
Edward Scribner Ames
Open Letters

On

RELIGION and —

DEMOCRACY
SCIENCE
INDUSTRY
TECHNOCRACY
LEISURE

By EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES

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DEAR DONALD: You remarked one day that you had once thought of going into the ministry and I imagine that at times you have a kind of wistful feeling that maybe you should have done so in spite of the difficulties which seem at times so baffling and discouraging. It is partly because you have this special interest in religion and continue to be so deeply concerned about it that I am writing you in this way.

Perhaps one reason so many intelligent people have difficulty with religion these days is because religion seems to be out of touch with life. They may recognize that in the past men felt religion to be very real, but now to many good persons the old forms and phrases appear strange and unreal. Probably this is because the conditions of our life have changed so rapidly in the last hundred years that the religious ideas and practices have not kept up. Within the six generations since the American revolution there have been very swift and radical changes in the political, industrial, and scientific interests of mankind, but religion has been disturbed and confused more than it has been reconstructed and adjusted under these influences. And now we are confronted with technocracy with its sensational claims and prophecies.

In order to make any intelligent assessment of religion and of its place in human experience it seems to me necessary to take a long view of it and to see it in relation to varying conditions of man’s total life. In the last fifty years extensive studies have been made of religion in the suc-
cessive stages of society. Everywhere it expresses man's quest for life and his effort to secure for himself the fulfillment of his hunger and thirst for daily bread and for the realization of his fondest dreams. He has ever built his hopes upon the powers which he has seen and felt to be operating in the world about him. These powers he has idealized and cherished and implored and celebrated in vivid ceremonial dances, feasts, songs, and symbolic acts.

In early times when he lived close to the animals, he used their flesh for food, their skins for clothing, their bones for tools and weapons. His life was dependent upon them. They excited his wonder by their strength, by their cunning, and especially by the renewal of his life when he feasted upon their flesh and blood. They became the mysterious spirits through which all things were created and controlled. He was sprinkled with their blood at his birth and blessed by their presence when he died. For this reason the bull was sacred to the early Greeks, and the sheep to the nomadic Israelites, the bear to a tribe of Japanese, and the buffalo to the Todas of India and to some American Indians.

You know, too, that where men took up the cultivation of plants new deities appeared, for rice became sacred to those who grew it, and maize was the god of those who lived on the fertile plains of this country before the white man came. The great river Nile was the giver of life to the ancient Egyptians because its waters every year carried rich deposits of soil over the fields along its banks. Gradually the development of society brought man himself into power in the person of the king and then so much depended upon his leadership that he became divine
and the people worshiped before his throne. The
rulers of Babylon, Assyria and Rome received the
homage of their subjects in majestic rites and sacri-
ficial feasts. For thousands of years the kings
and emperors were regarded as superhuman be-
ings. They held the power of life and death
over the millions whom they ruled. Not only
were the kings divine but they furnished the pat-
terns by which kingly deities were projected into
the heavens above where they were thought to
reign eternally over the earth and the whole crea-
tion. For thousands of years this kingly con-
ception of God has prevailed. Religion has been
fashioned in its terms and all the duties and func-
tions of men have been thought about in reference
to obeying the decrees of the heavenly monarch
whose word is absolute law, abject obedience to
whom is the means of life and the guarantee of
salvation and of eternal bliss.

Then came a day, after long centuries, when
the American revolution changed the patterns of
earthly governments. "The captains and the kings
depart." "Lo, all our pomp of yesterday is one
with Nineveh and Tyre." Slowly through the
one hundred and fifty-seven years since the adop-
tion of the American constitution, kings, czars,
kaisers, and emperors have disappeared from their
thrones into the silences of exile and death. My
friend, I wish I could tell you how real and
dramatic this change seemed to me, standing in
the palace of the late Czar of all the Russias. The
scene was unchanged except for his absence.
There was the chamber where his council met
and the deep balcony above where Rasputin and
the Czarina listened and plotted. Through the
once private and heavily guarded private rooms
the unceasing lines of tourists and peasants walked
with curious and astonished eyes, marveling at the lavish wealth and the very human symbols of the great ruler's inmost mind and heart. Over his bed, scores of icons reflected his superstitious faith. In his personal wardrobe hung his uniforms of office with their insignia of power, and on his desk lay the pens and pipes and photographs almost warm yet with the touch of his royal hands. There also was the door through which he and his family walked under guard out to Siberia, to the same terrible fate to which he had banished so many terrified and helpless subjects. The same great drama of history was before my eyes in Potsdam, and the same sense of a vanished presence which had once shaken the world and stretched out a mailed hand for vaster power and splendor. And now the King of Spain has been dethroned, and the reign of the people struggles to find stability and order in all these lands.

Have these events had no effect upon religion? Everyone knows how Russia has reacted against the old faith, having so far identified religion with autocracy that it cannot conceive religion in any terms tolerable to the new state. But what has happened to religion in the older democratic countries of the United States and England? Perhaps the best answer is that the new democratic form of religion is growing up alongside or within the framework of the old monarchical religion, just as in England a genuine democracy has arisen within the empire which still retains the symbols of a royal state. Very logical minds might be disturbed by the fact that Great Britain does not discard all the elements of the kingly system when it has so obviously developed the popular electorate and given so much of the real
power of the state into the hands of the prime minister, his cabinet and party. Certainly the king of England is no longer a king in the old sense and has not been for seven hundred years. Yet he continues as a symbol of the unity of the empire and aids the imagination of many peoples within his dominions in appreciating the magnitude and majesty of the kingdom. He has become a sort of metaphor, a figure or symbol, in which the unity and glory of the wide flung domain are made visible and resplendent.

You are aware, I am sure, of the extent to which religion in England and America has undergone great democratization, although the ceremonial forms may still appear to be kingly and autocratic. In the whole English-speaking world religion has been subjected to searching criticism, just as have matters of government. God is no longer conceived as a celestial king upon a throne sending messengers to do his will, ready with cohorts of angels to enforce his laws. Men have been bold to assert their right to study the Bible as they study other books and to use their reason to understand and interpret it. They decide for themselves what parts of it are important and valid, what are true and what are no longer to be believed. This insistence upon the rights of the common man is, in principle, much like the spirit of the Magna Charta which the English people wrested from King John. They claimed a voice in the affairs of state, and now men claim a voice in matters of religion. I do not, of course, forget that democracy is still on trial and that democratic forms of religion have yet to justify and establish themselves but there can be no doubt that modern tendencies are in that direction.
The idea of political democracy is not entirely clear. For some it means just the notion that all men, as our constitution declares, are born free and equal, a doctrine which seems opposed by many facts. There are such great differences of birth. Some are born to wealth and some to poverty, some to health and some to weakness, some to privilege and some to ignorance and social handicaps. There are differences of talents and of mental power. Democracy cannot mean uniformity. At most, perhaps, it signifies equality of opportunity, an ideal of free education, of fair treatment before the law, and the right of every citizen to exercise the elective franchise. The United States has seen a marked increase of political democracy in the extension of the ballot to the Negro and so recently to women, while great social movements have been achieved—more universal and more extended education, practical abolition of child labor, improved sanitary and hygienic conditions of all workmen, working-men's insurance, and the right of free contract. The rights of free thought and free speech are so familiar in our society that it is difficult to realize that they are really very modern and that they have been gained through so much suffering and labor. None of these things has reached perfection but it seems inconceivable that any of them could be deliberately surrendered.

