

 she was making early Christianity responsible for introducing, through the idea of 'divine pedagogy,' a 'poison,' namely, the notion of historical progress in morality. She says: 'The great mistake of the Marxists and of the whole of the nineteenth century was to think that by walking straight ahead one would rise into the air.' In her opinion, crimes of the remote past had to be judged as severely as those committed today. That is why she had a true horror of ancient Rome, a totalitarian state not much better than the Hitlerian. She felt early Christians were right when they gave Rome the name of the Apocalyptic Beast. Rome completely destroyed the old civilisations of Europe, probably superior to the civilisation of the Romans who were nothing but barbarians, so skilful in slandering their victims that they falsified for centuries our image of pre-Roman Europe. Rome also contaminated Christianity in its early formative stage. The principle *anathema sit* is of Roman origin.³ The only true Christian civilisation was emerging in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the countries of the Langue d'Oc, between the Mediterranean and the Loire. After it was destroyed by the Frenchmen who invaded that

3 Excommunication formula, used in condemning an individual convicted of heresy.

territory from the north and massacred the heretics – the Albigensians – there has not been any Christian civilisation anywhere.

Violent in her judgments and uncompromising, Simone Weil was, at least by temperament, an Albigensian, a Cathar; this is the key to her thought. She drew extreme conclusions from the Platonic current in Christianity. Here we touch perhaps upon hidden ties between her and Albert Camus. The first work by Camus was his university dissertation on Saint Augustine. Camus, in my opinion, was also a Cathar, a pure one, and if he rejected God it was out of love for God because he was not able to justify him. The last novel written by Camus, *The Fall*, is nothing else but a treatise on Grace – absent Grace – though it is also a satire: the talkative hero, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, who reverses the words of Jesus and instead of 'Judge not and ye shall not be judged' gives the advice 'Judge, and ye shall not be judged,' could be, I have reasons to suspect, Jean-Paul Sartre.

The Albigensians were rooted in the old Manichaean tradition and, through it, akin to some sects of the Eastern Church of Bulgaria and of Russia. In their eyes God the monarch worshipped by the believers could not be justified as he was a false God, a cruel

THE IMPORTANCE OF SIMONE WEIL

Jehovah, an inferior demiurge, identical with the Prince of Darkness. Following the Manichaean tradition, Simone Weil used to say that when we pronounce the words of the Lord's Prayer: 'Thy kingdom come' we pray for the end of the world as only then the power of the Prince of Darkness will be abolished. Yet she immediately added that 'Thy will be done on earth' means our agreement to the existence of the world. All her philosophy is placed between these two poles.