

waiting for god by simone weil

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Waiting for God by Simone Weil is a profound philosophical and spiritual exploration of the human condition, faith, and the nature of divine presence. Written in the form of a series of notes, reflections, and insights, Weil's work delves into the paradoxes of waiting—how humans yearn for and yet often struggle with the experience of divine silence and anticipation. Weil's writing challenges readers to reconsider their understanding of prayer, suffering, and the relationship between the finite and the infinite. Her approach is characterized by a deep humility, a recognition of human limitations, and an unwavering hope rooted in her spiritual conviction that God's presence, though sometimes hidden, is ultimately accessible.

The Context and Background of Waiting for God

Simone Weil: A Brief Biography

To appreciate Waiting for God, it is essential to understand the life and background of its author. Simone Weil (1909–1943) was a French philosopher, mystic, and activist whose life was marked by intense intellectual inquiry and personal sacrifice. She was deeply committed to social justice, education, and spirituality. Weil's own experiences of suffering, her engagement with political upheavals, and her spiritual pursuits deeply inform her writings.

The Genesis of the Work

Waiting for God was written during Weil's brief but intense period of reflection in the early 1940s, as she faced the upheavals of World War II and her own health issues. The work was initially intended as a series of notes or reflections to herself, rather than a formal treatise. Its fragmentary style reflects Weil's belief that spiritual truths are often revealed in moments of silence and openness, rather than systematic argumentation.

The Central Theme of Waiting

At its core, *Waiting for God* explores the notion that human beings are inherently in a state of waiting—waiting for meaning, salvation, or divine intervention. Weil suggests that this waiting is not passive resignation but an active, expectant posture rooted in love and humility. The work examines the tension between human longing and divine accessibility, emphasizing that true faith involves patience and trust despite the silence or apparent absence of God.

Core Concepts in Waiting for God

The Nature of Waiting and Its Spiritual Significance

Waiting as Active Engagement

Weil emphasizes that waiting is not a passive state but an active engagement rooted in love. It involves a sustained openness to the divine, an attentive patience that recognizes the potential for encounter at any moment.

The Paradox of Divine Silence

A central paradox Weil explores is that God's silence can be a form of divine communication. The silence is not absence but a space where trust and humility are cultivated. This silence invites the believer to deepen their faith and surrender their desire for immediate proof.

The Role of Suffering and Detachment

Suffering as a Means of Purification

Weil sees suffering as a pivotal element in the spiritual journey. It strips away superficial attachments and encourages a deeper longing for God. Suffering becomes a means of purification, enabling the soul to become receptive to divine grace.

Detachment from Worldly Attachments

Weil advocates for detachment from material and superficial attachments as a way to prepare oneself for divine encounter. Such detachment helps to cultivate interior silence and openness.

The Concept of Love in Waiting

Love as the Foundation of Faith

For Weil, love is the fundamental motive behind waiting for God. Love entails a willingness to accept divine timing and to trust in the goodness of God, even when the divine presence is not immediately felt.

The “Small Voice” of Love

Weil describes the divine voice as often subtle—like a small whisper—requiring attentive listening. Cultivating love involves tuning into this small voice amidst the noise of everyday life.

Weil’s View on Prayer and Divine Encounter

The Nature of True Prayer

Prayer as a State of Expectant Silence

Weil redefines prayer not merely as asking for favors but as a state of expectant silence—an openness to receive divine grace. Prayer becomes an act of love and surrender rather than a transactional exchange.

The Importance of Humility in Prayer

Humility is crucial in Weil’s conception of prayer. Recognizing one’s limitations and the vastness of

God fosters genuine reverence and openness.

The Delay in Divine Response

Embracing the “Now”

Weil encourages believers to accept that divine responses may be delayed or hidden. The “waiting” is part of the spiritual process, cultivating patience and trust.

The Role of Faith in the Absence of Evidence

Faith, in Weil’s view, is sustaining oneself in love and hope despite the absence of tangible proof of divine presence. It involves a conscious choice to trust rather than demand immediate answers.

The Ethical and Practical Implications of Waiting for God

Living in Expectation

- Cultivating patience amidst uncertainty.
- Maintaining love and openness even when divine presence feels distant.
- Recognizing that waiting itself is an act of love and faith.

Developing Inner Silence and Detachment

- Practicing meditation or contemplative silence.
- Detaching from material distractions to deepen spiritual receptivity.
- Embracing suffering as a path to spiritual growth.