It is interesting to see how the developing democratic spirit has brought into a new focus of attention those passages of the New Testament which are consistent with it and have relegated into a secondary place those texts which belong to the older conception of kingly authority and arbitrary power. When we read, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:
whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors as sent by him,” we feel something discordant with the newer freedom of criticism and social initiative. Or when Paul writes to Titus to “put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient,” we are impelled to give assent only in so far as the rulers and authorities require what is just and for the common good. Neither do we complacently accept the injunction, “Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear,” or the words, “Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.”

We are drawn to the deeper words of Jesus who made the individual of supreme worth, as every man naturally feels himself to be, for what will a man give in exchange for his life? When he said the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, he subordinated every religious form and custom to the service of human values. It has taken men a long time to appreciate the meaning of the saying of Jesus that the second commandment is equal to the first. When he said the first commandment is to love God and the second is like unto it, to love thy neighbor as thyself, he put them upon an equality and made them inseparable. It is the growing realization of this importance of the second commandment which is transforming religion into democratic form. No longer can a man pretend to love God, and hold slaves; no longer can rich men grind the faces of the poor and be Christian; no longer can statesmen and citizens exercise special privileges for their selfish profit and against the interest of other men without violating the supreme law of life and religion.

Perhaps too much energy and money are spent in churches maintaining the worship of God and
not enough in the service of men. Religious people still have the habit of seeking salvation through obedience to theological dogmas rather than through practical enterprises for helping human beings. The hymns of the churches are more often an adulation of the deity than they are an appreciation of the possibilities of making better men. But more and more songs are being written in the spirit of Washington Gladden’s words, “O Master, let me walk with thee, in lowly paths of service free.” Such is the hymn of John A. Symonds, “These things shall be—a loftier race than e’er the world hath known shall rise with flame of freedom in their souls, and light of knowledge in their eyes.” And we often sing with Felix Adler, “We are builders of that city; all our joys and all our groans help to rear its shining ramparts; all our lives are building stones: whether humble or exalted, all are called to task divine.” Leigh Hunt put this idea into the lovely poem of Abou Ben Adhem’s dream. When the angel of the vision told him that his name was not among those who loved the Lord

Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still, and said, “I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow men.”
The angel wrote and vanished; the next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed their names whom love of God hath blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.

I incline to take seriously and wholeheartedly the assertion that God is love, and to see this love in the natural life of man, in the noble love of
man and woman, in the love of parents for chil-
dren and the love of children for parents, in the
love of country, and in the love of mankind. Noth-
ing seems more real than this, nor anything
more immediate or more verifiable. It is a reality
which still needs interpretation as God has always
needed to be interpreted. It is the divine prin-
ciple which, like every conception of God, needs
to be made effective by intelligent and experi-
mental application. It is no mere easy sentiment
which is fulfilled by momentary impulse or good
natured wishing. It requires, like any other idea
of the divine, to find embodiment in stable habits
and in social institutions. Love has its own dis-
ciplines and its judgment days. But it is near
at hand, deep in the heart of every man, woman,
and child, and ever seeks, like the God of tradi-
tional theology, the salvation and the highest
redemption of every human life. Viewed in this
way, God is not so difficult to understand or to
serve. He does not dwell afar but dwells in the
temple of every man's truest thought. Thinking
of God as love we can come boldly to the throne
of grace and find mercy in every hour of need.

Where love is, fear is cast out. The child comes
back to the father with any question, with any
failure or mistake or need, and the father listens
and considers and gives freely of every resource.
This good-will is the presupposition of every
promise of successful negotiation over any dis-
pute of employer and worker. It is the final law
between classes and nations. It is the arbiter of
business and politics and social order. It is the
fulfillment of all the law and the prophets. This
at last is the great revolutionary force which has
overturned the old kingdoms of the past in the
interest of the freedom and enrichment of the
common man. It is the dynamic of all missionary enterprises, for this natural kindliness and brotherliness of men knows no barriers of race or color or social status. It is not merely for the poor or criminal or underprivileged. It is also for the rich and the proud and the mighty.

This love within us, my friend, directed by knowledge and experience, is the light that lighteth every man born into the world, and if the light that is in us be darkness how great is that darkness. This to me is the heart of religion and the one task of the churches is to clarify our perception of it, and to bring us back again and again from the confusions which selfishness and the greed for power create and show us the beauty, the healing, and the inspiring reality of patient, long-suffering, forgiving, and unfailing love. In these terms our creeds must be rewritten, in this spirit our prayers must be reworded, in this name and faith our hopes must be renewed and cherished. Now abideth faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Scribner Ames.
Religion and Science

An Open Letter to a Thoughtful Woman

DEAR FRIEND: Religion and science may seem altogether too impersonal and academic a subject on which to write you a letter, but after all no thoughtful person like you can be indifferent to any thing so much talked about, and so close to all our deepest experiences.

You have been ill at times in recent years, and I remember calling on you once when you were in the hospital. You suffered a great deal and you were careful to have the best physicians. You naturally wanted men who knew as much as there was to know about your case, and who had the skill to apply their knowledge in the most effective way. You were benefiting by modern science. In any former century of the world the chances would have been far greater against your getting well. The fact that you are here today is due to science. Yet I know, too, that you have a religious feeling about that recovery. You have a kind of general feeling of thankfulness toward life, for there were many other factors besides the knowledge and skill of the doctors. The nurses were very important, and the cooks, and the cleaning women, and the air, water, and sunlight, together with your own endowment of energy, physique, and grit. I call this sense of dependence upon the whole scene and frame of life "religion."

To me, the relation of science and religion may be stated in just these terms of your own experience. Science is the understanding of the nature and relation of things which enables us to fix
up our bodies and minds and machines so that they function normally and as effectively as possible. With this knowledge of things new notions of the character of life and the world are gained. Science may be regarded as a wonderful hospital or machine shop where men have carefully studied all sorts of objects, how they are made, how they operate, and how they may be repaired. Back a little from the street door and the ground level where the stream of practical life flows by, and from which the patients come, there are quieter rooms, the laboratories, where new observations and experiments are carried on to improve the knowledge and the methods by which the particular cases may be treated.

Religion might be said to be the feeling and faith which the scientific workers and the patients have that it is possible to find out more and more about the troubles that beset our human lot and to find better and better ways of living in this world. Such a feeling includes the conviction that the great life of nature and of man is such that it can be increasingly understood, that the relations between things hold true, and that the life of man may be indefinitely enriched and enhanced by such study and labor. As a religious writer has said, "The most characteristic thing about modern science, in fact, is not its wondrous insight into the constitution of the universe, but rather its spirit of self-abnegation and of devotion to ideal good. The scientific spirit is greater than all its products. Patience, exactness, the repression of haste, the silencing of desire, the postponement of conclusions that seem near, not seldom the sacrifice of the dearest children of one's thought, and not seldom, too, the daring to contradict an incredulous and intolerant world;
in short, the counting of self as nought that one might by all means win the truth has been the price of scientific purity and progress."

Religion is a hunger for life, and science is one of the means of helping to satisfy that hunger. A man's hunger is for many things—for health, for knowledge, for beauty, for friendship, for justice, for love. He is unhappy if any of these things fail, and he is constantly striving to get more of each of these things for himself and for others. It is too big a task for any individual by himself and therefore we work together for them. What I mean is that when you were ill you did not try to cure yourself. You found other people who would help. The same is true when you want to invest your money, or travel abroad as you so often do. You get others to work with you, to teach you and advise you. All religion and all science are cooperative enterprises. No one lives to himself. Life is so complex, there are so many things that we want to do, that we are always reaching out beyond any present attainment, or possession, into new ambitions and new ventures. Consequently we are more or less discontented, and restless, and unhappy all the time. Therefore, we are never without our problems trying to make our wishes come true. At times we are like spoiled children, just begging God and men to do for us what we want done. Some people try to use force, or favor, or influence. The honest person has some modesty about what he asks of life, and he also uses some sensible, intelligent method in fulfilling his wishes. In most cases it takes time and therefore requires patience; it requires skill, and that has to be learned; it involves other people, and requires good-will and cooperation.
Science is much younger than religion, and religion had become used to quite different methods of attaining the ends of life before science was born. Religion formerly relied upon what was customary, upon what old men thought and did. Or it relied upon what the Bible taught, or it depended upon prayer. Now religion includes scientific knowledge among the resources by which it seeks for life and life more abundant. It is not the only resource but it is of so much importance that to ignore it would be like traveling by ox-cart where automobiles are available.

