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I have always had a great admiration for the works of H.G. Wells and during my book-collecting days was able to assemble a complete set of his first editions. This collection is now in the library of the Athenaeum Club, London, thanks to the generosity of my good friend David Fishlock.

Nothing in Well's voluminous writings impressed me more than his succinct phrase "Adapt or perish, that is and always has been, the implacable law of life for all its children". I took it as my text for the Editorial in ISR 2/2 in which I pleaded again for the interdisciplinary co-operation between scientists and politicians to solve the great problems facing mankind at the end of the 20th century, like the prevention of nuclear war, pollution of the environment, exhaustion of raw materials, population explosion and the change of climate.

I asked if scientists and politicians could adapt to each other's all too different philosophies and compared their various education, training and professional knowledge. I quoted again Herr Walter Scheel, the President of the German Federal Republic: „Only together can science and politics understand and master the future, in all its intellectual and moral, its cultural, economic and political perspectives."I had to conclude that the *Implacable Law* rules us all and that the alternative was *Adapt or perish*. [See also Title 146]

Of all the excellent contributions to this issue I find that Professor Heyman's article on *The Gothic Structure* demonstrates best the thoughts of an interdisciplinary scholar, applying modern engineering knowledge to the solution of a mediaeval problem. He started by pointing out that the outstanding feature of Gothic buildings was the fact that most of them still stand today. They had survived earthquakes and even the bombing of World War II, most of them only slightly damaged, while surrounded by totally destroyed cities.

His scholarly analysis of Gothic Architecture ranged widely, from the Duomo of Milan, Notre-Dame de Paris, Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, Sainte Chapelle, Paris to the amazing cathedral of Beauvais. This, built between 1247-1272 stood for 12 years and then collapsed, probably due to foundation problems. It was rebuilt by 1569 with an enormous masonry tower, 153 m from the ground, and it was a continous cause for alarm until it came down four years later.

His engineering analysis was very scholarly, stresses in vaults, thrust and counterthrust, arch and masonry theory, hinge formation, plastic theory, distortion and structural action. Heyman most important conclusion was that the structural action of masonry, and its survival, must be related to the geometry of the structure, and not to stress.

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To ... Life at 60 - ISR Volume 2 - ISR 2/3 Medawar's *Effecting all things possible*. Title 272