The Role of Compassion and Solidarity

Weil believed that understanding divine silence should inspire compassion for others experiencing

suffering and silence. This compassion leads to acts of service rooted in love.

Critical Reflections on Waiting for God

The Strengths of Weil's Approach

- Emphasizes humility, patience, and love.
- Recognizes the importance of inner silence and detachment.
- Offers a realistic view of faith as a journey of trust despite uncertainty.

Potential Challenges and Criticisms

- The abstract nature of waiting may seem passive or discouraging for some.
- The emphasis on divine silence might be interpreted as neglecting active seeking or justice.
- Some readers may find Weil's mystical language difficult to access.

The Relevance of Waiting for God Today

Spiritual Practice in a Secular World

In a fast-paced, materialistic society, Weil's emphasis on patience and inner silence offers a counterbalance, encouraging a contemplative attitude amidst noise and distraction.

Interfaith and Ecumenical Perspectives

The themes of waiting, love, and divine silence resonate across different religious traditions, making Weil's insights valuable in interfaith dialogues on spirituality and faith.

Personal and Collective Transformation

Waiting for God invites individuals and communities to cultivate hope, humility, and love—values

essential for addressing social injustices and fostering genuine compassion.

Conclusion: The Enduring Wisdom of Weil's Waiting

Waiting for God by Simone Weil remains a timeless meditation on the human condition and the divine. It challenges us to recognize that faith is not merely about certainty but about trust, love, and patience in the face of divine silence. Weil's insights call us to embrace our own waiting with humility and hope, understanding that in the act of waiting, we participate in a profound encounter with the divine that transcends words and immediate evidence. Her work continues to inspire those seeking a deeper spiritual life, reminding us that sometimes, the greatest act of love is simply waiting with open hearts.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of Simone Weil's 'Waiting for God'?

The central theme of 'Waiting for God' is the human longing for divine presence and the spiritual patience required to seek and encounter God beyond immediate understanding or experience.

How does Simone Weil describe the concept of 'waiting' in her work?

Weil views 'waiting' as an active, attentive stance rooted in humility and openness, emphasizing that true waiting for God involves a patient surrender and a readiness to receive divine grace without forcing it.

In what ways does 'Waiting for God' explore the relationship between suffering and spirituality?

'Waiting for God' suggests that suffering can deepen one's spiritual longing and openness to divine presence, teaching patience and humility while highlighting the importance of detachment from worldly attachments in the spiritual journey.

What influence has Simone Weil's 'Waiting for God' had on contemporary spiritual or philosophical thought?

The work has profoundly influenced modern spirituality and philosophy by emphasizing active attention, humility, and the necessity of inner silence in the pursuit of divine truth, inspiring many thinkers to reconsider the nature of faith and spiritual waiting.

How does Simone Weil reconcile the idea of waiting with human agency in 'Waiting for God'?

Weil reconciles waiting with human agency by portraying waiting as an active, disciplined practice rooted in inner attentiveness and humility, where human effort is directed toward cultivating openness and readiness for God's arrival.

Additional Resources

Waiting for God by Simone Weil stands as a profound exploration of spiritual longing, humility, and the human condition. This collection of essays, written between 1938 and 1943, offers a unique perspective on the nature of divine presence and the act of waiting as a form of active engagement with the divine. Weil's writings challenge readers to reconsider notions of faith, patience, and the way humans relate to the infinite. As a philosophical and spiritual text, *Waiting for God* continues to resonate with contemporary audiences seeking deeper understanding beyond doctrinal boundaries, emphasizing that the act of waiting itself can be a form of love and surrender.

Introduction: The Essence of Waiting in Weil's Thought

Simone Weil's concept of waiting is not passive resignation but an active, attentive, and humble

posture towards the divine. For Weil, waiting embodies a form of love—an openness and readiness to receive God’s presence without presumption or expectation. Her writings suggest that true waiting involves a kind of attentiveness that demands humility, patience, and surrender, recognizing that human efforts alone are insufficient to grasp the divine mystery. Weil’s perspective is rooted in her own spiritual journey, marked by personal suffering, intellectual rigor, and unwavering faith that God’s presence is accessible yet often elusive.

