

ARTICLE II.

PHRENOLOGY.

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ALTHOUGH we have done with the five fundamental principles of phrenology, we have still some additional objections and remarks, to which we would invite the attention of our readers.

First of all, we object to *the name* of this alleged science. It should never have been called *phrenology*. It should rather have retained the name which Dr. Gall first gave to it, *craniology*. Phrenology is the science of mind; whereas this is primarily the science of skulls. To be sure, it treats of the mind more or less; but only of the mind as manifested through the brain and skull. The brain is, in the strictest sense, the organ of the mind; and the size of the brain, as indicated by the size and shape of the skull, is the measure of the mind's power. The brain consists of a congeries of organs, whose base is indicated on the outer surface of the skull; each of these organs has a corresponding mental faculty, which operates by it, and through it. In proportion to the size of the organ, as indicated on the skull, is the strength and vigor of its corresponding faculty; hence, by an examination of the skull, the mental traits of the subject may be discovered. Such are the acknowledged principles of the science; and who does not see that it is rather *craniology*, than *phrenology*? It does not begin with the mind, ascertain its phenomena and faculties, and from these reason outward to the skull; but it begins with the skull — its size, its shape, its indentations, and bumps; from which it infers the size and shape of the brain; and from this the faculties and character of the mind. It is primarily, therefore, *craniology* and not *phrenology*, and should not have been honored by its indiscreet friends with a name which does not properly belong to it. So far as the force of a name is concerned, they have in this way converted the noble science of mind (as one expresses it) into "a mere Golgotha — a place of skulls."

Our second remark is, that, so far as important practical knowl-

edge is concerned, phrenology teaches *nothing new*. One would think, from the boasts of its friends, from the sounding eulogiums which they are wont to pass upon it, that it had introduced a new era in philosophy, and should be regarded as the guiding star of the age. They claim that it is the most valuable discovery ever made, and that it will contribute more important aid towards the education and gradual improvement of the race, than can be derived from any other source. "Before the appearance of Gall and Spurzheim," says Mr. Combe, "the science of mind was in much the same state as that of the heavenly bodies, prior to Galileo and Newton." Again, he says: "The discoveries of the revolution of the globe, and the circulation of the blood, were splendid displays of genius in their authors, and interesting and beneficial to mankind; but their results, compared with the consequences which must inevitably follow from Dr. Gall's discovery of the functions of the brain, sink into relative insignificance."¹

Let us, then, look at the subject a little, and see whether these boasts have ever been realized; see what phrenology has done, or is likely to do, for the benefit of the world. It has told us a great deal — which we do not believe — about the functions and organs of the brain, and the ability of the operator, by fumbling over the head, to decide upon the mental traits and character of its owner. It has introduced a new and barbarous phraseology, under cover of which the commonest truths are made to assume a strange and scientific appearance. Still, it may be said, and said in truth, that so far as *important practical* knowledge is concerned, phrenology teaches nothing new. It was known, ages ago, that there were important differences among men in genius, disposition, propensities, habits, and traits of moral and religious character. Phrenology has taught us nothing new on this subject, except that it refers these different traits to different bumps on the head, a theory which we have shown to be unfounded, and which, if it were true, would be a circumstance of very little importance. Again; it was known, long before phrenology was born, that the exercise of any faculty, or the indulgence of any propensity or habit, tended to increase and strengthen it; and

¹ At the close of the fourteenth volume of their Phrenological Journal, the Messrs. Fowler very modestly say: "The Journal has done *more* to create an interest in the true philosophy of mind, and to awaken a spirit of self-culture, than *all other periodicals, since its establishment.*" "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Prov. 27: 2.

hence, that it was indispensable, in a good moral education, to repress the indulgence of everything evil, and encourage the exercise of everything good. Phrenology has nothing new on this subject, except its uncouth phraseology; and that only serves to make a plain matter obscure, or (as the Scripture hath it) to "darken counsel by words without knowledge."

The great object of Mr. Combe, in his popular work on "the Constitution of Man," is to show, that we are made subject to three classes of laws, *physical, organic* and *moral*; and that *suffering* is the penalty for violating any of them. But men knew all this before. Who did not know, that, if he stepped off a precipice, he would fall and hurt him; that, if he overloaded his stomach, he would suffer from indigestion; and that, if he was wicked and cruel, his conscience would be likely to trouble him more or less. We are constrained to think, therefore, that this most popular of all phrenological books has added very little to the extent of human knowledge. Stripped of its phrenological cant and verbiage, it will be found to contain little more than stale truisms, some of which the child will understand, especially after he has had a few hard falls, or has made himself sick once or twice by eating green fruit, or has felt some twinges of conscience, after striking his brother, or telling a lie.