One of the great hungers of religion is to understand the world and to contemplate its greatness and its mystery. Nothing has helped in this direction more than science. You may say there are three main divisions of the sciences, the physical, the biological, and the social. The physical sciences are the oldest. They include mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy. The biological sciences include zoology, physiology, botany, and psychology. The latest and, in many ways, the most important for religion are the social sciences. The physical sciences show us the magnificence of the universe both in space and time; the biological sciences present the marvelous drama of evolution in living forms; and the social sciences display the human scene and the problems which arise in it.

It is now a long time ago since religion was disturbed by the discovery of the motion of the earth, and the fact that it is a round globe, floating in space. Strangely enough we go on talking about the sun rising and setting when we still know that nothing of the kind happens. It only seems so when we just go by our first sense impression and do not think about it. Our lan-
guage, as well as our religion, got its present form before the sciences were much developed and therefore many words still used are not in exact harmony with the facts as we know them. A man's conversation would be very strange, and scarcely understandable, if he spoke only in carefully chosen scientific terms. Indeed that is one of the difficulties in getting religion and science together. Religion continues to speak in the words of the natural man about the ends of the earth, the heavens above, and hell below, about high ideals and low morals.

But religion has really adopted something of the new scale of measurement which science has developed. "A thousand years are but as yesterday; behold the stars, how high they are." Time has stretched away into millions upon millions of years, and the stars are spread out in new distances of light years, which make the frame of the astronomer's universe so vast that man feels himself and his little earth shrunk into physical proportions of insignificance. The stars are spread out in an enormous disc-like collection, the astronomer tells us, "so vast that even a ray of light, which travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, would take 50,000 years to travel from one end of it to the other." If the emotions of wonder and awe are essential elements of religious feeling, and if emotion could increase as the magnitude of the scenes observed, then modern man, aware of so much greater immensities, should have far deeper religious reverence than Job or the ancient Psalmist could possibly have experienced.

The biological sciences have also revealed new marvels. The bodies of all living things are built up out of minute cells. Every higher ani-
mal starts life as a single cell which multiplies by division, and differentiation until the body of man, for example, is a huge organization of cells, constituting blood and brain, flesh and bone. There are more cells in a single human body than there are people in all the world. “A single act of thought,” they tell us, “involves the cooperation of a vast multitude of brain-cells; a single movement of a limb implies the contraction of thousands of muscle-cells, a single beat of the heart sends billions of blood-cells whirling down the dark pipes that we call blood-vessels.”

One of the greatest marvels is the discovery that the various species of animals and plants are not so distinct and fixed as men once thought. The Bible, in the first chapter of Genesis, records that the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit after his kind, and the living creatures of the waters, and the living creatures of the land, each after its kind. But in 1859, only seventy-four years ago, Darwin published his “Origin of Species,” in which after long observation and experimentation he set forth the discovery that species change and that new species develop. The final significance of this doctrine was that man himself had evolved from lower forms. Man’s body has been called a museum of relics of his animal ancestry. Some anatomists have made a list of over a hundred vestigial structures, of which the vermiform appendix is one of the most troublesome. Many facts of anatomy, physiology, and embryology point to man’s affiliation with the order of monkeys and apes. Darwin, in his “Descent of Man” says: “We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels
for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest living creature, with his God-like intellect, which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin." Now, we must remember that millions of years were allowed for this great experiment wherein man appears as a new departure in the gradual unfolding life of nature. In this connection it is important to remember, as Pascal said, "that it is dangerous to show man too plainly how like he is to the animals, without, at the same time, reminding him of his greatness. It is equally unwise to impress him with his greatness and not with his lowliness."

This doctrine of evolution, like the idea of a round earth, seems to be in conflict with the accounts in the first chapters of Genesis, but the acceptance of the scientific conception into the world-picture of the modern religious mind has been achieved without destroying religion. In many ways it has greatly enhanced the meaning of human life, deepened the mystery of it, and opened new vistas for the future. Perhaps more than all else it has enlarged man's sense of responsibility for his own welfare, and stimulated his mind by the discovery of the immense possibilities for weal or woe that lie before him.

And here enter the social sciences, the latest application of the method of science. During the last few decades the science of sociology has come to birth, and I have keen satisfaction that one of the leaders in its development is a member of my church. He was one of the authors of the "Introduction to the Science of Sociology" which
for the first time brought together in orderly fashion the outlines of the entire field and made accessible to college and university students the thrilling story of human social organization, with its motives and attitudes, from the simple unit of the family to the great achievements of social structures in political and cultural movements of world-wide scope. These studies have made it clear that the individual is everywhere bound up with his human kind and is dependent upon his group for his language, his habits, his attitudes, and his evaluations of life. Every man is born into an intimate kinship of adults who transmit to him the standards and mores of a definite culture and tradition, which they in turn inherited from the far past. By the time the child is able to think for himself he is fashioned into the language and institutions already made, and the course of his own development can never escape the imprints of the mold in which he is cast. Religious sects, political parties, national idealisms, cultural ideals are transmitted through example and education strangely unconscious to both teacher and pupil. Only the exceptional individual ever becomes aware to any appreciable extent of the weight of social influence upon him, just as one seldom realizes the pressure upon his body of the atmosphere which envelops him.

Gradually it comes to be seen that social reforms and religious movements are set in these unconscious frames of inheritance and custom. The very standards of right and wrong, of good and evil, of the beautiful and the holy, vary through surprising ranges, and it is evident that what seem to us the darkest crimes, such as infanticide, cannibalism, killing of old people, prostitution, forced marriages, slavery, and human
sacrifice in many forms have somewhere and in some form had the sanction of morality and religion. On the other hand, human sympathy, mutual aid, patriotism, and religious fidelity have also had their place in the strange course of human history. Nothing is more impressive than the prominence and persistence of religion in which men have sought through their ceremonials and rites to gain the support of powers greater than themselves to attain redemption from pain and death.

In the light of all that these sciences teach, we of the modern world find ourselves suddenly brought face to face with the whole vast scene of a greater universe, full of minute and titanic forces, within which our human life is for us the one thing of greatest moment. Our most important values still lie within the field of our personal hopes and values. We struggle to find ways by which we and our loved ones may secure length of days and fullness of joy. It is little wonder that many sensitive souls find the old forms of religion inadequate, and sink down in despair. Never have the theoretical difficulties been more appalling. Never has there been such a challenge to our faith and courage. But human nature is fortified by the deep, unconquerable will to live, and the general temper of men is not that of defeat and surrender.

Along with all the terrifying facts of life are discovered other facts which promise new sources of strength and mastery. But there can be no doubt that we are faced with the opportunity to determine for ourselves more than ever before what kind of a world we shall have and what kind of a life we shall live. The religious minds of our time no longer look to supernatural aid.
They find the evidences of something they may call divine immanent within themselves and in the vast nature to which they belong. Their strength lies in their understanding of the saving forces of knowledge and good-will, and in cooperation to establish among themselves greater measures of social justice and opportunity for every one to realize the possibilities of his nature.

