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SCIENCE VERSUS LIFE¹

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I AM grateful for the honor and conscious of the responsibility of speaking to you on this occasion. Many of you are probably disappointed that my theme is not one in which I may claim special experience and competence. But I felt that this is not the time and place to display one's personal wares, the special minutiae of our common endeavor. I have chosen the harder way of thinking aloud, perhaps neither wisely nor well, on a problem of deep concern to all scientists and all other citizens. In so doing it may be that the apparent urgency of the problem obscured the factor of personal incompetence. But I assure you that this eclipse is not total. Should I bore my seniors, seniors in experience, wisdom and years, may I suggest that

perchance there is a precipitate, even from folly; and should I exasperate our "young men in a hurry," may I remind them that the general education of the scientist-citizen is incomplete, even at the age of three-score and ten.

When the hurricane strikes ships at sea, frail hulls founder, while the crew of sturdier crafts experience anxiety, if not panic, and are for a time deflected from their course by the temporary violence of wind and waves. But they ultimately make their goal, thanks to human courage, the compass and the fixed stars. Such hurricanes, man made, have struck human society, and its institutions, from time to time throughout recorded history. We call them war. The world is now in the midst of one such period of violence, labeled "the worst"; because human memory is short, and even yesterday's experience is less vivid than that of to-day.

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