Indeed, Mr. Combe, in his more candid moments, does not pretend to have advanced anything of importance that is new. "I lay no claim," says he in his Preface, "to originality of conception. The materials employed lie open to all men. Taken separately, I would hardly say that a new truth has been presented, in the following work. The facts have nearly all been admitted and employed, again and again, by writers on morals, from the time of Socrates down to the present day."

What Mr. Combe here acknowledges of himself, is more eminently true of inferior writers and speakers on the same subject. A gentleman in England, "who had been most successfully engaged in the business of education for more than forty years, was induced to attend a course of phrenological lectures, under the assurance that this new philosophy would afford him vast assistance in his vocation. But at the close of the lectures he solemnly declared, he had not heard a single principle enunciated, which had not been constantly in his view, from the time when the claims of phrenology were unknown in Britain."

We would go even further than this, and say, with Mr. Morell,

that, so far as *mind* is concerned, phrenology never *can* teach anything new. It can only assign certain *ascertained* mental qualities and propensities to what are conceived to be their appropriate organs on the skull. But by the supposition, these mental qualities are *already ascertained*. They *must* be ascertained, every one of them. And we must come to the knowledge of them in the ordinary way, that is, by *reflection* and *consciousness*, before the phrenologist can get hold of them, and assign them to their material organs.

Our next objection to phrenology grows out of its bearings and teachings on the subject of *education*. Much credit is claimed for it, by its advocates, on the score of education. Parents have been earnestly advised to obtain *charts* of their children's heads, that they may know early their dispositions and propensities, and thus be able to conduct their education in the wisest manner. And, if any accurate, reliable knowledge could be obtained in this way, we allow that it might be of some importance. But suppose (what is undoubtedly the fact) that *no* such reliable knowledge can be obtained. Suppose the parent, instead of getting any true ideas concerning his children, gets the opposite; instead of being instructed, he is deceived. The influence of phrenology, in this view, can only be hurtful, both to parents and children. There is a *natural* method in which parents are to learn the particular genius, the aptitudes, the propensities, and dispositions of their children; and this is by close *observation* and *watchfulness*. But the parent has no time, or no heart for this. He must come to his conclusions by a shorter cut. And so he applies to the phrenologist, and gets a chart. But his chart is no better than white paper. In fact, it is a great deal worse. White paper would not deceive him; whereas his chart, if he relies upon it, will be very likely to lead him astray.

Nor is the effect of the process any better upon children and young persons. They are led to believe that they have got the truth, respecting their talents, their genius, their disposition, their destiny; and they follow it out as such, until they find, too late, that they have been deluded. More than one case we have ourselves known, in which young men have been completely baffled, turned aside from their appropriate pursuits, and in effect almost ruined, by trusting to their phrenological advisers.

But this is not the only way in which phrenology bears disastrously on the cause of education. Its doctrine of distinct, inde-

pendent organs and faculties, is not only false in fact, but injurious in its influence. The doctrine is, as we have before remarked, that these numerous mental faculties are so distinct, that the exercise and improvement of one, has no tendency to improve any other. "It would be as unreasonable," says Mr. Simpson, "to attempt to sharpen hearing by exercising the eyes," as to improve one mental faculty, by working another. Now we all know that this statement is not true. Almost any sort of mental application imparts strength and vigor to the *whole* mind; just as exercising the arms, the legs, the chest, diffuses strength and elasticity through the entire frame.

And not only is this position false in fact, it is of hurtful *inference*. It is this which has led phrenologists to oppose the study of the ancient languages, and the regular, grammatical study of all languages. "By such study," says Mr. Lovison, "the mind is cramped; many of the most useful faculties remain in a state of inactivity; while *verbal memory*, like an especial favorite, engrosses all attention to itself." This writer admits "that a knowledge of our vernacular tongue is of great importance," yet this, he thinks, may be better acquired "without the usual drudgery of poring over a grammar. Let a child know the names of all things it sees, and how we express their qualities and modes of existence, and this plan, combined with a free intercourse with intelligent adults, will practically point out," without a grammar, "the natural mode of arranging words to give the order of our ideas."

Nor are languages the only study which phrenology proscribes. Listen to the following edifying passage from the Rev. George Blackburn: "What has the study of *mathematics* to do with giving success to one in the clerical profession, or to one who is occupied with the study of moral philosophy? Or what has Greek or Latin to do with a successful prosecution of the science of astronomy, or of chemistry? Oh, it will be said, the study of mathematics is essential to the clergyman and moral philosopher, because it tends wonderfully to discipline and strengthen the understanding; and that of the Greek and Latin, because they make us better acquainted with our vernacular language, and tend likewise to elevate and expand the mind. Now phrenology demonstrates that there is *no sort of relation between mathematical and moral reasoning*; that they depend upon *different and distinct faculties*; and that, by necessary consequence, the former may

be exercised forever, without *in the least disciplining or improving the latter*. And as to languages, it shows that a knowledge of them is obtained through the medium of a single faculty, which may be powerfully active even in the semi-idiot, who is well-nigh incapable of combining two ideas and inferring from them a third."