Christianity makes love the supreme law of life, not as a law imposed upon us, but as a law discovered within experience. Whether science is to be a means of life or death depends upon whether it is employed in a spirit inspired by this natural love. Jesus suggested that what men give themselves to, in fullest devotion, is their God. To him, God was love, and everything still depends upon whether we can make all the kingdoms of this world subject to his kingdom of righteousness and love.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Scribner Ames.
DEAR WILL: It has been a long time since I heard from you. Somehow the years have carried us apart since we were such chums in college. In those days we lived much the same life, often talking over what we would do when we got out into the big world. Sometimes we were both inclined to the ministry and at other times we planned to go in for big business. Our little ventures for making money in vacations to pay our way through school gave us a little experience as salesmen, and we had the satisfaction of finding that we could play that game with some success. But at last we came to the fork of the road and you went in for business and I kept on through many years in college and the universities.

We often wondered where we would be in forty years and what we would be doing. Now you are a New York business man, president of your company, and I see by the new calendar you have sent me for 1933 that you have branches in Chicago, London, and Toronto. I know that in the good years your business ran into millions of dollars, and that you have reason to be proud of the record.

In comparison, my life has run a very different course, and by your scale of achievement I am about where we both were in those ardent days of youth. A minister has to accept for himself other standards of success. These standards are not so convincing to the majority of men, espe-
cially in such times as those through which we have lived since college days. I suppose no one ever called you a martyr, nor ever pitied you because you were so devoted to your calling. No one would be tempted to think of you in that way when they see you in your big office, behind your shining desk, or in your grand home, or riding down the avenue in your big car with your liveried chauffeur. But my kind of work is always something of a puzzle to many nice intelligent people. One bright person used to wonder why I stuck to the ministry, and said I was a martyr and didn't know it. I have often smiled about that for if martyrs have had as good a time as I have had, then a lot of pity has been wasted on them. Once a business man, in the kindness of his heart, offered me an opportunity to join his firm and make a good salary. He never understood why I would not do it. I only mention these things as evidence that people know better how to estimate your kind of life, and are quicker in giving you credit for being sensible and successful. They certainly are right in that. Any respectable kind of work is as good as any other. The world needs all sorts of things done to keep it going and in the long run it all depends on what opportunities are offered and what one likes to do. As things were for us your work is better for you and mine is better for me.

In all our years of correspondence I have never written you a letter under these circumstances. Generally the contents of a letter are determined by the person you are writing to, but in this case I am addressing you because of what I want to say. You are a business man and have helped in directing the development of a significant industry. During the forty and more years of your
connection with it, great changes have taken place which have affected every phase of life, including religion. If we could put our experiences together they would make a little chapter in the big story of religion and industry. If you were to tell the changes you have seen in industry, I think I could tell of equally great changes in religion, and if you see the possibility of still vaster transformations coming in your field, I am keenly aware that just as fundamental developments lie ahead for religion.

As boys together we were taught that we were in a new religious movement. It was the spirit of Protestantism expressing itself in the life of the last and newest of the great Protestant denominations. The influence of political democracy was strong upon our religion. We were taught that every member of the church had equal rights with all the rest. There was no validity in the distinction between clergy and laity. Any one could organize a valid church and administer any of the services. Ordination was not necessary, though it might be convenient. The ultimate authority in all important matters rested in the constitution both in religion and in the state, the New Testament being the constitution voluntarily adopted by church members.

I think this sense of freedom in religion and politics had something to do with our desire to go as far as possible in the pursuit of science and the whole range of knowledge. We were taught not to be afraid of the truth, only we were cautioned not to be careless in accepting just anything as truth. It seems to me that our experience was typical of the college youth from that day to this. They are encouraged to hunger and thirst for knowledge, for discovery, for intellec-
tual adventure. This was all very revolutionary, and in our time the revolution centered more and more in the realm of scientific thought. The result was disastrous to many old beliefs, but perhaps the most significant change for religion was in the attitude of doubt and expectancy which science develops. Doubt and scepticism were dangerous and sinful in the old religion. In our time they were coming to be virtues, for only the questioning mind is aware of new problems and open to discover new answers.

It was this new scientific questioning, so natural to American youth in our school days, which threw new light upon all the old ways of life and produced another tremendous revolution, that which is known as the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution, now familiar to every high school student, was the result of the invention of machines and the social changes which resulted from their use.

What a difference there is between the daily scene of our childhood and that of our children. We had no telephones, no Frigidaires, no radios, no movies, no electric lights—in fact we used oil lamps and even candles—no fountain pens, no vacuum sweepers, no kodaks, no oil or gas furnaces, no phonographs, no typewriters. Railroads, steamships and telegraphy were really novelties, though we accepted them as matter of fact conveniences, much as our children have no realization of the recency of automobiles and telephones, motor boats, slot machines, and safety razors. It was in 1903 that the first successful flight was made by an airplane, and now it has flown over all the lands and seas of the earth and over the north and south poles. In 1932, a descendant of George Washington flew in a single day over
all the routes which Washington had traversed in the course of his lifetime. I never expect to have a greater thrill than I had on a glorious summer afternoon in 1926 when I rode in an airplane from Paris to London in two and a half hours, crossing the English Channel two thousand feet above the tossing, choppy sea, and viewing the little checkerboard farms, green meadows, and lacey, hedge-lined highways of the countryside. President Hoover's research committee on social trends says of the spectacular growth of transportation by air: "The airplane as an instrument of war tends to add to the might of the advanced land powers, to weaken the sea powers, and to threaten the interior of belligerent countries. In peace times, besides being a method of fast transport, especially in desert or semi-populated regions, carrying passengers, express, news, mail and medicine, the airplane is used in exploration, in timber cruising, for photography, in archaeology, in projecting railroads and pipelines, for fighting forest fires, for finding schools of fish or seal, for sightseeing, for vicarious sport, for scattering seeds or insecticides, for advertising, for locating shipwrecks and lost persons, for carrying provisions to the marooned and for tracking criminals."

Equally marvelous achievements in invention and discovery have been made in all fields of electricity, chemistry, physics, metals, power, construction, machinery, and biology. And these inventions keep up at a surprising rate. From 1851 to 1855, 6,000 patents were granted in the United States; from 1875 to 1880, 64,000; from 1901 to 1905, 143,000; and from 1926 to 1930, 219,000. Not all of these inventions register such radical changes and in such conspicuous fashion as the
airplane, but many of them have transformed basic conditions of life and industry. Along with machines came the factory system, with its consequences in problems of labor and capital, of cities and their new ways of life. Every side of life has been deeply affected, the home, schools, government, leisure, art, morals, and religion.

I want to talk especially about religion, for I have made that my main interest. Everything which is of importance sooner or later comes up as a religious matter—whether it is daily bread, health, or love. Now many of these scientific inventions and the resulting changes in labor and enjoyment bear directly upon food and health and the attitudes of men toward one another. The effects upon religion may be seen in changes in the institutions, and less easily but just as certainly in beliefs and feeling.

The last religious census was taken in the United States in 1926. It shows that church membership has about kept pace with the increase of the general population. During the twenty years up to 1926, the wealth of the churches increased more rapidly than did the national income. This probably means that churches took over in their financial methods some of the improved techniques of business soliciting and collecting. But the better methods could not have succeeded so well if there had not been also a deep and genuine interest in religion. The value of church edifices doubled in twenty years after 1906. The last census showed the value of church property to be seven billion dollars while all public school property was less than this, or four and a half billion. The expenditures for local churches increased 50 per cent in ten years. In 1926 the cost of operating churches amounted to $18.44 for
each member thirteen years of age and over. The figures show that “People may not be attending their churches as regularly as they once did, but they are supporting them on a scale never before known.”

