

As this dictum is partly philosophical, partly political and also has a biological connotation, I should like to elaborate it here. It was H.G. Wells (1866-1946) who in his book *The Fate of Homo sapiens* wrote in 1939:

“Adapt or perish, that is, and always has been,
The implacable law of life for all its children“

At one stage of my book collecting I owned a complete set of First Editions of H.G. Wells and I had read many, though not all of them. When I had to sell them, a friend of mine, David Fishlock, bought them and presented them to the Athenaeum Club in London. A worthy place for the books, as H.G. had been a member for a short time when he was asked to resign from the Savile Club. [See Title 338]

I was reminded of the Implacable Law ‘Adapt or perish’ when I was invited by a good friend, Bartholomew Nagy, a palaeo-chemist at the University of Arizona, Tucson and an editor of *Precambrian Research*, to write an editorial for one of its future issues, on a subject of my choice. It was certainly a challenge, and what I wrote was published by Elsevier Amsterdam, in his Journal Vol. 13, pp. 105-107 (1980).

I wrote that life began—the most important event on our planet—during the Precambrian age and that H.G. Wells had in his Implacable Law defined better and more precisely than anyone else, the struggle for survival for all of us on Earth. I considered this law as a philosophical statement and a scientific cornerstone for all biological evolution. Few will recall that Wells was a biology graduate of the Royal College of Science (my own College), later on part of Imperial College, and that the first part of Wells’s two-volume *Textbook of Biology* was published in 1893. It was his first book.

Did Wells ever consider how Life started on Earth? He summarily dismissed panspermia in his *Science of Life* of 1931 as “it only removes the problem of life’s origin one step further back”. But if life is now to continue on our planet, we must consciously learn to adapt to the ever more rapid changes which confront our survival. I have enumerated the vast problems facing us now, and in my opinion, their solution is as much a political as a scientific challenge for Interdisciplinary Wisdom. [See Title 143]

From the unicellular life of the Precambrian to the *Homo sapiens* of today, evolution has been unidirectional, to ever greater complexity, to greater gifts of thought and action. Those unable to adapt to change, perished. Evolution has always been positive, upwards and forward, true to the Implacable Law. Who gave the direction? God? Is this a proof for His existence?

I returned to “Adapt or Perish” as an Editorial in ISR, see Title 271.