This remarkable passage is in harmony with the general strain of phrenological teaching on the same subject. Its positions are justly deducible from the doctrine of *numerous distinct faculties and organs* — so distinct, that the exercise of one tends not at all to the improvement of any other. And yet these positions are so palpably false, and of so evidently destructive bearing upon all the interests of education, that they might be sufficient alone to refute and demolish the whole phrenological theory. "Phrenology demonstrates that there is no sort of relation between mathematical and moral reasoning! that they depend upon different and distinct faculties! and that, by necessary consequence, the former may be exercised forever, without in the least disciplining or improving the latter!" It demonstrates, that "a knowledge of languages is obtained through the medium of a single faculty, which may be powerfully active, even in the semi-idiot!" If phrenology demonstrates all this, we have only to say that it demonstrates a tissue of *gross falsehoods*; and thus proves itself *untrue*. And not only so, it lays its axe at the root of all sound and reliable systems of education. Carried consistently out, it would overturn all our higher institutions of learning, and reduce us quickly to a semi-savage and uncultivated state.

But we have a more serious charge against phrenology, than either of those which have been noticed. We are constrained to regard it as of a *dangerous moral and religious tendency*; and that in several ways.

In the first place, its tendencies are to *materialism*. We do not say that it absolutely and necessarily leads to this; much less would we say that all phrenologists are materialists. And yet the *tendency* is obviously and strongly in that direction. We hear so much of the brain, and the numerous organs of the brain, and are told so confidently that everything depends upon the size and shape of the organs, that we come naturally to the conclusion that the man is *all organs*; that he has no mind, no soul besides. So much is made to depend upon the *material* in man, that the spiritual is overlooked, if not discarded.

With regard to this question of materialism, phrenologists may be divided into three classes. First, those who are *not* materialists. These hold that man *has* a soul distinct, in nature, from the body, and that the brain is but the material organ through which the spirit acts; just as the external senses are organs through which we become acquainted with the outer world. This is altogether the better class of phrenologists; and yet, to their more advanced brethren, they are objects of suspicion, if not contempt. They are regarded as the slaves of an early prejudice, and as afraid to carry out a new and noble science to its best results.

The second class of phrenologists are in *doubt*, whether man has any soul distinct from the body, or not, and believe the question to be quite insolvable and unimportant. Thus Mr. Combe says: "The solution of this question," as to the material or immaterial nature of the soul, "is not only unimportant but impossible." A writer in the *Edinburgh Phrenological Journal* says: "We know nothing whatever concerning the substance of the mind," whether it be material, or not. A writer in the "*Annals of Phrenology*," an American publication, echoes the same sentiment: "No one knows whether the human mind is material, or not."

But the third class of phrenologists, the more advanced class, those who think themselves the most faithful expounders of the doctrine, have no doubt at all on the subject. They believe the whole man to be constituted of matter, and that there is no proper distinction between the body and the soul. Thus one tells us: "A spirit is no immaterial substance. On the contrary, the spiritual organization is composed of matter, in a very high state of refinement and attenuation." Another says: "Immaterial substance or essence is a mere abstraction of the human imagination, altogether unknown to our senses or understanding. Everything we see, hear and feel, is material, and our own minds are unknown to us, except as incorporated with matter." Still another says: "As we never become acquainted with either the living or the intelligent principle, unconnected with material organization, so we have no philosophical reason to regard them as separate existences. They may be properties of peculiarly constructed matter." A philosopher of this class once said to us, that "the brain generates ideas as really and truly as the liver does bile," and that "it is nonsense to think or speak of anything pertaining to us, which is not matter."

We trust that nothing further need be said as to the *tendencies* of phrenology. They are naturally and obviously to a gross materialism. Thither its bolder and more consistent advocates speedily arrive; and those who are restrained from it are held back, not by anything in the system itself, but by other and better influences.

By its bearings towards materialism, phrenology tends, of necessity, to *fatalism*; a denial of the proper free agency of man, and his responsibility for his actions. Materialism always ends in fatalism. Not an instance, we presume, can be found, from the times of the old Greek philosophers to the present, of an individual, who regarded the whole man as *material*, who denied the proper distinction between body and soul, without also denying free agency and human accountability. Why should it not be so? How can it be otherwise? Material atoms cannot make a *will*—a *free will*. Material atoms cannot choose, refuse, desire, resolve, and act, and feel responsible for their actions. Material atoms cannot *move*, except as they are moved, and that, too, by physical causes; and there is no more voluntariness in their motions, than there is in the motions of a clock, or a mill.

