

most striking features of the hypothesis, that it opposes strongly the idea of any special oversight and interposition on the part of the Deity. True when we look at the subject philosophically, we must acknowledge that an event is just as really the work of God, when brought about by laws which he ordains and energizes, as by miraculous interposition. Still the practical influence of these two views of Providence is quite different.

Whoever the author of the *Vestiges* may be, he has evidently lived in a religious community, and felt the influence of a religious atmosphere; for he tries to conform his system as much as possible to the principles of Protestant Christianity. In other words, he feels so much the power of practical piety around him, that he does not suffer the influence of the system which he advocates to exhibit itself fully, nor to drive him into those extravagances of belief which naturally result from it. In order to see what is its natural tendency, we need to go to such a country as Germany, or Switzerland, where there is little to restrain the wildest vagaries of belief. In the works of Professor Lorenz Oken, of Zurich, we see fully developed the tendencies and results of this hypothesis of development by law, combined with the unintelligible idealism of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, etc. In his *Physiophilosophy*, translated by the Ray Society for the edification of sober, matter-of-fact Anglo-Saxons, we find a man, of strong mind and extensive knowledge, taking the most ridiculous positions with the stoutest dogmatism, and the most imperturbable gravity, yet whose blasphemy is equalled only by their absurdity. Let a few quotations illustrate and confirm this statement.

“The highest mathematical idea, or the fundamental principle of all mathematics, is the zero = 0.

“Zero is in itself nothing. Mathematics is based upon nothing, and consequently arises out of nothing.

“Real and ideal are no more different from each other than ice and water: both of these, as is well known, are essentially one and the same, and yet are different, the diversity consisting in the form. Every real is absolutely nothing else than a number.

“The Eternal is the nothing of nature.

“There is no other science than that which treats of nothing.