In this context, Weil’s idea of waiting challenges modern notions of instant gratification and promptness, instead proposing that genuine spiritual fulfillment arises through a patient and persistent openness. Her reflections invite readers to consider how their own lives might be transformed through a conscious act of waiting—an active engagement that prepares the soul to receive grace.

Biographical Context and Philosophical Foundations

Understanding Weil’s *Waiting for God* requires a brief exploration of her life and philosophical background. Born in 1909 in France, Simone Weil was a philosopher, mystic, and activist whose life was characterized by intellectual rigor and spiritual depth. She was deeply engaged with social justice, working among the oppressed and impoverished during the Spanish Civil War and later in France during World War II.

Her philosophical outlook was heavily influenced by her Christian faith, Stoic philosophy, and a commitment to truth and humility. Weil’s unique spiritual perspective emerged from her intense personal suffering, including health issues and her dedication to understanding the divine beyond institutional religion. She believed that divine truth requires a sincere, humble approach—one that recognizes human limitations and the need for grace.

In her writings, Weil draws from various sources, including Christianity, Greek philosophy, and her own mystical experiences. Her emphasis on “attention” or “concentration” as a spiritual practice reflects

her conviction that true knowledge of God requires focused, selfless awareness. Waiting for God synthesizes these philosophical insights into a compelling meditation on the nature of divine-human relationship.

The Core Themes of Waiting for God

1. The Act of Waiting as a Form of Love

At the heart of Weil's philosophy is the idea that waiting for God is an act of love. Unlike superficial or transactional forms of faith, waiting involves a deep, patient devotion that acknowledges human limitations and trusts in divine timing. Weil suggests that love manifests in the willingness to wait without demanding immediate answers or results.

This active patience is rooted in humility—recognizing that God's ways are beyond human understanding. Weil writes, "Waiting for God is not a passive act but an active surrender of one's ego and expectations, opening oneself fully to the divine mystery." This concept challenges believers to see waiting not as a deficit but as an essential part of spiritual growth.

2. Attention and Concentration

Weil emphasizes that genuine waiting requires focused attention—a kind of mental and spiritual concentration that filters out distractions and superficial concerns. She advocates for "attention" as a practice that tunes the soul to the divine frequency, enabling a receptive state.

This practice of attention involves:

- Self-awareness: Recognizing one's own limitations and ego.
- Stillness: Cultivating silence within to listen for divine whispers.
- Focus: Eliminating superficial distractions to deepen one's spiritual receptivity.

Weil contends that this focused attention is a form of love, as it demonstrates a willingness to genuinely engage with the divine presence, however subtle or distant it may seem.

3. The Paradox of Darkness and Light

A recurring motif in Weil's writings is the paradoxical relationship between darkness and light. She describes spiritual waiting as often accompanied by a sense of divine absence or silence—a “dark night” that tests faith.

However, Weil interprets this darkness as a necessary precondition for true spiritual illumination. The silence and absence of visible signs serve to strip away superficial beliefs, guiding the soul towards authentic understanding and union with God. This paradox underscores that divine presence may not always be manifest in obvious ways but can be experienced through trust and patience amid darkness.

4. Humility and Self-Knowledge

Weil's approach to waiting is deeply rooted in humility. She emphasizes that recognizing one's own unworthiness and limitations is essential in approaching the divine. This humility fosters a sense of openness and receptivity, making it possible to truly wait for God.

Moreover, Weil advocates for self-knowledge as a prerequisite for genuine waiting. Understanding one's own ego, desires, and distractions helps cultivate the humility necessary for spiritual openness. She warns against reliance on superficial virtues or external signs, urging believers to develop inner humility and simplicity.

5. The Ethical Dimension of Waiting

Weil extends her concept of waiting beyond individual spirituality to encompass social and ethical implications. She believes that patience and attentiveness are vital virtues in addressing societal injustices.

In this light, waiting becomes an active engagement—an ethical stance that prioritizes humility, compassion, and persistent hope amid suffering and chaos. Weil suggests that societal change requires a similar patience and attentive love, mirroring the spiritual act of waiting for divine intervention.

Weil's Mystical Experience and Personal Faith

Simone Weil's personal life was marked by profound mystical experiences and a relentless quest for divine truth. Her writings reveal that her understanding of waiting was not merely theoretical but rooted in her own spiritual struggles.

Weil's intense suffering—both physical and emotional—shaped her view of divine presence as something to be patiently awaited amid darkness. She believed that divine love manifests in silent, humble waiting, often in the face of apparent divine absence. Her own life exemplifies her conviction that waiting is a form of active love—a way to participate in the divine mystery without presumption.