But phrenology tends to fatalism, not only as it tends to materialism, but because it entirely and confessedly *takes away the human will*. It destroys not only free will, but the will itself. The will has no organ assigned to it on the cranium; it is not once mentioned among our faculties; and in place of it we have only a congeries of instincts and impulses, which move as they are moved, and control the man. Thus one writer says: "Man is not less a bundle of instincts, than were the fascies which were carried before the Roman consuls a bundle of twigs." And Spurzheim says: "Will is no more a fundamental power, than is the instinct of animals. It is only the *effect* of every primitive faculty of the mind. Each faculty being active, produces an inclination, a desire, a *kind* of will."

But in taking away the human will, and substituting instincts and impulses in its place, phrenology must, of course, destroy human freedom. There can be no free agency without a will, any more than there can be thought or reason without an intellect. And when free agency is gone, moral character and responsibility, and the sense of good and ill desert, are gone with it; and nothing is left to guide the actions of men but blind instincts and impulses,

amounting to a physical necessity. Men *must* act according to their organs and impulses, whether these be good or evil.

And what is the bearing of such a doctrine upon the nature of sin and crime, and the desert of punishment? This question opens a field of thought too important to be passed lightly over. Sin, according to the phrenologists, is rather a *misfortune* to be pitied; a *disease* to be, if possible, curbed and cured, than a *moral wrong*, an *offence* against God, for which the perpetrator is guilty and deserving of punishment. Thus Mr. Combe says: "According to this view, certain individuals are *unfortunate* at birth, in having received organs from their parents so ill-proportioned, that abuse of them is an almost *inevitable consequence*." "There exist individuals," says Prof. Caldwell, "who steal, and others who deceive and lie, by a force of instinct which seems *irresistible*. In others, the instinct of *destructiveness* is like that of the tiger. Nothing can appease it but blood." Mr. Combe represents the convicted criminal as "*the victim of his own nature, and external condition*." At the same time, "he is not the cause of the unfortunate preponderance of the animal organs in his brain. Neither is he the cause of the external circumstances which lead his propensities into abuse." He is, therefore, to be pitied more than blamed. He is to be taken care of and restrained, so that he may not be left to injure himself or others, but not *punished*, as though he had done anything wilfully wrong.

Having exhibited the head of Pope Alexander VI., or what purports to be a drawing of his head, Mr. Combe further says: "Such a brain is no more *adequate* to the manifestation of Christian virtues, than the brain of an idiot is to the exhibition of the intellect of a Leibnitz or a Bacon." "Such a head is unfit for *any* employment of a superior kind, and never gives birth to sentiments of humanity."

Pope Alexander VI. was, indeed, a monster of wickedness. He has been called, not improperly, "the Nero of the Pontiffs." But, according to the view here taken, wherein was he culpable? Wherein was he, properly speaking, wicked at all? "His brain was no more *adequate* to the manifestation of Christian virtues, than the brain of an idiot." He was the victim, therefore, of his brain, which he had no hand in creating, and for which he was to be pitied, but not blamed. It was unfortunate, indeed, that he was exalted to so high a station, that he was placed in circumstances to do so much mischief. But we are in fault in

pronouncing him a monster of *wickedness*, who justly deserves the execration of mankind.

The New York Phrenological Journal presents us with the picture of another head — whether from life, or not, we cannot say — and descants upon it in the following terms: “Such a head will be sensual in love; ferocious, stubborn, and contrary in disposition; a glutton in appetite; destitute of taste and refinement; stupid in intellect; incapable of reasoning; and extremely low in moral emotion; a natural vagabond, open to all the excitements to low and vulgar criminality; a being who, for the sake of society, should be guarded by law, as we would a lunatic.”

We are here presented with a character, embodying all the bad qualities which can cluster around, or be crowded into, a human being. And yet, in what respect is he strictly *blameworthy* for one of them? They grow out of the conformation of his head; and he did not make his head. As Mr. Combe says: “He was not the cause of the *unfortunate* preponderance of the animal organs in his brain. Nor was he the cause of the external circumstances which led his propensities astray.” He is, therefore, to be pitied, but not blamed. He is to be confined and taken care of, but not punished. In the language of the Journal just quoted: He is “a being who, for the sake of society, should be guarded *by law*, as we would a lunatic.”

Observe, he is to “be guarded *by law*.” But how is the law to take hold of such an one? For what is he to be indicted? We see not for what, unless it be for the shape of his head. He may not have *done* anything, as yet, to merit punishment. Indeed, on the theory before us, he *cannot* do anything to merit punishment. Of course, he must be tried for the shape of his head, and tried before a jury of phrenologists; because no others would be competent to try him. The Lord save the poor fellow from the tender mercies of such a jury!

