls’ secondary schools between 1931 and 1938). The qualification was, however, a purely academic one and did not involve any training in pedagogy. As noted: ‘She was an unorthodox teacher who refused to co-operate with the school over assessment marks and class rankings which she considered bureaucratic and oppressive, and prejudicial to what she considered authentic understanding and learning on the part of her students’ [1. P. 422]. This was an exceptional stance to take in a girls’ secondary school in the deeply conservative formal French public education system of the time. It is Weil’s experience of the reaction from officials and parents which may explain partially at least why she reflected on the ‘right use of school studies.’

We should remember that Simone Weil was raised in a secular Jewish family whose attitude to God and religion was one of agnosticism. However, she was always attracted by the Christian tenet of loving one’s neighbour. It was this, rather than economic and political theory, that led her to sympathise with the condition of the workers and to support left-wing social movements such as anarchism and syndicalism. However, in the mid-1930s, she had a succession of religious experiences that led her and her writing to become intensely spiritual and mystical, although she was no less concerned with the causes already espoused. Widely read in and empathetic to both classical European and Asian cultures and religious traditions, she was attracted to Roman Catholicism but did not take the step of formal baptism for reasons we shall consider later. The effect on her of George Herbert’s poem ‘Love’ is an important example of this⁴. She wrote later: ‘I thought I was reciting it simply as some beautiful poem, but without my awareness that recitation had the force of prayer. It was in the course of these recitations that . . . Christ himself came down and took possession of me.’ [17. P. 68—69]⁵.

In 1941, when at Marseilles, in collaborationist Vichy France, waiting for an opportunity to leave for the United States via North Africa, Weil met the devout Catholics Thérèse and Pierre Honnorat. These introduced her to the Dominican Father Joseph-Marie Perrin who worked among deprived communities in Marseilles. Weil and Perrin began a close friendship in which he gave, without

⁴ George Herbert (1593—1633) was a Welsh devotional poet and Anglican priest. See [15]. See [16] for an interesting account of the influence of George Herbert on Simone Weil.

⁵ In ‘My Spiritual Autobiography’, *Letter V* to Father Perrin in Weil (1951).

proselytising, spiritual advice about her relationship with Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, and with Judaism, towards which she was very hostile. It was through Perrin that Weil met Gustave Thibon, responsible for a Catholic agricultural community, living there, working on the land, discussing spiritual matters, and compiling her personal religious and philosophical notebooks. Father Perrin and Gustave Thibon were to publish a memoir of their spiritual encounters with Simone Weil, in two independently written sections. It is neither sentimental nor hagiographic and is prefaced by this joint *Note*: ‘Simone Weil wrote to one of us that friendship should not affect differences nor differences friendship. This golden rule always dominated our relationships with her—perfect independence was preserved together with complete openness. Faithful to this principle we here offer our testimony, combined yet separate, and each of us is only responsible for his own text.’ [7. *Note*].

Both men were important influences on Simone Weil⁶, but it was Father Perrin to whom she addressed a written account of her spiritual strivings and thoughts. On her return to Marseilles for the winter, she renewed her meetings with him, and the relationship continued by correspondence after he was appointed Dominican Superior at Montpellier in March 1942. ‘It was probably on 15th May that she wrote the long letter, which she calls her “spiritual autobiography,” to Father Perrin, then away on a journey’. [17. X]. Simone Weil finally left France on the 17th May 1942, but, while in transit for the United States at Casablanca, sent further papers to Father Perrin via another correspondent while still able to do so. These were published later as *Waiting for God* [17].⁷ They comprise six letters and four longer essays, reflecting on the spiritual matters that troubled her as she prepared to go into exile. The first letter expresses her ‘Hesitations Concerning Baptism’; another her ‘Spiritual Autobiography’, and another ‘Her Intellectual Vocation.’ In this, she says to her correspondent ‘...I am also sending you the paper on the spiritual employment of school studies, which I had taken away by mistake. That is for Father Perrin too on account of his indirect relations with the *jécistes* of Montpellier.’⁸ Anyhow he can do what he likes with it.’ [17. P. 87]. This refers to ‘Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God’, the first of the essays in the book [17. P. 105—116]. The original essay runs to 3,414 closely handwritten words.