Clergymen are decreasing in number in relation to the country’s population, while charity and welfare workers are increasing, but Who’s Who in America listed 27 per cent more ministers in 1929 than in 1909.

Cities have greatly developed during the machine age and now contain the majority of the population. This has meant fewer churches with larger membership in the cities, and it is an interesting fact that a larger proportion of the people in cities belong to churches than in rural areas, but church membership in the cities declined 7 per cent in the twenty years prior to 1926. More than half of the people of the United States over thirteen years of age are on the membership rolls of the churches. Protestants outnumber all other church members, having five out of every eight adult church members.

The more important aspects of religion, however, do not appear in tables of statistics. The inner attitudes and beliefs are more difficult to discover and report. Still it is possible to determine by the behavior of people how they feel and think. This is well illustrated in the changes taking place in Sabbath observance. Formerly recreation was felt to be improper on Sunday, but when the factory and the office keep men and women confined to work during so much of the daylight time of the week it is natural that they should want to get out into the open on Sunday. This they have done, not through any conscious change in theory about the day but in spite of the
older theories. New theories have sprung up with the new practice, and now one hears arguments for it based upon the religious virtue of being healthy, of communing with nature, of finding rest in solitude. But it is also easy to disregard the day to pursue one's regular work when one is hard pressed, as with the office man in the rush season, or the student facing examinations, or the scholar devoted to research, or the physician visiting patients in the hospital, or the lawyer getting up his case. It is just in the nature of things now that policemen, firemen, railroad men, telegraph and telephone operators, sailors, druggists, newspaper men, stage folk and musicians should often have little or nothing of this old day for religious uses. Twenty-nine states still have laws that either directly or indirectly prohibit Sunday movies but these laws are not everywhere strictly enforced.

Some studies have been made which show decline in the old dogmas. It was found in a recent survey that students in theological seminaries adhere less firmly to traditional ideas than do ministers in service. Very few of the students believe in a personal devil and in the existence of heaven and hell as actual places. Only 3 per cent of the students interviewed as against 46 per cent of the ministers, held that to be a Christian it is necessary to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus.

What is called the social gospel seems to have developed directly in relation to the conditions arising in the new industrial order. The factory system made a wider cleavage between the employer and the worker. Since the new processes of manufacture required expensive plants and machines, they required large capital and the
worker could not afford to own either the tools or the product of his labor. He received wages and worked long hours. Big industries and big business organizations outgrew the older, simpler system in which the individual employer and worker stood in close personal relations, where acquaintance and friendship between them helped to preserve natural human feeling and respect. In the large scale operations, the stockholders of the company were remote from those who made the dividends, and the relation of manager and director tended to become that of an impersonal conduct of the enterprise to secure the greatest possible production at the lowest cost and the highest profit. It was still regarded as private business and it has been a slow and troubled process through which there has developed the recognition of the right of the general public to pass judgment upon the methods of the big industries. But gradually it became apparent that business is dependent upon the public for its market and therefore must, in the long run, be able to justify its methods to the best interests and to the conscience of that public. Many employers realized the need of reforms but no one knew precisely what conditions could or should be required. The whole system was new and there were no precedents to follow. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote an encyclical on the condition of labor. In 1908, the Methodist Episcopal church formulated a social creed which later was adopted in substance as the social creed of the Protestant churches.

This was a new formulation of religious interest and idealism. Nothing like it had ever been called for and it met with the opposition of many conscientious religious men who believed, in New Testament terms, that servants should be subject
to their masters and that in the sweat of his brow man should earn his bread. This social creed of the churches had for its articles of faith the eight-hour day, one day’s rest in seven, a living wage, the abolition of child labor, regulation of conditions of labor for women, suppression of the sweating system, protection from industrial accidents and occupational diseases, and the recognition of the principle of arbitration in industrial disputes. Whatever influence these new doctrines of the churches may have had in practical life, they certainly have had great significance in the development of religion itself in support of a larger and more effective humanitarianism.

Involved with the new industrialism are many other questions which tend to stir religion out of the older idea of individual salvation and create a larger social vision. Race relations, the abolition of war, education, the restriction of population, and many other problems come within the purview of religion.

Well, my friend, this does not sound much like the kind of religion we used to hear, which was so largely concerned with the steps by which sinful man can become a child of God and be assured of salvation hereafter. There was no such thing as the social gospel in the sense in which I have been writing about it, largely because there was so little need for it. There were then about twenty-five thousand people living in our little western city which was largely made up of people who had moved in from the farm to educate their children or to engage in some small business. There were no slums, there was no conflict of capital and labor. The rural religion of the Bible was well suited to that situation, for we lived close to the soil if not on it,
and we felt dependent upon the weather. But in New York and Chicago life is different. We scarcely touch the ground. Everywhere is the pavement, and we flit about in little houses on wheels protected from the sun and the rain, the cold and the heat. I seldom hear anyone speak of the moon and the stars in the city. We live by artificial light, in houses we did not build, near neighbors we do not know, and among throngs who are strangers and only potential friends.

But we cannot go back. In all other ages, men have looked to the past for the model of what the future should be, but today, sensitive to the lessons of old experiences, we trust, more than men ever did before, to the new and the untried. This is a new kind of religious faith and it requires its own measure of courage and adventure. It is a more aggressive and experimental faith than that which demands blind obedience and submission. The age of science and invention creates new hopes that knowledge and love, twin powers of the spiritual life, can be cultivated and directed to fulfill as never before the prophetic and Christian expectation of a time when "they shall not hurt nor destroy, and when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." It is out of experience that men come to better understanding of God and now more than ever God comes into view as the light of knowledge and love that lighteth every man born into the world. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them." Next Sunday I shall write
you again, and tell you more of what I think of
the age in which we live and of the days ahead,
for I am anxious to know what you think of my
ideas about religion and technocracy, in these
days of sore depression.

Affectionately, your old friend,

Edward Scribner Ames.
DEAR FRIEND: I promised to write you a letter about Technocracy and I cannot wait any longer, for if I do the word may have been forgotten. It is not more than three months since this word burst upon us with the claims of doom and prophecy. The magazines rushed into print about it; and then the newspapers, always more conservative, at first made news of it; and then, realizing that it might seem to add to the depression, the press exploited all adverse criticisms and applied the poisoned arrows of ridicule.

One thing is very certain, and that is the evidence which this news has given that the public mind is extremely sensitive to the existing situation and eager to hear something significant as to the causes and possible cure of the suffering and anxiety which afflict the whole country and the whole world. It is a day when any man or movement which claims to have a remedy can get people to listen. Political and social theories, old and new, are being vigorously pressed upon attention. Religious cults, of the queerest and of the sanest types, are quickened by the pitiful need for help. Not the least among the religious offerings are those which propose some plan of escape from the whole problem. In not a few orthodox churches there is a revival of the idea that the world is nearing the end and that the second coming of Christ is at hand when the last act of the long human drama will end in the great day of judgment. Some ministers in our city are preaching this doctrine as they are in yours,
and throughout the country there are hundreds of thousands of people waiting and praying for this settlement of the world problem. These are the perilous times, they say, which presage the doom of the wicked and the deliverance of the righteous. Political and economic panaceas are proclaimed in a great confusion of tongues. Socialists, communists, single-taxers, fascists, and now the technocrats, are trying to persuade men to adopt their programs.

Fortunately, in the midst of all the excitement, we have at hand a comprehensive report on all aspects of our national life, presented by representative and authentic scholars appointed by the President of the United States three years ago. These experts in government, in economics, in sociology, in technology, in education, and in religion, have given a survey of our whole society in a massive work of two volumes, called “Social Trends,” which presents the most reliable figures and interpretations ever assembled. I have been comparing the claims of technocracy with this report, and the results are most interesting to me and I think they will be to you.