The right to try and confine a man for the shape of his head, or, in phrenological phraseology, for his *developments*, is here presented in the shape of inference; though we think a just inference from the premises given. But some of the phrenologists advocate it openly. Thus Prof. Caldwell says: “Convicts should be sentenced to a period of imprisonment and discipline, proportioned, not only to the enormity of any single crime, but to their age and *developments*. Were two youths convicted of crimes precisely alike, or as accomplices in the same crime, the one of

better, the other of much worse *developments*, the latter should be sentenced to *the longest discipline*." A writer in the Edinburgh Phrenological Journal, speaking of prisoners, says: "The measure of the restraint ought to bear reference, not so much to the amount of crime actually committed, as to the degree of criminal *tendency* in the individual." "Persons having brains of" a certain "class ought to be viewed as moral patients, and treated as such; and *the form of their brains*, combined with their manifestation of criminal *tendencies*, should be sufficient to warrant their being subjected to *treatment*," i. e. confinement. "This," he adds, "is the grand practical principle that must be adopted and acted on, before a successful result in criminal legislation can be reached."

Here, then, we have it, on the highest phrenological authority. Men should be tried, convicted and imprisoned, not so much for actual crime committed, as for their "criminal *tendencies*," their cranial "*developments*," the "*form of their brains*."! "This is the grand practical principle that must be adopted and acted on, before a successful result in criminal legislation can be reached."!!

But we have not yet done with the positions of the phrenologists, as to the nature of crime, and desert of punishment. Mr. Combe speaks of three sources of crime, and only three: "First, particular organs are too large, and spontaneously too active; secondly, great excitement produced by external causes; and, thirdly, ignorance of what are uses, and what abuses, of the faculties." And each of these causes, he says, "exists, independently of the will of the offender." The will, therefore, as we might expect on phrenological principles, has nothing to do with the causes of crime at all. It is excluded.

But in excluding the will, it is obvious that Mr. Combe excludes that which is, in fact, the cause of *all* crime, without which it is impossible that *crime* should exist. He forgets, or does not consider, what *crime* is. "It is not simply evil, but evil arising from one definite source; and that the very source which phrenology excludes, viz. the consent of a free, responsible *will*. The crime of murder, for example, is not simply the killing of a man. The man must be killed *maliciously, wilfully*. Destructiveness, in the sense of the phrenologists, may be a remote cause; but if it be destructiveness, apart from a responsible and consenting will, as in the case of a maniac, or a ravenous beast, it is not *murder*. It is, in fact, no *crime* at all." It follows, from Mr. Combe's theory as to the causes of crime, that there is, in fact, no such

thing as crime; and so we are brought back to the same conclusion as before: The criminal incurs no guilt, and deserves no punishment. He is the mere victim of his nature, and of external circumstances.

Nor is Mr. Combe alone in this conclusion. It is concurred in, as we have seen, by all the more distinguished phrenologists. Their idea is, that bad dispositions and criminal acts, imply *disease*, rather than guilt. All wrong character is a *brain disorder*, as much as fever is a disorder of the body; and we can no more *will away* the former, than the latter. The words sin, guilt, blame-worthiness, ill-desert, have no place in the nomenclature of these men, as they have no ideas corresponding to them in their philosophy.

And the proper idea of *punishment* is as foreign from their system, as is that of sin. Punishment, we are told, serves only to "irritate and inflame the propensity which it was designed to check. We might as well undertake to whip a sore, or beat the typhus fever out of the body, or steady a wild horse with spurs," as to reform a vicious mind by punishment. "The only effect will be to chafe the disorder into greater malignity."

The true course, therefore, is, to treat the transgressor as a *patient* or a *humatic*, in the hands of a physician, rather than as a culprit deserving punishment. "Capital punishments should be forthwith abolished; prisons should be turned into hospitals; the rod of the parent and teacher should be laid aside; the diseased, over-worked organs should be put to rest; while their too feeble neighbors should be fed and drilled into activity." Punishment for crime, and reward for well-doing, are both entirely foreign to the system. They "both appeal to the animal feelings, and thus serve to defeat their own proper end, which is to set the *moral* feelings on the throne."

That we do not misrepresent here the great teachers of phrenology, might be shown, were it necessary, by further quotations. Says a writer in the Edinburgh Journal: "No one would propose to punish a man capitally for being infected with a contagious disease; although by putting him to death, at its first appearance, we might save many lives more valuable than his. Yet it would be as becoming to do this, and thereby protect society from *physical* contagion, as to guard it from *moral* contagion, by the destruction of a patient, who was defective in his moral constitution."