‘Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God’: The Essay

It should be noted that the *essay* is both spiritual and pedagogical in content. Here we will consider examples first of its spiritual aspects, and then of the

⁶ T.S. Eliot commented: ‘It may be that in her conversations with Gustave Thibon she profited more than she knew from her contact with that wise and well-balanced mind [14. XII].

⁷ She also addressed *Letter to a Priest* to Father Perrin [18].

⁸ Members of the *Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne* (Young Christian Students).

pedagogical. In dealing with the former it is important to remember that the essay was an intimate part of her spiritual and religious discussion with Father Perrin, and intended to help him with the Catholic students with whom he was in regular contact. With the latter, we must bear in mind her personal experience as a teacher of philosophy at girls' secondary schools in the conservative French public education system, and the reaction against her pedagogical approach by both educational authorities and parents. The more positive response of students to her teaching objectives and methods must also be remembered⁹

The essay opens: 'The key to a Christian conception of studies is the realisation that prayer consists of attention. It is the orientation of all the attention to which the soul is capable towards God.' [17. P. 105]. This contains the essential spiritual message of the essay: the reaching out to God through *prayer* is enhanced by the quality of *attention* given to it. It is connected with the necessity for and way to finding faith, Weil insisting that: '...if we do not regulate our conduct by it before having proved it, if we do not hold on to it for a long time, only by faith, a faith at first stormy and without light, we shall never transform it into certainty. Faith is the indispensable condition.' [17. P. 107].

She continues: 'Quite apart from explicit religious belief, every time that a human being succeeds in making an effort of attention with the sole idea of increasing his grasp of truth, he acquires a greater aptitude for grasping it, even if his effort produces no visible fruit.' [17. P. 107]. The example is given of Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney (1786—1859), the Curé d'Ars. He had struggled to acquire the academic knowledge necessary to the seminary, but whose pastoral ability for spiritual care was well known in France. The painstaking attention the Curé gave to his studies enabled him, as others can, to '...acquire the virtue of humility, and that is a far more precious treasure than all academic progress.' [17. P. 108].

The relationship between the spiritual and the pedagogical is insisted on throughout. Weil says from the outset that while school exercises develop only a lower kind of attention, they remain effective in increasing the capacity for prayer, but '...on condition that they are carried out with a view to this purpose and to this purpose alone.' [17. P. 105]. This is of profound pedagogical value, emphasised in the no less unequivocal assertion: 'Although people seem to be unaware of it today, the development of the faculty of attention forms the real object and almost the sole interest of studies. Most school tasks have a certain intrinsic interest as well, but such an interest is secondary. All tasks that really call upon the power of attention are interesting for the same reason and to an almost equal degree.' [17. P. 105—106].

Those who search for God should, therefore, be taught to like all subjects, as each develops the faculty of attention, the substance of reaching out to God through prayer. Hence: 'School children and students who love God should never say: "For my part I like mathematics"; "I like French"; "I like Greek."' They should learn to

⁹ These factors are considered in more detail in [1].

like all these subjects, because all of them develop that faculty of attention which, directed toward God, is the very substance of prayer.’ She continues: ‘If we have no aptitude or natural taste for geometry this does not mean that our faculty for attention will not be developed by wrestling with a problem or studying a theorem. On the contrary it is almost an advantage. It does not even matter much whether we succeed in finding the solution or understanding the proof, although it is important to try really hard to do so. Never in any case whatever is a genuine effort of the attention wasted. [17. P. 106].

There follow, says Weil, two conditions by which we may put school studies to their right use. Good marks, examination success, according to natural abilities and taste, are secondary to applying oneself equally to all tasks recognising that each will help form ‘...the habit of attention which is the substance of prayer. When we set out to do a piece of work, it is necessary to wish to do it correctly, because such a wish is indispensable in any true effort.’ [17. P. 108]. But, this is not enough as ‘...our deep purpose should aim solely at increasing the power of attention with a view to prayer; as, when we write, we draw the shape of the letter on paper, not with a view to the shape, but with a view to the idea we want to express. To make this the sole and exclusive purpose of our studies is the first condition to be observed if we are to put them to the right use.’ [17. P. 108].