The one thing which is most in accord with the claims of technocracy is the significance of technology in our civilization. There can be no doubt that engineering and social planning have come to have new importance for government, but the technocrats can scarcely justify their theory that government must now become solely or chiefly the responsibility of such scientists alone. Neither are they convincing with reference to their economic theory that capitalism and the present money system must give way entirely, under the present burden of debt, corporate and national, to a system of labor measured only by energy units and reward-
ed merely by certificates of power expended in work. There are doubtless vast modifications already under way in both government and finance but these are more likely to be alterations of the present systems than completely new devices.

If America were suffering the rule of a tyranny such as Russia formerly had, or a chaos such as Italy had, then we would be more in danger of a sudden and revolutionary establishment of some such new autocratic government as those countries now have. But the American people have been educated to far greater extent than these older countries in a flexible, adaptable, political life which has already proved itself effective in several major crises and calamities. There can be no doubt that our recent election was an expression of the will to have a change in national policies, but it is also the conviction of the voters that the two old parties are not so radically different as to mean that the new administration will entirely change the patterns of American life as did the recent upheavals in Russia and Italy. Any party would have been compelled to change its policies in the present situation, and no party could have been certain that its principles would have altogether succeeded. It is very obviously a new state of the world to which we have come and there are no old theories or forms of government ready-made for the emergency.

At this point I want to say a word about this present depression in relation to former depressions. It is often remarked that we have had depressions before, that they come in cycles, and that they last a fairly calculable time. I am of the opinion that this idea of cycles may be very misleading. It is true that we have had depressions in a somewhat regular series of periods, and
that we have moved out of them. I have no doubt we shall get over this one, but I do not think any of the experts can tell how soon the change will come or what our society will look like when it is accomplished. Certainly all the calculations have miscarried so far. There has never been a more amazing failure of predictions, nor greater difference of judgment among the financiers, economists, and politicians. That is one reason why men like myself feel freer than usual to hazard some opinions about these matters. It may be that men of general interest in social institutions and in the larger movements of the human spirit may be as well equipped to understand what is now happening as are those whose interests and habits confine them to special fields of finance or politics.

The strongest claim of technocracy is that this depression has come in connection with a radical change in processes of production. There have, of course, been other factors. The greatest one is the world war. The long and dire consequences of that disaster are now being felt for the first time with their full force. We have never been able to estimate the magnitude of the destruction and human derangement which it involved. Perhaps only the continuing and increasing pain from the wounds it caused will make us realize how tragic it was. President Hoover’s experts speak of “the huge and uncalculated consequences of the world war,” and say that “the normal recession of a business cycle beginning in 1929 has, contrary to expectations, been prolonged into a depression of exceptional magnitude.”

But there are equally as vast forces at work in society as those which descend from the war. I wrote you about the transforming influence of
industry, as I see it. We must remember that modern industry is due to scientific invention and efficiency in organization. The steam engine was invented by James Watt about the time the United States became a nation. That was a century and a half ago. Until that time man power and horse power were the standard forms of energy available for labor, but since that time machines have been developed at such a rate that the methods of industry have been revolutionized. By the use of steam, the gasoline engine, and electricity, with modern machines and methods, the working power now in operation in the United States is equal to the power of ten billion men. This explains why fewer men are needed as laborers. Fewer flour mills, with fewer men employed, can now grind more wheat than ever before. More steel is produced, or could be produced, now with fewer men than ever before. In 1929 we made four million more automobiles than in 1919 and with fewer men.

One of the greatest advances in the mechanization of labor arises from the use of machines to tend and oversee machines. It is said that "hitherto wool required repeated handlings, frequently shipment from one plant to another before the washing, fluffing, spinning, and weaving were completed. It is now possible through a straight line, automatic process to introduce into one end of a machine the raw wool and have the machine wash it, extract the wax and lanolin, fluff the wool, spin it into yarn, dye it, weave it into cloth and cut it into lengths, roll it into bolts and wrap it for shipment." Every one has heard of the New Jersey rayon factory that eventually is to require the services of but one man operating an electrical switchboard. A typesetter in one city
is at the present time able through a system similar to telegraphy to set type automatically and simultaneously in any number of cities. The photoelectric cell, or electric eye, is thus described in President Hoover's report:

It never knows fatigue, is marvellously swift and accurate, can see with invisible light, and coordinates with all the resources of electricity. It sorts beans, fruit and eggs, measures illumination in studios and theaters, appraises color better than the human eye, classifies minerals, counts bills and throws out counterfeits, times horse races, counts people and vehicles, determines thickness and transparency of cloth, detects and measures strains in glass, sees through fog, records smoke in tunnels and chimneys, and is indispensable in facsimile telegraphy, television, and sound-film pictures. Others of its uses are to direct traffic automatically at less frequented crossings, to open a door at the approach of a waitress, and to serve as an automatic train control.

Cutting of all kinds has been revolutionized by technology. Formerly it took three and a half days to cut a crane hook from solid steel; it can now be done from a blueprint in twenty-one minutes. Bolts and nuts may be made automatically. On account of these and many other improved mechanical processes it is estimated by the technocrats that even if our factories were operating at the peak of 1929 there would be millions of men—seven millions, they say—still unemployed. Another calculation is that with what is known of technology today, it is now necessary for the adult population, from the age of twenty-five to forty-five, to work but 660 hours per year per individual to produce a standard of living for the entire population ten times above the average of 1929. That would be two hours a day for each worker, or twelve hours a week. The critics of technocracy regard these figures as exagger-
ated, but they do not deny that labor saving inventions have made it impossible for all workers to find jobs, or that the physical labor could now be accomplished in fewer hours of the day if all were employed. All admit, too, that more inventions may be expected which may give new employment to some.

We have already reached the point of overproduction and our store-houses are full of surplus goods. It is common knowledge that manufacturers have attempted to limit production in order to regulate prices. Last summer I saw great fields of pineapples in Hawaii unharvested and rotting on the ground because the canneries had no market for their product. In August these companies were holding conferences in Honolulu to plan for limitation of the crop in order to maintain working prices and profits. The same problem confronts the sugar growers, the cotton producers of the south, the wheat farmers of the northwest, and the corn planters of the central states. A friend of mine who lives on a farm in Michigan called my attention the other day to the fact that tractors and trucks have eliminated millions of horses from the roads and farms and thus contributed to the surplus grain the amount the horses used to eat. The farmers and manufacturers are now in the same difficulty of being able to produce more than is needed, though the farmer has the advantage of securing from the soil his own necessary food while the factory worker unemployed soon becomes completely helpless to maintain himself.

The one set of facts which technocracy has made clear and dramatic is this speeding up of machine labor at an unprecedented rate, with the reasonable prospect that it will continue, and that
profound changes are certain to occur in the whole life of society. But these are facts recognized also by the technologists, and by the experts who have made the recent survey of social trends. There is, however, no such agreement as to the remedy for the present distress. Some think it is a matter of adjusting the currency, canceling the debts, going on a silver instead of the gold standard, making huge government loans directly or through public works to restore the purchasing power of those now unemployed; some imagine that all that is needed is a restoration of confidence in the old forms of business enterprise. Technocracy holds that the old capitalistic system is bankrupt and buried in debt, and that it goes deeper in debt by any system of making more loans to start the wheels of the old industry, in the old way. Most of us are just certain that the times are out of joint when farmers cannot grow enough on their land to pay the taxes, or when landlords receive less than enough rent to maintain houses and apartment buildings, when all the great hotels are forced into receiverships, and when honest and capable workers cannot earn wages enough to pay for the bare necessities.