Her spiritual discipline involved a rigorous practice of attention, prayer, and self-emptying, which she believed prepared the soul for divine encounter. Weil's mystical stance underscores the importance of sincerity, humility, and patience, reinforcing her central thesis that waiting for God is an act of love and trust.

Critical Reception and Contemporary Relevance

Since its publication, *Waiting for God* has garnered widespread admiration among theologians, philosophers, and spiritual seekers. Critics have praised Weil's depth of insight, her poetic language, and her ability to synthesize complex philosophical and mystical ideas.

Contemporary relevance of Weil's thought is evident in its resonance with modern spiritual practices emphasizing mindfulness, patience, and humility. In an era characterized by rapid technological change and instant gratification, her emphasis on attentive waiting offers a countercultural message—one that champions patience, humility, and genuine love as pathways to spiritual fulfillment.

Moreover, Weil's integration of ethics and spirituality underscores her relevance in social justice discourse. Her insistence that patience and attentive love are necessary virtues for societal change aligns with current movements advocating for compassion and humility in addressing global crises.

Conclusion: The Enduring Significance of Weil's *Waiting for God*

Simone Weil's *Waiting for God* remains an essential text for anyone interested in exploring the depths of spiritual longing and the human capacity for love and humility. Her insights challenge complacency and superficial faith, urging a sincere, patient, and attentive approach to the divine.

By framing waiting as an active, loving act, Weil transforms a seemingly passive state into a vital spiritual practice. Her emphasis on humility, attention, and trust offers a timeless roadmap for

navigating the complexities of faith in a modern world increasingly preoccupied with speed and achievement.

Ultimately, Weil's *Waiting for God* is not merely about waiting for divine intervention but about cultivating a receptive heart—one that loves patiently, listens attentively, and recognizes that the divine is often present in the silence and darkness that we tend to overlook. Her teachings inspire generations to embrace humility and love in their spiritual journeys, reminding us that sometimes, the greatest act of faith is simply to wait with an open heart.

In summary, Simone Weil's *Waiting for God* challenges us to reconsider the nature of faith and patience. It calls us to cultivate humility, attention, and love as we await the divine presence—an act that can transform not only our spiritual lives but also our approach to the world around us. Her writings continue to serve as a beacon for those seeking genuine spiritual depth amid the noise and haste of contemporary life.

Waiting For God By Simone Weil

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting on God* (Routledge Revivals) Simone Weil, 2009-10-15 A work first published in English in 1951, *Waiting on God* forms the best possible introduction to the work of Simone Weil, for it brings us into direct contact with this amazing personality, at once so pure, so ardent, so utterly sincere, yet normally so reserved that only her closest friends guessed the secrets of her inner life. The first part of the book concerns her letters written to the Reverend Father Perrin, O.P., who befriended her at Marseilles and, the only priest she knew, became her intimate friend. The second part of the book concerns essays and reflections on such subjects as education, human affliction and the love of God, prayer, and forms of the implicit love of God.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting on God* Simone Weil, 2018-11-28 Emerging from the thought-provoking discussions and correspondence Simone Weil had with the Reverend Father Perrin, this classic collection of essays contains the renowned philosopher and social activist's most profound meditations on the relationship of human life to the realm of the transcendent. *Waiting for God* will continue to influence spiritual and political thought for centuries to come.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting for God* Simone Weil, 1991-01-01 Emerging from thought-provoking discussions and correspondence Simone Weil had with the Reverend Father Perrin, this classic collection of essays contains her most profound meditations on the relationship of human life to the realm of the transcendent. An enlightening introduction by Leslie Fiedler examines Weil's extraordinary roles as a philosophy teacher turned mystic. One of the most neglected

resources of our century, Waiting for God will continue to influence spiritual and political thought for centuries to come.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting For God* Simone Weil, 1973 Philosopher, theologian, social critic, and political activist, Simone Weil has become a legend of modern spiritual and political thought. *Waiting for God* contains her most profound thoughts on the relationship of human life to the eternal -- especially as it relates to obedience, surrender, spiritual poverty, readiness to bear suffering, and the love of God. For many of us who try to figure out how to live our lives -- what values and beliefs to uphold, what actions to pursue -- Weil's example, achievements, and frustrations serve to focus the mind and stir the soul. New York Times The writings of this left-wing mystic are unmatched for surprising, sometimes shocking, spiritual insight.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting for God* Simone Weil, 1995

