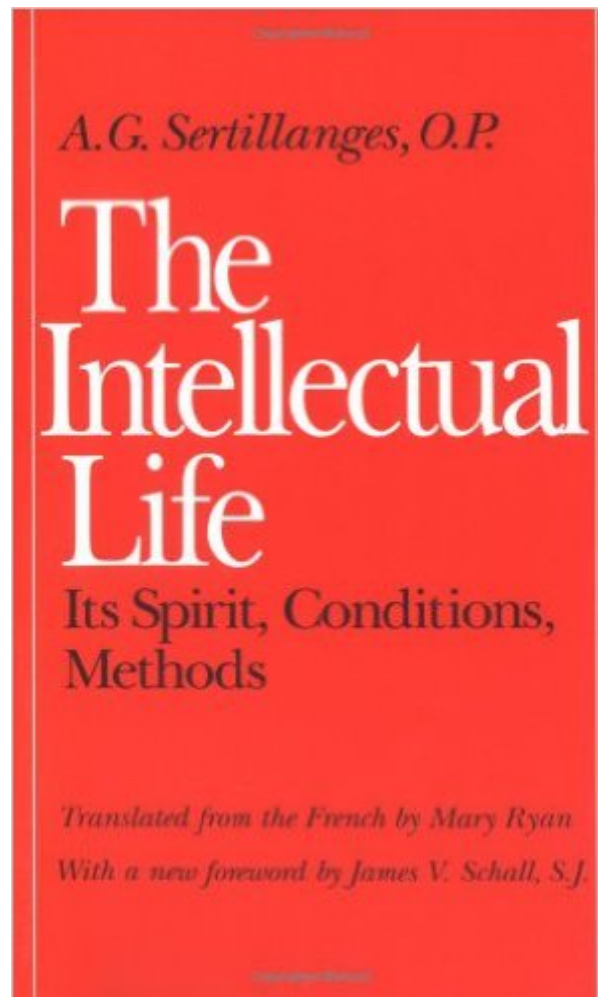


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The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Conditions, Methods



Synopsis

"Fr. Sertillanges's teachings are as timeless as any truths which describe the genuine nature of things. . . . This book is highly recommended not only for intellectuals, but also for students and those discerning their vocation in life." •New Oxford Review"[This] is above all a practical book. It discusses with a wealth of illustration and insight such subjects as the organization of the intellectual worker's time, materials, and his life; the integration of knowledge and the relation of one's specialty to general knowledge; the choice and use of reading; the discipline of memory; the taking of notes, their classification and use; and the preparation and organization of the final production." •The Sign

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Customer Reviews

1998 reprint of 1987 edition, Catholic University of America Press, 296 pages (of which 260 pages form the main body of the book) Translated from the French (1934 2nd edition) by Mary Ryan I came across this unusual book when discussing with my most well read friend the problem of deciding how much to read. He told me this topic was covered in Sertillanges' book and suggested I read it. The title makes it sound as if the book might be pretentious, but it is not. In the same way that Peter Drucker's superb The Effective Executive is a book for any knowledge worker rather than just for managers, Sertillanges' book should be helpful for anyone who wishes to work using their intellect, rather than just for rarefied intellectuals. The 1998 reissue (the 1992 date listed on .co.uk is incorrect) of the 1987 edition has a new forward by James Schall. I think he captures the essence of Sertillanges' book very well: "At first sight...this is a quaint book. At second sight it is an utterly demanding book." The subtitle of The Intellectual Life describes its contents well: "Its Spirit,

Conditions, Methods". For Sertillanges, intellectual work is not something done in isolation of the rest of a person's life. He believes strongly that in order to do intellectual work to one's capacity, one must order the whole of one's life with this goal in mind. And further, that this requires habits of simplicity, detachment, note taking, memory, writing and more. His book is thus a step-by-step manual that sets out these requirements from the general (virtues, character) to the specific (note-taking, writing).

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