

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

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Science and Religion by William Rupert Gascoyne Cecil

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WILLIAM RUPERT GASCOYNE CECIL

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AND RELIGION**

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*By the
Rev. Lord William
Gascoyne Cecil*



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FOREWORD.



THESE addresses were delivered in substance at St. Lawrence Jewry, during Lent.

In trying to reduce to writing what was spoken without notes, I must of necessity have deviated somewhat from the original. But they are, if not the same words, of similar import.

I am aware that the word "science" in my mouth has a presumptuous sound, as I have no scientific qualifications at all, and, therefore, can only speak as one of the crowd. Yet, as one of the crowd nowadays, one has a right to speak, for this is an age that despises

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all "authority" and reckons humility out of date.

Not only does one meet at every turn people to whom life has no secrets and thought no difficulties, men to whom state-craft is child's play, political economy, simplicity, metaphysics, nonsense, but one also meets men who deem that the great mysteries of religion of which the Saints, after years of struggle and effort, won but a glimpse, are non-existent because, to their own proud and scornful hearts, such beautiful truths must be hidden. So if I am accused of conceit by those who are better acquainted with modern science, my defence must be, that I deal with the knowledge of the age in the spirit of the age.

I write not in the mediæval spirit of submission, but in the modern spirit of revolt.

I revolt, not against what is beautiful or

what is true, but against that spirit of insolence which is recklessly tearing down that wonderful civilisation that Christian workers have built up with endless pains and trouble. I do not doubt the wonderful nature of the discoveries vouchsafed to this age, but I doubt whether they are final, and whether in the light of the wonderful discoveries of subsequent ages our knowledge will not seem ignorance.

And so among other scientific formulas, I do not doubt that evolution or the survival of the fittest or the law of heredity are true, yet I doubt if they express the whole truth, and in this distrust of the finality of modern discoveries I am confirmed by the obvious reluctance that most evolutionists shew to trusting the well-being of the community in which they live to the logical deductions of the theory of the "survival of the fittest."