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INTELLECTUALISM AND INTELLIGENCE

EVELYN J. UBERTI

AN intellectual, in the popular sense of the term, is one who prides himself on possessing much knowledge, one who delights in knowing facts just for the sake of knowing facts. An intelligent person is one who makes proper use of whatever amount of knowledge he has. The intellectual uses knowledge in an attempt to ornament himself, while the intelligent person uses it to equip himself. The intellectual lets his knowledge run away with his common sense, whereas the intelligent person makes his knowledge subservient to his common sense. The intellectual acts unnaturally, permitting his intellect (the faculty by which he knows) to dwell in territories where his will (the faculty by which he loves) cannot accompany it. Thus much of what he knows he does not love. The intelligent person pursues knowledge only in realms where he can exercise both his intellect and his will. Whatever he knows he takes to his heart and makes part of himself. The intellectual frequently espouses absurd opinions which he could never put into practice without contradicting himself. He falls into error because he has no love, for it is to a loving heart that truth makes itself known. The intelligent person, on the other hand, is rarely given over to false theories which are at variance with reality. He is likely to arrive at certitude because he desires to rejoice in the truth. The intellectual, who claims to pursue knowledge without loving it, may become so hardened of heart that he will refuse truth when it is presented to him. The intelligent person, in whom knowledge and love go hand in hand, may fall so deeply in love with truth that he will give his life to its cause.

The intellectual is typified by the Pharisee, who permitted himself to be enslaved by the knowledge that he possessed but did not love. So completely did his heart abdicate in favor of his proud mind that when truth came to him as a Person he would not accept Him. In wickedly refusing to submit his mind to Jesus Christ, the Pharisee became the most unintelligent of all men, depriving himself of the knowledge of all truth. The intelligent person is exemplified by the

child. Those who were childlike in spirit were set free by the truth which Our Lord taught them and which they so lovingly received. In believing that Jesus Christ was God, and in accepting His authority, they performed the supreme act of intelligence, submitting their finite minds to the Divine Mind, in loving adoration. Jesus loved the qualities of a child. He loved his innocence and simplicity and humility and trust, his certitudes and alertness and enthusiasm. He made an example of the child to His disciples, saying, "Amen, I say to you: Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a child, shall not enter into it" (Luke 18.17). He despised the Pharisees and rebuked them, calling them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, "blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matt. 23.24). He did not excuse their blindness, but condemned them, saying, "You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?" (Matt. 23.33).

Although Our Lord severely censured these false intellectuals, He did not cast opprobrium on learning itself. What He did require was that intellectualism build on intelligence and serve as its handmaid. To show us the kind of intellectual He loves, He raised up beautiful examples for our imitation in the persons of the Doctors of the Church. These were true intellectuals, and they were proclaimed Doctors of the Universal Church not only on account of their learning but also because of their eminent holiness. Their virtues were as extensive as their learning, and their humility was as deep as their knowledge was great. The Doctors were holy in that they always remained as children in their innocence and purity of heart. As they advanced lovingly in the pursuit of knowledge, they retained the simplicity and meekness of a child. Although they neither spoke, nor understood, nor thought as a child (1 Cor.13.11), yet they possessed the clear intelligence and surety of a child. They embraced truth with a child's spontaneity and loved it with the generosity of a child's heart. Their certitudes were as unshaken as those of a child, and they saw through error with a child's astuteness. Like the child they were aware of their own limitations, and they humbly submitted to the authority of the Church. They possessed a child's simplicity of outlook, and ordered all truths to the one central Truth in the realization that secondary

truths are supposed to lead to God, and those who content themselves with possessing truth which is taken out of this context are not pleasing to Him.

The Doctors of the Church were first led by their knowledge of the true Faith to a desire to learn more about it. Love then led them to increase their knowledge, and this in turn served to augment their love. The one gave impetus to the other; knowledge and love proceeded hand in hand and advanced by leaps and bounds, so that their charity became more and more abundant "in knowledge, and in all understanding" (Phil.1.9). Christ dwelt by faith in their hearts, and, being rooted and founded in charity, they were made able to comprehend, with all the saints, "what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge," so that they were "filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph.3.17-19).

The outlook possessed by the holy Doctors, God's most beloved intellectuals, was one of supreme intelligence. They lived in the realization that all learning must be centered in the Faith, accompanied by humility, and grounded in love. Because they faithfully served Truth with their intellect and loved Truth with their will, they were much loved by God, Who made them His own children and took them unto Himself, satiating their intellect with Knowledge and their will with Love in all eternity. And if, for one instant, the barrier between heaven and earth might be broken, so that the Doctors could speak to those on earth, they might well remind the intellectuals that only those shall see God who are pure of heart. These alone shall be numbered among the blessed.