waiting for god by simone weil: *Awaiting God* Simone Weil, 2013-02 *Awaiting God* (218 pages) combines a fresh translation (by Weil scholar, Brad Jersak) of Simone Weil's 'Waiting for God' and 'Letter to a Priest' (*Attente de Dieu* and *Lettre un Religieux*) in one volume. These works are considered Weil's primary essays and letters. In addition, Simone Weil's niece has contributed an introductory article entitled, 'Simone Weil and the Rabbi's: Compassion and Tzedekah, ' which puts Weil's relationship with Jewish thought into perspective. She includes source material from the Rabbis that put Weil (however reluctantly) in line with rabbinical thought throughout her major themes. The book is the ideal English introduction to the works and thought of Simone Weil, including important preface material (by Jersak) on how to read her work, as well as her relationship to Roman Catholicism and Judaism. The book includes: Part 1 - Essays 1. Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies in View of the Love of God 2. The Love of God and Affliction 3. Forms of the Implicit Love of God a. Love of Neighbor b. Love of the Order of the World c. Love of Religious Practices d. Friendship e. Implicit and Explicit Love / 99 4. Concerning the Our Father Part 2 - Letters Preface to her letters: Weil on Catholicism and Judaism 5. Hesitations Prior to Baptism / Jan 1942 - Fr. Perrin 6. Hesitations Prior to Baptism / 1942 - Fr. Perrin 7. Departure from France / Apr 1942 - Fr. Perrin 8. Spiritual Autobiography / May 1942 - Fr. Perrin 9. Intellectual Vocation / May 1942 - S. 10. Last Thoughts / May 1942 - Fr. Perrin 11. Letter to a Priest / Nov 1942 - Fr. Couturier

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting for God, Justice, and Rush-Hour Traffic* Dennis Okholm, 2025-06-12 Patience is an indispensable Christian virtue but is often neglected. Often it is thought to be passive inactivity, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Christian patience is creatively active. It has been so in the church's mission, in God's response to fallen humanity, in the cross-shaped life of those who are waiting for justice, and even in the believer's experience of God's silence. Okholm delves into these facets of patience, illustrating them with the experiences of those who have practiced the creative activity of patience and concluding with strategies to cultivate the virtue in our lives.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Waiting for God* Simone Weil, 1973

waiting for god by simone weil: *Beloved Dust* Robert Davis Hughes, III, 2008-08-15 There has been an explosion of interest in classical Christian spirituality over the past 50 years. While a great deal of work has been done on the history of Christian spirituality, there has been no full-scale theological and pastoral treatment of Christian spiritual life since before the Second Vatican Council. *Beloved Dust* takes a realistic, contemporary view of human being as entirely physical (dust) and shows it immersed in three great tides of the Holy Spirit, the traditional threefold rhythm of conversion, transfiguration, and glory. What is unique about Robert Hughes's approach is the effort to root spiritual theology in the doctrine of the Spirit, an outgrowth of the renewed interest in the Trinity among both Catholics (Karl Rahner) and Protestants (Robert Jenson). Also striking is Hughes's emphasis on ordinary life. Here as a married Episcopal priest/theologian who brings a distinctly Protestant perspective to a traditionally Catholic enterprise for so long the preserve of celibate priests. What he achieves is a new presentation of the traditional teaching in the light of contemporary knowledge and practice.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Reviving the Golden Rule* Andrew DeCort, 2025-10-02 The