Secondly, one must withstand the temptation, to which we give in nearly always, to overlook criticism and correction of poor work. She reminds us that: ‘Nothing is more necessary for academic success, because, despite all our efforts, we work without making much progress when we refuse to give our attention to the faults we have made and our tutor’s corrections.’ [17. P. 109]. She concludes: ‘If these two conditions are perfectly carried out there is no doubt that school studies are quite as good a road to sanctity as any other.’ [17. P. 109].

Weil draws an important distinction between real attention and mere will-power. ‘Studies conducted in such a way can sometimes succeed academically from the point of view of gaining marks and passing examinations...But, contrary to the usual belief, it has practically no place in study.’ [17. P. 110]. She insists that: ‘The joy of learning is as indispensable in study as breathing is in running. Where it is lacking there are no real students, but only poor caricatures of apprentices who, at the end of their apprenticeship, will not even have a trade.’ [17. P. 110]. She returns to geometry as a pedagogic and spiritual example saying: ‘The solution of a geometry problem does not in itself constitute a precious gift, but the same law applies to it because it is the image of something precious. Being a little fragment of particular truth, it is a pure image of the unique, eternal and living Truth, the very Truth which once in a human voice declared “I am the Truth”.’ [17. P. 112].

It follows that: ‘Our first duty towards school-children and students is to make known this method to them, not only in a general way but in the particular form which bears in each exercise, It is not only the duty of those who teach them, but also of their spiritual guides.’ [17. P. 113]. She concludes with an echo from *Letter V* on ‘Her Intellectual Vocation’ [17], declaring: ‘Academic work is one of those

fields which contain a pearl so precious that it is worthwhile to sell our possessions, keeping nothing for ourselves, in order to be able to acquire it.' [17. P. 116].

In his comments on the essay, Father Perrin admits that it would be a mistake to aim for an inventory of Simone Weil's spiritual discoveries, while again the *truths* in question have been heard 'from the beginning.' By which he means since Christ himself. However, '... she has said them again with a genius which is all her own and lived them with all the depth and force of her personality.' [7. P. 91]. He decides, nonetheless, that '...at the head of the list we should put her doctrine of attention, whether applied to facts, ideas or persons.' [7. P. 91]. This emphasises the importance of attentive intellectual enquiry, but this, says Perrin, is '...neither the object of the essay nor the main concern of the author.' [7. P. 91]. Simone Weil's fundamental message is rather that an '... attitude of opening to the truth makes the soul utterly transparent to the light, prepares the way for the most beautiful vocations and enable human eyes to become as the eyes of Christ.' [7. P. 91].

Father Perrin says wisely: 'While most thinkers want to invent their truth, attention disposes us to receive it. In spite of the difficulties which attended such a method for Simone Weil on account of her intellectual temperament, if I may put it in this way, I am convinced that she would have been able to reduce and, as it were, burn up from within most of the prejudices- chiefly of an historical nature—which hindered her search. It is useless to insist upon it; many consider this paper to be Simone Weil's masterpiece.' [7. P. 91]. He adds: 'Another of the most beautiful features of Simone's doctrine is the attentive understanding of the individual in affliction: misfortune has made him like a thing, he is the nameless casualty, lying inert and bleeding by the wayside. We should respond to such affliction with compassion full of respect and attention, of devotion and insight, of self-loss through love of the sufferer, with compassion which is God's compassion in our human hearts.' [7. P. 92]¹⁰.

Some Recent Perspectives on the Essay

What have others, more recently and without personal knowledge of Simone Weil, said of her essay and the concept of *attention* it introduces? It has proved seminal in its stimulation of academic articles, formal and informal, and more superficial blogs, the latter often representing polemical religious or philosophical points of view. Space does not permit a comprehensive review of the literature. Here we consider representative examples. These focus on *attention*, on *prayer*, and the essay's *pedagogical* implications.

An interesting and sophisticated example is that of Pirruccello (1995). She attempts, drawing on the Japanese philosopher Hase Sōtō, to '...approach Weil's notion of attention, and to consider how the various forms or degrees of attention

¹⁰ This is a clear allusion to the 'Parable of the Good Samaritan', Luke 10, 30—37, *The Bible*, King James Version.

are fulfilled.’ [19. P. 61]. An important objective is to ‘...show how the symbolic quality of its fulfilling intuitions allows attention to contain these complementary moments of presence and absence.’ [19. P. 61]. It is argued that similarly to Hase Sōtō, Simone Weil ‘...feels that the essence of prayer, what she calls "attention," must reveal the absence of its object at the same time that it conveys its presence...that is both purification and completion, both an emptying and a filling of the human being.’ [19. P. 61]. This has fundamental implications for intellectual studies in which: ‘What becomes present to attending mind and is inseparable from it are relationships that can be symbolic of supernatural truths, and this in some cases indicates the absence of God while presenting God’s likeness mathematically.’ [19. P. 66].

