

which our authors give of the fact that nature is formed on certain prevailing types or patterns—an explanation which makes the Order of the universe only a peculiar kind of adaptation. And this will shew in what light we must regard a criticism that has been passed upon the work before us in a contemporary review. "There is a difficulty," it has been said, "lying at the very threshold of the discussion, which the learned authors have not troubled themselves to engage with; viz: How is the existence of these antagonist principles (of order and of special adaptation) compatible with the doctrine of the Divine unity? If one Being is the author of order and law; diversity and multiplicity must be already given. If He is a designer, contriver, adapter; a primordial homogeneous material must be coexistent with Him. Is the one God to be identified with the principle of order, or with the principle of variety? The forces are really antagonistic, void against form, unity against multiplicity, the uniform against the various, the homogeneous against the heterogeneous, and death against life. Neither is victorious o r the other. If form issues from void, it sinks back into it; if variety diversifies the uniform, it is again overcome by it; if life emerges from death, it is again absorbed into it. The professors have not, as it seems to us, precluded a dualistic doctrine."\* Now, upon these apparently profound, but in truth, hazy and somewhat unmeaning sentences, we remark *in the first place* that order and adaptation are not "antagonistic principles." On the contrary, we believe with Drs. McCosh and Dickie, that the order of nature is adaptation of the highest kind: it is the Creator adapting his works to the capacities of the intelligent beings, by whom they are to be studied. But *in the second place*, as it is affirmed that the recognition of the principle of adaptation in nature would involve the conclusion that there must have been two independent principles, what ground is there, we ask, for such an assertion? Not the slightest. We do not mean to attempt proving the Divine unity; but we deny that there is any thing incompatible with the Divine unity, in the notion that the world exhibits design. Where is there even the semblance of contradiction in our supposing that there is a living God, the sole self-existent Being, who created the world, and created it endowed, in its various parts, with those properties, and standing in those mutual relations, which the terms *Order* and *Adaptation* set forth? Why, if he be a designer, contriver, adapter—does it follow that a primordial homogeneous material must be coexistent with Him? When a human workman; indeed, fits together the parts of a watch, he employs his skill upon existing materials; but we must

---

\* Westminster Review, April, 1856.