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Father Lord, Logic and Pollock.

Channing Pollock's article, "Why I Don't Go To Church", which appeared in a recent issue of two national magazines, The American Mercury and The Reader's Digest, is answered in a lengthy article by the Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.J., famous Catholic author, in the February issue of The Queen's Work. Father Lord quotes the secular author and then comments on the quotations.

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Pollock's remark that he does not "need any intermediary between me and God" drew this rejoinder:

"Yet you constantly use intermediaries between yourself and everyone else, everything else. You call those intermediaries experts or professional men. You get an intermediary to express great music for you -- a great conductor, a splendid artist. You don't act directly to restore your health; you use an intermediary expert called a doctor, as you use an intermediary known as a lawyer to plead your case before the judge. You are glad to have an expert explain scientific truth to you.

As to Pollock's assertion that "It should be the function of the pulpit to give spiritual significance to our daily lives, to deepen our religious sentiments and broaden our ethical concepts," Father Lord comments:

"Your words are very abstract, and religion is not an abstract thing. It is more a part of our lives than the sidewalks under our feet or the clothes on our backs or the food on our table. If by that sentence I have just quoted you mean that religion should give us a share in God's own life, I most certainly agree with you. That is what the Church calls sanctifying grace, the life of God promised in the parable of the vine and the branches, and given to us in the sacraments."

"Significance to our daily lives, Precisely. The man who has received baptism is a different person; he has become a son of God, quite different from his associate who is only a creature of God. Christ explained all that to Nicodemus. The man who this morning received Christ in the Eucharist has given a real lift to his day; he is very different from the man who merely found a slightly misty being, to whom you refer by that most abstract phrase, 'the infinite'.

"And a man who believes that this morning he talked life over with the living Christ certainly has something that is going to be of vast significance to his daily life.

"'Religious sentiments' is such a nebulous phrase for the Christlike standard of living which the Son of God gave to His followers, and 'ethical concepts' are a rather poor substitute for the beautitudes and the two great commandments of love.

"I studied and believe in ethics, human and divine; I regard religious sentiments as oil upon the stiff action of our souls. But it is a great mistake to think that religion consists merely in this. Religion regards first of all, not what happens in man's mind or his emotions, but the correct relationship of man towards all those essential things which surround his life. He goes to church, not to be emotionally stimulated, but to get the courage to love his neighbor as himself. He hopes that God's experts will help him untangle the problems which surround his life.

"More importantly, he goes to church because he has certain obligations toward God, and he means to fulfill them. God has been a wonderfully good Father to him, wonderfully generous. So he offers God his heart, his life, and in Catholic practice, the great gift of the Mass.

"Man goes to church because it is a fitting place to reassert his relationship to God. God's handiwork, he thanks Him for the gift of life; God's son, he expresses his love; God's executive on earth, he talks things over with his Boss."