Mr. Simpson says: "When penitentiaries shall be held to be *hospitals* for *moral patients*, and not engines to protect society, by holding out the spectacle of the sufferings of perfectly *free agents*, either paying back the loss which their actions have occasioned, or deterring others from crimes by their example; the duration of the convict's detention will depend, not upon the mere act which brought him there, but upon the continuance of his disease." The purport of this long, bungling and obscure passage is, that men are *not* "perfectly free agents;" that sins and crimes are to be regarded and treated as particular forms of disease; that prisons should be considered as hospitals, and not places of punishment; and that the term of confinement should be regulated, not by the nature of the crime committed, but by the continuance of the disorder.

Mr. Simpson's whole book (and the same is true of Mr. Levi-son's) is based upon this one idea. Their plan of "efficient protection from crime" is, to lay hold of the offender, on the first breaking out of his disease, and keep him until the remedial process is completed. Murder, they tell us, comes from "homicidal insanity," or "diseased destructiveness. To torment the murderer will not annihilate this propensity. The only remedy is, to stifle the disease, by exciting the other propensities into predominance."

Much has been thought and written, within the last thirty years, on the punishment of crime, and the proper treatment of its perpetrators. A strong sympathy has been awakened for poor criminals, thieves, robbers, murderers, adulterers, because they have been punished in some instances *severely*, as they deserved. This course of remark, assuming the appearance of great philanthropy and benevolence, was received with some favor for a time; but the public have, at length, become nauseated with it. They see through it; see the folly and mischief of it; and will not tolerate it further. When a man knocks us down upon the highway, and steals our purse; when he fires our dwelling, and destroys our property, and perhaps our family; sensible people cannot see why all the sympathy of the community should be lavished upon *him*, rather than upon *us*; why he should be caressed, and cared for, and screened from punishment, and nursed and sheltered in a hospital, at the public expense; while *we* are left, unprotected, to bear our injuries as best we may.

Sensible people are beginning to inquire, too, as to the cause of these new-fangled notions. Where did they come from? How did they originate? These inquiries, if pursued, will lead directly, and by a very short process, to phrenology. The pernicious notions of which we speak, came in upon us from phrenology. They have been nurtured and strengthened by it. They grow right out of it, as we have seen, and can be removed only by removing the cause. When we return to the plain teachings of the Bible and of common sense on this subject; when we come to regard man as a free, responsible agent, whose acts are his own; when we come to regard him as *guilty* for his crimes, and deserving of punishment, in proportion to his guilt; when society is left, unembarrassed by the whinings and whimperings of miscalled philanthropists, to *inflict* such punishment, without the prospect or hope of escape; then the wicked will begin to fear, and crime will begin to diminish, and property and life will be more secure.

We might speak of other social evils growing out of these phrenological speculations, more especially as they bear upon the union of the sexes, and the permanence and happiness of the marriage relation. It would seem from much that we read and hear, that those who have bad heads or disordered bodies, that is, from a fourth to a third of our whole race, ought not to marry at all. Thus, one writer says, and Mr. Cornbe endorses the statement, that all "persons in any way constitutionally enfeebled, persons predisposed to scrofula, pulmonary consumption, gout, or epilepsy, should conscientiously abstain from matrimony." Or if, in an evil hour, such persons have been married, the union had better be dissolved. These ill-shapen heads and disordered bodies should not be multiplied. There is quite enough of them in the world already.

This doctrine is adapted, if not to prevent or dissolve the marriage relation, to produce *discontent* and *unhappiness* in it. A pleasant couple, we will suppose, soon after marriage, submit their heads to the examination of some practised phrenologist, and he decides that they are essentially unlike. One is intellectual, the other stupid. One is gentle, the other obstinate. One is open-hearted and generous, the other selfish and miserly. Now here is a *terrible secret* laid open to this happy couple. They learn — what they did not know before, though they may have been intimately acquainted for years — that they have no

congeniality, that they ought never to have come together, and that they have no prospect of living peacefully, much less happily. And this revelation of their probable destiny will have a mighty influence in accomplishing it. The more they confide in what has been said to them, and the more they ponder it, the more will their connubial joys be marred, and the cup of life will be embittered.

But we cannot dwell longer on this topic. We must dismiss it with a word, and hasten to the religious bearings of the subject before us. We profess to be a Christian people. We profess to believe and revere the Bible, and to find our religion there. How, then, do the teachings of phrenology compare with those of the Holy Scriptures? How far do they agree together?

The views which have been already presented will enable us to answer these questions, in part. The Bible teaches the existence of a soul, distinct from the body, of another substance from the body, which is to survive the body, and live in a future state. In other words, it sets its face against every form and degree of materialism. When the body returns to the earth, as it was, *the spirit* is to return to God who gave it. But phrenology, we have seen, if it does not end *necessarily* in materialism, ends there very frequently, in *fact*. It has a strong bearing in that direction, and many of its advocates, and those, too, who claim to be most enlightened, are professed materialists. "Immaterial substance," they say, "is a mere abstraction of the human imagination, altogether unknown to our senses or understanding." But so far as phrenology does tend to materialism, its bearings, its tendencies are obviously against the Bible.