Jesson (2014), in a lucid and scholarly theological paper, considers Simone Weil’s view of the relationship between human suffering and intellectual life, including the vexed issues raised by theodicy. He shows that she offers us a powerful account of how *compassion*—which involves an uncompromising acceptance of suffering—may be found in patterns of thought. It is argued, however, that Weil’s theological and philosophical problem remains that of articulating spiritual reality in a way that encourages undivided attention; this being the only hope that truthful compassion for suffering might be possible. He concludes: ‘As the capacity to genuinely pay attention is both intellectual and ethical (see in particular the essay ‘Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies’ in *Waiting on God*), there is continuity between concept and behaviour. Those who acknowledge undeserved suffering in theory will be more likely to recognise and respond to it in practice, and only those who recognise it in practice will be able to recognise it in theory.’ [20. P. 198].

Travis (2017) provides a feminist interpretation. She is a self-declared Jungian psychoanalyst in private practice, a committed Christian in the liberal tradition, a feminist, and a Christian Socialist. The article describes what she considered the difficult and confusing reception of a research report commissioned from her by a diocese of the Church of England. She discusses the traumatic effect of this and how the strong feelings evoked were worked through in dialogue using Simone Weil’s concept of ‘attention’. The experience of attending to what she considered ‘the depth and darkness of the problem’ is linked with the Anglican liturgy of confession and absolution. She concludes by saying how she learned from the experience and moved on. This she attributes to her use of Weil’s essay. It provided her with ‘...a conduit for truth and love to enter the murky world of the problem and transform it. I felt much happier, as if a burden had fallen off my back. Here was an experience of what might be termed ‘contemplative resilience’ arising from applying Weil’s notion of ‘attention.’ [21. P. 86].

Hadaway (2018) in an informal, even folksy, way, sets out the pedagogical and the spiritual in Simone Weil’s *Essay*. Its central argument, he says, is that school studies ‘...can develop that specific form of attention which, when directed toward God, is the very substance of prayer.’ [22. P. 29]. He adds: ‘Study, then, is exactly

the kind of spiritual practice that a restless and activity-infatuated people of God need. Weil reminds us that some daily activities are pregnant with the possibility of growing our capacity for communion with God. Rather than add to our already oppressive to-do lists, we need only to survey current practices to discover which ones, like school study, can help us cultivate the relevant form of attention.’ [22 P. 34]. The article is useful not least in its identification of the implications of *attention* for informal learning, as well as for formal education. Hadaway suggests: ‘Some obvious candidates are the forms of study that live on long after our schooling has officially ended. For example, reading serious novels and short stories can cultivate attention when we allow their rich narratives to illumine significant aspects of life. Studying the Bible or books of Christian reflection in a church setting does this too, particularly when we spend quiet moments of preparation before the group discussion takes place.’ [22. P. 34].

Finally, Kotva (2019) offers a most interesting fresh approach in using Simone Weil’s religious philosophy to understand ‘attention as waiting’ as developed by the contemporary Scottish poet Thomas A. Clark. Kotva argues that, while there are affinities between Clark and Weil, the former’s poetic practice reveals a resistance to the ascetic extremes that attention assumes in Weil’s philosophy. There is also, it is claimed, an ontological difference: ‘Weil’s understanding of the world is like Descartes’ and is broadly dualistic. For Weil, body and spirit, mind, and matter, are different in kind. It thus makes sense to claim that attention should be fixed principally on thought, which belongs to mind, rather than on things or bodies, which belong to matter. Clark’s understanding of the world, by contrast, makes no claim to dualism, but imagines bodies and minds connected in a vast network of living things.’ [23 P. 5]. There is also a perceived difference between attention as *method* and attention as *style*. She argues that Weil mostly writes *about* attention, while Clark attempts also to *perform* it through his poetry. This is an interesting if arguable distinction.