You are wondering where religion comes in. That was what I promised to write about in relation to these proposals for what Stuart Chase calls “a new deal.” I have already said that the effect upon religion is very stimulating. In my opinion, it is revolutionary. None of the old forms is adequate, though they contain elements and principles which are essential. Instead of giving you an account of the readjustments which are taking place, I may simplify the statement by summarizing what kind of religion is needed in these days.
First, it is a religion which emphasizes the fact that man shall not live by bread alone. Until the last century, man has faced the problem of getting enough to eat and wear and to make him physically comfortable. Now it is evident that he has the tools and the command of natural resources to supply all these wants. This he has achieved by the cultivation of knowledge, scientific knowledge.

Second, it is a religion which emphasizes love, in the sense of finding the best means of so ordering society and industry that the goods of life shall be shared. This means that all men be provided with useful work of some kind to secure what they need. At the present time it is not necessary that any one work more than a few hours a day if all share in the work. Love, in this sense of seeking a happy life for all, will have to encourage new forms of endeavor, or at least greatly extend the beginnings already made in the creative realms of science, art, and idealistic pursuits. Possibly it will be necessary to limit the population. In the last century the number of human beings on the globe increased two and a half times. Love, in terms of regard for the highest welfare of all men, must educate men out of their greed and selfishness, out of the old grasping love of money and the private hoarding of vast wealth. It must remake human nature, which Professor Hocking has shown to be possible in his book on that subject, until men realize the necessity for themselves as well as for others of cooperating in all the great concerns of life. Such love will put an end to war, and to all forms of national and individual hatred which breeds the brutal types of strife.

These are the two fundamental and persistent
articles of the creed of enlightened and effective religion. Religion has always been a quest for the power to live and to live abundantly. Jesus stated these two principles. He taught his followers to be wise, and he taught them to love their neighbors as themselves. If he were teaching today he might say, Be scientific and be socially minded. It requires long and painful experience, apparently, to get men to see how realistic and vital these sayings are, but the truth and force of them were never better illustrated than in the present depression.

Religion means reverence for life and for the lessons it teaches. That reverence arises out of the natural experience of every-day living. We respect pain. It is a sign that something is wrong, that correction and change are needed. We have learned this with reference to the toothache and appendicitis. We are offered an acute opportunity to learn it with reference to industry, business, and politics. We also respect pleasure and happiness. We seek those ways of life which yield joy and blessedness. They are found in the conduct of life that brings health, harmony, and energy of spirit.

It is the task of religion to celebrate this reverence for life. It has built beautiful temples, and developed elaborate rituals whose ultimate significance lies in the fact that they symbolize and dramatize the ways of life that lead to destruction and the ways of life that lead to fruitfulness and joy.

The story of the Prodigal Son is an epitome of the Christian religion. When he wasted his substance in selfish and riotous living he came to want and abject humiliation. When he returned
to sanity and went to his father's house in a chastened spirit of willingness to live within it as a respectful and helpful child, he found the riches of life and measureless joy.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Scribner Ames.
DEAR FRIEND: It seems clear to me that scientific invention and machine industry have not only given us more leisure but new kinds of leisure. I am not thinking of the present unemployment so much as of the eight hour day and of the prospect of a still shorter day for factory workmen and common laborers. It is obvious that with so many machines fewer hours of man power are needed for the things the machines can do. I am not referring to the leisure of the rich and specially privileged. That has always been limited to a relatively few people in any society, and the present conditions are not increasing that kind of persons. The old time gentleman and lady are disappearing and without many to mourn their passing. What we see developing in the last fifty years is an extension of leisure to the common people on a scale never before witnessed.

This removes what has been regarded for ages as the great curse of mankind. The biblical story of the necessity for work is that because Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator, they were thrust out of the Garden of Eden and forced to labor in the sweat of their brow for their daily bread. More realistic causes for the need of toil have been the gnawing pangs of hunger and the constant fear of starvation. Now for the first time men can produce more food, shelter, and clothing than they need and the gospel of work begins to lose its tang and authority. In the past it has been natural, too, to think that when a man could produce more than he needed for himself he
should continue to work in order to save up a surplus for his children and heirs. But this necessity for saving is now being questioned, because each generation, with the appliances available, should be able to take care of itself. Some of our wealthiest and wisest citizens have seen that it is not so important to establish great endowments for education and charity, and that it may be better to spend as we go for the maintenance of public welfare and social enterprises.

With the reduction of the hours of physical work and other routine labor a new kind of leisure has come for the workers themselves. It no longer exists as a means to labor. Formerly spare time and rest were the intervals between the periods of work, and in those periods the worker was too exhausted to do much more than sleep and recuperate. Or, if in desperation he rebelled against the daily grind, it was not strange if he got drunk or indulged in other excesses. The old leisure, except for the favored few, was the leisure of tired people. The new leisure is that of men and women who have not consumed all their energy, and who are not driven through exhausting toil to the point of listlessness and stupor. They have strength left, after the working hours, for other interests and activities. They can spend more time at home, to play with the children, talk with the neighbors, read the papers, and share in many interesting things.

Fortunately, the age provides an abundance of these interesting things, such as motor cars, movies, and radios, with which even the workers are well supplied. But there are also other features of the times which have very basic and transforming influence upon their life. For instance, there is better food and a far greater
variety. Instead of a diet of beef and potatoes or pork and beans, fruits and vegetables are available to afford more balanced rations and thereby to produce better health and vigor. Men leave their work less worn and depleted because they are better fed. Formerly only the rich could secure variety for their tables beyond what was locally produced, but today the markets supply the products of distant gardens, farms, and fisheries, at prices within the reach of all. The shorter hours of work make it possible for meals to be served at much the same hours for all classes, and thus contribute to a significant equality in the manner of life everywhere. Even more important is the fact that more meals are taken away from home, which tends to increase social contacts and to emphasize the sense of living a common life with others.

The modern world has also brought striking changes in clothing which stimulate the mind through new styles and through the profound effects which come with the sense of being garbed as well as other people. The use of ready-made clothes has increased to the point where ninety per cent of wearing apparel is made in the factory and at prices which make it possible for girls on small incomes to have a variety of dresses and for men to have, in addition to the one Sunday suit of the old days, sport clothes for various occasions. The new materials may be less durable than formerly and they are lighter and more colorful. Changes are more frequent, and as someone has said, the "look" of the street is different and more interesting. This similarity in clothing contributes to the destruction of class distinctions. It is impossible by their dress to distinguish shop girls from college girls, or busi-
ness men from doctors and ministers. Similarity of dress makes social contacts easier, even if it is also sometimes annoying to those who are still endeavoring to maintain their "individuality" and superiority by their outward appearance rather than by real merit.

A similar process of democratization is occurring in the character of our houses and furnishings. Professor Burns, in commenting on this, says, "The things which surround you, in the place where you live, affect the way in which you act and think. Even the forks and spoons reflect particular types of manners... If we change from oil-lamps to electricity for lighting, the labor of women is changed and probably also the temper of those who used to search for the matches in the dark and cut the smoking wick. The modern house is likely to make more civilized men and women and children, because it is cleaner, lighter, more airy, more spacious, and less traditional, therefore more easily changed so as to suit those who live in it." Further, he says, the home is not so much the center of human life as it once was. The increase in ease of transport makes people look upon home as little more than a dormitory. Moreover the similarity of the houses of the rich and the poor, like the similarity of their food and clothing, so far as they are similar, tends to bring all classes closer together and thereby to create a more stimulating and significant social life.