Revolutionary Power of Loving Your Neighbor Discover the transformational power of neighbor-love in theologian and ethicist Andrew DeCort's *Reviving the Golden Rule*. This thought-provoking work illuminates the revolutionary ethics of loving your neighbor, weaving together history, theology, and practical guidance. Through this in-depth historical survey of the ethics of neighbor-love, DeCort invites readers to reclaim loving their neighbor as a powerful force for justice, healing, and human flourishing. The biblical charges to "love your neighbor as yourself" and to do to others as you would have them do to you are at the heart of Abrahamic faith. DeCort argues that they are also at the heart of some of the most groundbreaking developments in human rights and the common good. Jesus taught neighbor-love and promised, "Do this and you will flourish." But Christians today are at high risk of ignoring or overthrowing the most daring teaching of Jesus' movement. Having heard it repeatedly and having benefited immensely from its cultural effects, we have become dulled to neighbor-love's revolutionary power. In response, *Reviving the Golden Rule*: Explores the ethics of neighbor-love from the ancient world to modern times. Examines how neighbor-love challenges the oppressive power of othering and expands human connection. Highlights inspiring figures like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, and Oscar Romero, who practiced neighbor-love among marginalized communities. Addresses instances where Christians have failed to uphold neighbor-love. Provides practical guidance on how to love and embrace othered neighbors today. In one of the only historical and constructive works on the ethics of neighbor-love, DeCort invites us to reclaim this ancient movement. Get your copy today and learn to embody this revolutionary practice amidst crises for the healing of the world.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Women's Literary Cultures in the Global Middle Ages* Kathryn Loveridge, Liz Herbert McAvoy, Sue Niebrzydowski, Vicki Kay Price, 2023 Initiates a wider development of inquiries into women's literary cultures to move the reader beyond single geographical, linguistic, cultural and period boundaries. Since the closing decades of the twentieth century, medieval women's writing has been the subject of energetic conversation and debate. This interest, however, has focused predominantly on western European writers working within the Christian tradition: the Saxon visionaries, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Gertrude the Great, for example, and, in England, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe are cases in point. While this present book acknowledges the huge importance of such writers to women's literary history, it also argues that they should no longer be read solely within a local context. Instead, by putting them into conversation with other literary women and their cultures from wider geographical regions and global cultures - women from eastern Europe and their books, dramas and music; the Welsh gwraig llwyn a pherth (woman of bush and brake); the Indian mystic, Mirabai; Japanese women writers from the Heian period; women saints from across Christian Europe and those of eleventh-century Islam or late medieval Ethiopia; for instance - much more is to be gained in terms of our understanding of the drivers behind and expressions of medieval women's literary activities in far broader contexts. This volume considers the dialogue, synergies, contracts and resonances emerging from such new alignments, and to help a wider, multidirectional development of this enquiry into women's literary cultures.

waiting for god by simone weil: *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues* André Comte-Sponville, 2002-09-01 An utterly original exploration of the timeless human virtues and how they apply to the way we live now, from a bold and dynamic French writer. In this graceful, incisive book, writer-philosopher André Comte-Sponville reexamines the classic human virtues to help us understand what we should do, who we should be, and how we should live. In the process, he gives us an entirely new perspective on the value, the relevance, and even the charm of the Western ethical tradition. Drawing on thinkers from Aristotle to Simone Weil, by way of Aquinas, Kant, Rilke, Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Rawls, among others, Comte-Sponville elaborates on the qualities that constitute the essence and excellence of humankind. Starting with politeness -- almost a virtue -- and ending with love -- which transcends all morality -- *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues* takes us on a tour of the eighteen essential virtues: fidelity, prudence, temperance, courage, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, gratitude, humility, simplicity, tolerance, purity, gentleness, good faith, and

even, surprisingly, humor. Sophisticated and lucid, full of wit and vivacity, this modestly titled yet immensely important work provides an indispensable guide to finding what is right and good in everyday life.

waiting for god by simone weil: Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy Ian T. Ramsey, 2011-06-07 In a time when more and more people are discovering they can have a rational morality without an orthodox God, these twenty-four essays reappraise the whole character of Christian ethics and criticize the traditional underpinning of morality by religion. Edited by Ian T. Ramsey, professor of philosophy at Oxford University, the volume is a valuable sequel to the well-known *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*. The contributors include atheists, agnostics, and Christians. Among them are Ninian Smart, R. B. Braithwaite, Ronald Hepburn, and Iris Murdoch. The essays do not attempt to examine specific Christian questions in any sort of theological detail; rather, their primary concern is with problems that arise principally in a philosophical context. But they are concerned with issues that lie behind the present bewilderment in Christian morality. Stressing the diversity of moral situations, the papers show that these are far from being homogeneous and rule-determined. Moral decision demands personal involvement, activating the possibility of good and bad reasons for making such a decision. The essays point out the character of moral disagreements and also remind us that morality is not only of individual but also of social significance. The last section of the book examines the present concept of natural law; its possible erosion by developments in anthropology, psychology, and philosophy; and whether the possibility exists for a theory of morality that unites both natural-law theory and Christian ethics.