These various perspectives indicate the seminal quality of Simone Weil’s original essay, with each in its way attempting to interpret the implications of her spiritual intentions.

Conclusion

Is the essay Simone Weil’s masterpiece as Father Perrin said it was believed to be? Although brief and written for the eyes of a friend who ‘can do what he likes with it’, the essay is a profound statement of her belief in the necessity of attention through prayer for the soul who reaches out to God. The personal voice of Simone Weil in her spiritual striving may be heard throughout, as her thoughts are presented for the reflection of the reader. This is of great value for those readers whom she could not then have anticipated. It is a quality of so much of Simone Weil’s writing and whether this essay is her masterpiece should perhaps be left unanswered.

As Fiedler has pointed out, those in France who thought of Simone Weil in terms of her early political essays, an unorthodox Marxist moving toward

anarchism, would have been shocked by the posthumous books on religion and Christianity. He comments: ‘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.’ [24. P. 4]. An explanation for the path Simone Weil followed may be found in what she regarded as her ‘intellectual vocation’. It precluded her baptism, which was her sacrifice: ‘And that is in order that I may serve God and the Christian faith in the realm of the intelligence. The degree of intellectual honesty that is obligatory for me, by reason of my particular vocation, demands that my thought should be indifferent¹¹ to all ideas without exception, including for instance materialism and atheism; it must be equally welcoming and equally reserved with regard to everyone of them.’ [17. P. 87]. It is an ascetic philosophy profoundly characteristic of Simone Weil (as [23], noted). In her final written words, in the notebook found after her death, she said: ‘The most important part of education-to teach the meaning of *to know* (in the scientific sense).’ [17. XI].

There is, of course, a further question. Is Simone Weil’s essay still relevant to contemporary philosophy of education and educational practice? An early public assessment, given as a lecture at the Catholic University of Angers,¹² by Dom Georges Frenaud, a prominent Catholic theologian, suggested that: ‘All young people should have read to them the "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God" found in *Waiting for God*. Some details need modification, but the reflections are basically sound and constitute a magnificent vindication of the true contemplative spirit.’ [25].¹³ This is true today and is likely to continue to be so. A recent comment, on ‘play, puerilism, and post-modernism’ in the twenty-first-century, claims we are in an intellectual world threatened by ‘... sound-bites, by Twitter, shouts-down of speakers at universities; and in a retreat from discourse based on evidence and reasoned argument.’ [26. P. 1612]. The human capacity for profound attention is atrophied and is in urgent need of renewal. It is here that the continuing educational and spiritual relevance of Simone Weil’s essay of 1942 is to be found. As for the fundamental of faith, one knows its presence or absence. It may be learned. It cannot be taught.

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¹¹ ‘Disinterested’ may be a better translation from the French than ‘indifferent.’

¹² Published with minor omissions as Frenaud (1953).

¹³ Interestingly, he said ‘read to them’ rather than ‘advised to read’ which may indicate a certain didacticism on his part.

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«Размышления об использовании учебных занятий в воспитании любви к Богу» Симоны Вейль: комментарий

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Цель этой статьи — дать комментарий к короткому, но основополагающему эссе Симоны Вейль «Размышления об использовании учебных занятий в воспитании любви к Богу». Оно дополняет более раннюю работу Вейль «Лекции по философии». Эссе было отправлено через письмо ее другу и наставнику, католическому священнику, и доминиканскому монаху, отцу Джозефу-Мари Перрину. В нем изложено ее убеждение в том, что школьные занятия должны дать отдельному ребенку или ученику образование в ценности и приобретении внимания. Вейль верила, что это будет иметь основополагающее значение при обращении к Богу через молитву. Такая способность к вниманию также способствовала бы общему академическому и социальному обучению учащегося, обеспечивая основу для подлинного диалога с другими, а не только с учителями и школьными товарищами. Статья представляет ее автора как религиозного философа, объясняет происхождение эссе и дружбу Вейль с отцом Перрином, который был ее христианским религиозным наставником, исследует сам текст, рассматривает некоторые критические комментарии и оценивает его отношение к философии и практике образования сегодня.

Ключевые слова: Симона Вейль, школьные занятия, внимание, молитва, Бог

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