Again; the Bible assumes everywhere, that man is a free, responsible agent, that his acts are his own, and that he is justly accountable for them. As much as this is implied in all the commands of Scripture; in its exhortations, warnings, persuasions, motives; and in its repeated annunciations of a coming day, when we must give an account of ourselves to God. But in respect to this matter of moral agency, phrenology teaches quite another doctrine. It denies to man the faculty of *will*, and represents his actions as the result of his cerebral organization, and of external circumstances; conditions which he did not create, and over which he has no control.

Still again; the Bible speaks of sin, not as a misfortune, or as merely an evil, but as an *offence*, a *wrong*, to God, to the universe,

and to the soul of the perpetrator; as that which confers guilt, and justly exposes to Divine punishment. But all this is childish and obsolete, in the ears of the practised phrenologist. Such notions may have been current once, but not now. They are among the things which, in these times of progress, have waxed old, and are ready to vanish away. Sin is a disease, not a crime. It confers no stain of guilt. It carries with it no ill-desert. Its perpetrator should be pitied, and, if dangerous to himself or to society, should be taken care of; but let him not be punished, by God or man, in this world or the next. We might as well "whip a sore, or beat the typhus fever out of a man's body, or steady a wild horse with spurs."

The whole scheme of redemption, as revealed in the Scriptures, rests on the supposition, that men are guilty, self-ruined creatures, whom Christ came into the world to seek and to save. But if men are not in the situation here supposed; if they are not personally sinful, guilty, and deserving of punishment,—and phrenology assures us they are not; then this scheme of redemption, so called, is all a farce. It is not needed, it cannot be applied, nor are we to suppose that the alleged facts of it ever occurred.

Thus far we have the light of the foregoing discussion to aid us in our present inquiry; to show us the *disagreement*, the *contradiction*, between phrenology and Christianity. But in justice to the subject, we cannot stop here. Phrenology conflicts with the Bible in various other parts, and we feel constrained to push the inquiry further.

The Bible teaches that *all selfishness is sinful in the sight of God*. Paul describes a state of great declension, when he says: "*All seek their own*, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." He predicts a state of still greater wickedness, when he says again: "*Men shall be lovers of their own selves*, covetous, proud, boasters, blasphemous," etc. If selfishness is not, as some think, the root and element of all sin, there can be no doubt that it is a base and sinful affection, which no rational being should ever indulge, but of which all men should be ashamed. Compare, now, these obviously Christian principles with the teachings of phrenology on the same subject. The Rev. Mr. Weaver, a distinguished American phrenologist, thus describes, in his Lectures, *the selfish sentiments*: "They are devoted exclusively, absolutely to the good of self. They have no interest in the well-being of

any body else. For them there is but one object, and that is self. That is dear above everything else — the world, and *all* to them." And why does he describe so elaborately and truly the selfish sentiments? To condemn them as the Bible does? Not at all, but to praise them. He goes on to say that these selfish sentiments "should be preserved, educated, cherished, as sacredly as any other affection! They are a part of the mind, a part of the living, eternal being, which is God's child, and bears his image!" pp. 128, 129. We can conceive of nothing more directly contrary to both reason and revelation than this. And yet it is a genuine fruit and outbreak of the phrenological philosophy. These selfish sentiments have each and all of them their bumps upon the head, and they must be exercised. The infinite Creator placed them there; and to impugn or condemn them, is to condemn his handiwork.

The Bible represents man as not only a sinful being, but *naturally* sinful, and, until renewed by Divine grace, *entirely* so. "Every imagination and thought of his heart is only evil, and that continually." "And were *by nature* children of wrath." But phrenology, as might be supposed from remarks before made, teaches no such thing. All heads have their good bumps, as well as their bad ones, and the character resulting from them must necessarily be a mixed one of good and evil. "I am astonished," says Dr. Spurzheim, "to observe so much goodness in the world. Its abundance necessarily proves that man is *naturally* good." Vol. II p. 162.

Again; man being what he is by nature, the Bible speaks of a great *moral change* as necessary, in order to salvation. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto you, *Ye must be born again.*" And not only does the Bible set forth the necessity of such a change, it furnishes numerous instances to illustrate it. Such were those of Paul, and the jailer, and the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. Like instances are occurring, in great numbers, in modern times. Here is a man, we will suppose, who has been a reprobate for years; setting at defiance every law of God and man; reckless, selfish, intemperate, profane. But at length a happy change comes over him. He is led to think upon his ways, and turns his feet unto God's testimonies. Every law which he once had broken, he now tries to keep. He is generous, conscientious, benevolent, and temperate in all things. He

walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. Now in what way is this change (and there are many such) to be accounted for, on phrenological principles? Did it originate with a corresponding change in the shape of the head? Or has it been followed by any such change? Had this man's head been examined just before conversion, all the *baser* organs must have been found, if phrenology is true, largely developed, while *reverence, conscientiousness, benevolence*, etc. could hardly have been found at all. Had the same head been examined shortly after conversion, it must have been found in a very altered condition. The organs which before had almost disappeared, now stand out with amazing prominence; while the baser organs, so large before, have shrunk away almost to nothing.