waiting for god by simone weil: The Modern Theologians David F. Ford, 2013-09-23 This popular text has been updated to ensure that it continues to provide a current and comprehensive overview of the main Christian theologies of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Each chapter is written by a leading theologian and gives a clear picture of a particular movement, topic or individual. New and updated treatments of topics covered in earlier editions, with over half the chapters new to this edition or revised by new authors. New section singling out six classic theologians of the twentieth century. Expanded treatment of the natural sciences, gender, Roman Catholic theology since Vatican II, and African, Asian and Evangelical theologies. Completely new chapters on spirituality, pastoral theology, philosophical theology, postcolonial biblical interpretation, Pentecostal theology, Islam and Christian theology, Buddhism and Christian theology, and theology and film. As in previous editions, the text opens with a full introduction to modern theology. Epilogue discussing the present situation and prospects of Christian theology in the twenty-first century.

waiting for god by simone weil: Selfless Love and Human Flourishing in Paul Tillich and Iris Murdoch Julia Theresa Meszaros, 2016 In an age of self-affirmation and self-assertion, selfless love can appear as a threat to the lover's personal well-being. This perception jars with the Biblical promise that we gain our life through losing it and therefore calls for a theological response. In conversation with the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich and the atheistic moral philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch, *Selfless Love and Human Flourishing in Paul Tillich and Iris Murdoch* enquires into the anthropological grounds on which selfless love can be said to build up, rather than undermine, the lover's self. It proposes that while the implausibility of selfless love was furthered by the modern deconstruction of the self, both Tillich and Murdoch utilize this very deconstruction towards explicating and restoring the link between selfless love and human flourishing. Julia T. Meszaros shows that they use the modern diagnosis of the human being's lack of a stable and independent self as manifest in Sartre's existentialism in support of an understanding of the self as relational and fallen. This leads them to view a loving orientation away from self and a surrender to the other as critical to the full flourishing of human selfhood. In arguing that Tillich and Murdoch defend the link between selfless love and human flourishing through reference to the human being's ontological selflessness, Meszaros closely engages Søren Kierkegaard's earlier attempt to keep selfless love and human flourishing in a productive, dialectical tension. She also examines the breakdown of this tension in the later figures of Anders Nygren, Simone Weil, and Jean-Paul Sartre,

and addresses the pitfalls of this breakdown. Her examination concludes by arguing that the link between selfless love and human flourishing would be strengthened by a more resolute endorsement of a personal God, and of the reciprocal nature of selfless love.

waiting for god by simone weil: *Eating Beauty* Ann W. Astell, 2016-02-09 The enigmatic link between the natural and artistic beauty that is to be contemplated but not eaten, on the one hand, and the eucharistic beauty that is both seen (with the eyes of faith) and eaten, on the other, intrigues me and inspires this book. One cannot ask theo-aesthetic questions about the Eucharist without engaging fundamental questions about the relationship between beauty, art (broadly defined), and eating.—from *Eating Beauty* In a remarkable book that is at once learned, startlingly original, and highly personal, Ann W. Astell explores the ambiguity of the phrase eating beauty. The phrase evokes the destruction of beauty, the devouring mouth of the grave, the mouth of hell. To eat beauty is to destroy it. Yet in the case of the Eucharist the person of faith who eats the Host is transformed into beauty itself, literally incorporated into Christ. In this sense, Astell explains, the Eucharist was productive of an entire 'way' of life, a virtuous life-form, an artwork, with Christ himself as the principal artist. The Eucharist established for the people of the Middle Ages distinctive schools of sanctity—Cistercian, Franciscan, Dominican, and Ignatian—whose members were united by the eucharistic sacrament that they received. Reading the lives of the saints not primarily as historical documents but as iconic expressions of original artworks fashioned by the eucharistic Christ, Astell puts the faceless Host in a dynamic relationship with these icons. With the advent of each new spirituality, the Christian idea of beauty expanded to include, first, the marred beauty of the saint and, finally, that of the church torn by division—an anti-aesthetic beauty embracing process, suffering, deformity, and disappearance, as well as the radiant lightness of the resurrected body. This astonishing work of intellectual and religious history is illustrated with telling artistic examples ranging from medieval manuscript illuminations to sculptures by Michelangelo and paintings by Salvador Dalí. Astell puts the lives of medieval saints in conversation with modern philosophers as disparate as Simone Weil and G. W. F. Hegel.

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