If people dress up and go out for dinner more, and visit their friends' houses with keener interest, enjoying the novelties and variations of chairs and wall paper and pictures, they also have in their new leisure other means of still wider contacts. With the automobile they have a greater
range, and their neighborhood extends far beyond that of former generations. One easily rides ten miles where he can walk but one. I am familiar with a countryside where in my youth it took the farmer an hour to get ready and drive four miles to church. Now his son just as easily goes twenty-five miles by automobile.

The talking pictures furnish still wider and more varied contacts. They carry the customs of different classes and nationalities into every community and provide glimpses of the rich for the poor and of the poor for the rich, of the adventurous for the timid, of the artistic for the unimaginative, and of the world of travel and sport for those who have not seen much of the world they live in.

The radio goes still deeper into the life of the average home. It is less expensive than the automobile or the movies, and it brings even more intimate and immediate revelations of the ongoing life. There is a new sense of belonging to a great community, or to a world society, when one listens to a national or an international broadcast, bringing the voice of some great singer, or scientist, or statesman. All these and many other influences operate to induce new experiences, to suggest new ideas, new modes of thought, new understandings between people, and new possibilities of life. It could be shown how these opportunities for leisure and its uses affect particularly the life of women, of children, and of youth.

All classes have been affected by changes in the falling birth rate which means lightened duties for woman in the home, less economic strain, and greater freedom in every direction for all members of the family. All phases of life are also involved in the greater participation of women in
industry and in politics. Woman has become far less the inferior and subject individual which she used to be, and the new attitudes toward her have brought her into a companionship with man which deeply affects both. The development of more intelligent and freer relations between the sexes has already created new social conventions of the most important kind.

On the whole, life has become more diversified and more exciting, more interesting. In terms of the number of things to do, and of the facilities for change and adventure near at hand, the life of the average person in a modern city is fuller and more absorbing than that of the wealthy and the royal of past ages.

There are, however, other questions as to the effects of all this leisure so suddenly obtained. The old leisure class was at least experienced in the use of what they had, though their sports and indulgences are certainly not what would be desired for every one today. The greatest difficulty lies in the fact that leisure still seems the exceptional and unusual thing. Hard labor is regarded as the natural lot of man, and any escape from it is only for the moment, or for a period of enforced idleness. In the present crisis, unemployment has come so abruptly that those who are thus unable to work are confused and can only bend their energies to finding another job where they may feel at home again. But what if a considerable degree of unemployment were to become the natural and the general state? Would not the result be that it would be a common thing for competent workers to find themselves as ill adjusted for leisure as is many a business man who has closely devoted himself to his business, and after retirement feels himself
so lost in his unaccustomed freedom that he does not know what to do with himself?

So long as leisure is regarded as the exceptional state, there will be difficulty in making adjustments to it or in using it to the highest advantage. In our present society a man who has been accustomed to employment feels little interest in fitting himself for leisure. Work is the respectable thing unless one has wealth and even then it is not the condition most approved. It is hard for an unemployed man to feel right in a society where it is assumed that all should be working or attempting to get work. However, there is a very real probability that we now face the problem of making leisure the standard and normal thing and the full eight hour working job the exception.

We have been trained to regard work as shaping the character of men. We think of industry, of promptness, of initiative, of endurance at the job, as among the great virtues. We have not had respect for the tramp and the hobo for we have thought of them as not willing to work. We have known for a number of years at least that there was a great deal of unavoidable unemployment, and that many individuals must therefore be forced to depend upon those who had means to help them. But the individual man out of work has seemed to be lacking in purpose or skill or in ability to get along with other people. We have made a kind of adverse moral judgment upon him and have regarded him as at least a potential danger to society. There are, it seems to me, several possibilities toward a more positive and constructive view of the leisure which has already come to millions of men through unemployment, and to other millions through the short-
ening of the working day so that they still have energy for other activity and vital interest for other concerns.

The matter may be stated in terms of the way people of the working class as well as others view religion and religious observances. There is a tendency to regard them as superfluous interests which do not fit into the workers' world. They are chiefly in evidence on the day when the workman is needing rest from his exhausting toil, or when he needs to get out into the air and sun. But it would be quite different if his week had not been so exhausting and he could come to Sunday without being depleted either by the week's work or by Saturday evening dissipation.

There would be interesting discoveries to be made by many people concerning religion, and there would be changes in religion itself. Traditional religion has been developed under the old system of hard labor. It offered comfort for those thus burdened. It exhorted them to still greater fidelity and industry, and pictured a future heavenly state in which there would be eternal leisure free from want and worry. One wonders sometimes at the sudden and revolutionary change that would be involved in translating men from the busy life of ceaseless toil and exacting duties into a heaven of eternal rest and easy pleasure. We have already been told that we should begin to think of the future as a place of continuing work and endless striving, and we must either do that to make the new life continuous with the present, or we must change the present life into one of greater leisure in order to fit ourselves for still more leisure in the hereafter.

In a society where leisure is the common lot religion might offer interesting and significant
things to do, for the leisure men are now promised in our terrestrial abode does not mean mere idleness, but rather spontaneous and voluntary activities engaged with something more than daily bread and the accumulation of a bank account. It is interesting to remember how the teaching and the life of Jesus fits better into a society of leisure than it ever could into the present driving, hectic, quest for material goods and for the treasures on earth which moth and rust so easily corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. When you stand in the little carpenter shop in Nazareth where he worked—or in the one like that in which he worked—you do not feel yourself in the atmosphere of a wage slave driven by a hard master or by an impersonal and relentless factory system. It is not difficult there, where the sun falls across the bench and the windows open out over the lovely hills, to imagine a youth who would turn to meet you as you enter, lay down his hammer or adze, and talk to you of other things. He would suggest that it is not worth while to be anxious about many things, that life is more than meat, that the sparrows and the lilies are cared for, and that the morrow will take care of itself. It is not strange that the visitors became so numerous that he finally gave up altogether working in that shop and went out to meet more people and tell them more about the possibilities of life upon a higher plane, a life bathed in neighborliness and great dreams. He was a poet and an artist and a teacher, and the fascination of him to this day lies in his sense of the more important things of the heart and the imagination.

There are already in our world thousands of people like that, scientists, lovers, musicians, paint-
ers, teachers, and prophets, who are living happy, useful lives, without calculating financial gain or seeking to provide treasures for the morrow or income for old age. They seem foolish in our acquisitive world, but they are nearer to the spirit of all the great religious leaders than those who are more typical of the present time. Perhaps we are on the eve of a day when this religion of the spirit will be more in tune with the affairs of human life, for this religion at its best releases the souls of men in forms of interest and activity which make a friendly world and adorn it with the beauty of art and the inspiration of the ideal.

I do not mean that we are to take refuge in sentimentality, but I do believe that we may be at a point in the great human pilgrimage where we may have so far conquered the material side of life that we may utilize our machines to do the rougher work of the world and turn our attention more to the greater realms of the mind and the profounder human interests.

William Vaughn Moody wrote a poem called "The Brute," and by the Brute he meant the machine. He pictures the Brute tamed at last and able to fulfill his proper destiny for man.

He must loose the curse of Adam from the worn neck of the race;
He must cast out hate and fear
And make the fruitful tears gush from the deep heart and clear.
He must give each man his portion, each his pride and worthy place;
He must batter down the arrogant and lift the weary face,
On each vile mouth set purity, on each low forehead grace.
Then, perhaps, at the last day,
They will whistle him away,
Lay a hand upon his muzzle in the face of God,
and say,
"Honor, Lord, the Thing we tamed!
Let him not be scourged or blamed,
Even through his wrath and fierceness was thy
fierce wroth world reclaimed!
Honor Thou thy servants' servant; let thy justice
now be shown."
Then the Lord will heed their saying, and the
Brute come to his own,
'Twixt the Lion and the Eagle, by the armpost
of the Throne.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES.