

**PHRENOLOGY KNOWN BY ITS FRUITS;
BEING A BRIEF REVIEW OF DOCTOR
BRIGHAM'S LATE WORK, ENTITLED
"OBSERVATIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF
RELIGION UPON THE HEALTH AND
PHYSICAL WELFARE OF MANKIND"**

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Phrenology known by its fruits; being a brief review of Doctor Brigham's late work, entitled "Observations on the influence of religion upon the health and physical welfare of mankind" by David Meredith Reese

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DAVID MEREDITH REESE

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A BRIEF REVIEW OF
DOCTOR BRIGHAM'S LATE WORK,
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"OBSERVATIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION
UPON THE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL WELFARE OF
MANKIND."

BY DAVID BRIDGEMAN BEEBE, M. D.
OF NEW-YORK.

"There seemeth to be a superfluity of books — but, shall no more be made?
Yea! make more good books — which, like the seraph of Moses, may devour
the serpents of the enchanters."—*LORD BACON.*

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1836.

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TO

THOMAS SEWALL, M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY IN THE
COLUMBIAN COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEAR SIR—

Your well known hostility to the whole Phrenological fabric—because of your well founded apprehensions of its deplorable moral influence—as well as the profound esteem and respect I have always entertained for your personal and professional character, have emboldened me in the dedication of this humble effort to you.

Accept, Sir, this small token of my affectionate regard and friendship.

DAVID MEREDITH REESE, M. D.

New-York, October 1st, 1836.

PREFACE.

THE author of the following pages, having more than once had occasion to appear before the public in the unenviable character of a polemick, had become weary of controversy. With increasing years, he had thought to have sheilded the sword of wordy conflict in its peaceful scabbard, and whether he had become wiser or not, he verily thought to have "learned war no more." In this pacific purpose he found no small share of self complacency, and was already employing his leisure hours in the quiet avocations of reading and study, preparatory to the completion of some literary efforts, which have been long contemplated, and still lie unfinished upon his *escritoir*, among the few manuscripts which his time and opportunities have allowed him to begin, with no other result than to "report progress."

After such a resolution to retreat from the din of polemical strife, some explanation of the motives for his suddenly emerging from his obscurity is due to his friends, to whom his purpose had been communicated, and who will be surprised, and some of them, perhaps, grieved, that he should so soon buckle on his armour. To such he will only need to say, that the work of Dr. Brigham had not then appeared, which has called forth thisropiy, nor was it until a short time since, that it came under his notice. His attention was first directed to it, by a distinguished literary friend, in the city of Washington, who, in a letter referring to the work, earnestly urged the importance of an early antidote to the moral poison it contained, and made an appeal to the author, for a prompt attempt to repel this assault upon both medical and theological truth, and to refute the heresies it contains against science, as well as religion. This appeal was rendered irresistible, by the importunity of other judicious friends, who overcame all scruples against farther controversial writing, by alleging that the minds of the young and rising generation would readily imbibe the prejudices against religion which Dr. B.'s book is so obviously calculated to inculcate, coming as it purports to do, from a regu-

larly educated physician, and shielded from suspicion by the pretext of being dictated by philosophy and science, and under the imposing guise of a "profound respect" for religion itself. And they still further urged the writer to this unwelcome service, by the consideration that the character of the work was such, embracing the subjects of health and disease, and especially by reason of the observations on insanity, that none but a physician could be appropriately expected to reply to it. Constrained to concur with them in the opinion that the book imperiously called for an answer, the author has yielded to their judgment, rather than his own, in becoming the writer of the following pages, but not until he had waited several months in vain, in the hope that another would undertake it.

Ever aware of the imperfections of his wisdom and piety, and peculiarly sensible of his liability to an excess of zeal, and occasionally to a degree of causticity in manner and style, the author, while he regrets this torrid temperament, which may be ascribed to his physical and phrenological "organization," can offer no apology for "calling things by their right names." Towards the author under review, he is conscious of no sentiment inconsistent with "the law of love;" but with the book which bears his name, he has no fellowship, and he is free to avow that he contemns and even abhors the errors on which he has animadverted, and he "loves to abhor them." He has no kindred affiliation with the sentiment, that because a man is a professor of the religion which inculcates "love to all men," that he is, therefore, to "suffer sin in his neighbor" without uttering reproof; or to "prophecy smooth things," when the "citadel of this world's hopes, the sacred edifice of our holy religion," is approached by the brand of an incendiary, even though he should be "transformed into an angel of light," or attempt the deed of darkness under the specious guise of philosophy, or "science, falsely so called." In humble imitation of an apostle, he would "withstand him to the face, because he is to be blamed;" yet, in doing so with the plainness of speech, and just indignation which the cause of truth demands, he trusts he has not betrayed a spirit of vindictiveness, or unbecoming censoriousness. If it shall so appear to any friend of the truth, it will be a subject of regret, and to none more sincerely than to himself, since it would grieve him to find that the infirmity of the writer should thus deteriorate from the

usefulness of his effort. He can, therefore, only say to the reader as his apology for imperfections either in matter or manner, that the reason why the task has not been *better* performed, is for want of an abler hand, a wiser head, and a better heart. That it has not been *earlier* published, is wholly owing to the incessant avocations which other and imperative duties have imposed, by which he has been deprived of those hours of leisure which he would gladly have devoted to the work, and by which he has been constrained to prepare detached parts at intervals, sometimes of weeks together, and to write chiefly during those few hours which a laborious profession render needful for repose.

Having written the whole under these disadvantages, the author can scarcely say that he is himself satisfied with the manner of the performance; nor can he hope to escape the ban of reprobation from that class of critics, who make a man "an offender for a word." As, however, he does not write for reputation, nor yet for money, in the present case, but wholly for the purpose to expose error and vindicate truth, irrespective of any minor or personal consideration, he will be content to bear with what grace he may, the condemnatory sentence of such as demand perfect symmetry of elocution in every page of an original work. He "could not meet their requisitions if he would," and, in sober verity, he may add, he "would not if he could." To have his sentences stereotyped into conformity with their archetype, would afflict him as grievously as to distort his own limbs, and limit his locomotion by a straight jacket.

In respect to the views he expresses of Phrenology, and the disrespect with which he treats that "science," the author deems it proper to inform the reader, that his own opinions on that subject have recently undergone an entire revolution. Attracted by the learning and labors of Gall, and admiring the genius and untiring industry of Spurzheim, with many others he had hailed phrenology as a science, and even partially invested craniology itself with the merits of a philosophical system. It was, however, with anatomical views entirely that he had looked upon the subject with favor, and he had not been led to investigate its moral aspect or tendency until recently. He had regarded the light which phrenologists claimed to have thrown upon the structure and functions of the brain, as calculated to contribute to the business of education, to aid in some questions of medical juris-