The question now is: Has any such change in the head occurred? Who has observed it? Who believes it? Yet it *must* have occurred, if phrenology is true, and if the phrenologist is able to decide accurately upon the character, by feeling the outside of the head.

We know it will be said that the change need not have taken place in the size of the organs, but only in their activity. Those which were active before conversion are dormant now; while those which before were dormant, are now roused into great activity. But how is this changed activity discoverable outside the skull? How does the feeler of heads know anything about it, except that, having learned the altered character of his subject, he infers, of course, that it must be so?

In this work of moral renovation, the Scriptures ascribe a mighty efficacy to the Spirit's influences. "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." But phrenology neither makes any account of these influences, nor leaves any room for them. Its language is: 'Take care of your organs. Cultivate your good propensities, and repress your bad ones. Stir up the good that is naturally in you, and you will be good enough. You need no other renovation than this.'

The Bible professes to reveal God's *truth*, and binds all those who read it to receive the truth and obey it. It makes the rejection of plainly revealed truth not only an error, but a sin. Heresy is always represented in the Scriptures as sinful; in some instances fatally so. But all this is widely different from

the teachings of phrenology. "The diversities of doctrine in religion," says Mr. Combe, "owe their origin to ignorance of the primitive faculties and their relations. The faculties differ in strength in different individuals, and each person is most alive to objects and views connected with the powers predominant in himself. Hence, in reading the Scriptures, one person is convinced that they establish Calvinism; another, possessing a different combination of faculties, discovers in them Lutheranism; while a third is satisfied that Socinianism is the only true interpretation."

In reply to all this, we have only to ask: Is there not such a thing as revealed *truth*? Is not this truth *one* and *immutable*? Are not those who read the Bible bound to receive it, and obey it? And does not this imply that they are capable of learning what it is?

In the Scriptures, the preaching of the *Gospel* is represented as the grand *means* of enlightening and recovering lost men. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the *Gospel* to every creature." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But Mr. Combe does not think much of preaching the Gospel. He would prefer to have men instructed about their organs and faculties, and the laws of their physical and moral being. "Divines should introduce the *natural laws* into their discourses, and teach people the works and institutions of the Creator." They should not "represent Christianity as a system of spiritual influences, of internal operations on the soul, and of repentant preparation for another life," but rather as an "exposition of pure and lofty principles, addressed to responding faculties in human nature itself, and therefore capable of being applied in this world." But how much good does Mr. Combe think such preaching would do, in a world like this? How much has it done? Who ever heard of a revival of religion, or of individual conversions, under a phrenological lecture? Nations have often been civilized and Christianized—some in our own times—under the influence of the Gospel. Has such a thing ever occurred under the influence of phrenology? Men may preach about organs, and faculties, and physical laws, and constitutional propensities, as long as they please, and those who listen to them will wax worse and worse. It is the Gospel, and that alone, which, under God, subdues the heart, reforms the life, and prepares the recov-

ered soul for usefulness and heaven ; and all this has been proved, by actual experiment, a thousand times over.

We are taught in the Scriptures that the Gospel is adapted to the wants of *all men*, publicans, magdalens, harlots, the poor, the degraded, the vicious, drawn from the highways and hedges of the world ; none are too low to be reached by those influences which are provided and proffered in the Gospel of Christ. But this precious, glorious feature of the Gospel, like many others, is contradicted by phrenology. This teaches that men, with a certain class of heads, are impracticable, incurable. They are beyond the reach of moral means, and the power of Gospel truth. Take, for example, such a head as that of Pope Alexander VI., which Mr. Combe says "is no more *adequate* to the manifestation of Christian virtues than is the brain of an idiot" for high intellectual pursuits ; or such a head as that given in Fowler's Journal, which the writer tells us "will be sensual in love, ferocious in disposition, a glutton in appetite ; a natural vagabond, open to all the excitements to low and vulgar criminality ; a being who, for the sake of society, should be guarded by law, as we would a lunatic." The difficulty with such characters, it must be borne in mind, is not primarily in their depraved dispositions. If this were all, the influences of the Gospel might recover and save them. But the root of the difficulty, on phrenological principles, lies further back. It is in the shape of their heads ; the conformation of their brains ; and how is the Gospel to reach and transform these ? What adaptedness is there in moral means of any kind to the accomplishment of such an end ? Obviously, none at all. The work is impossible, except to the direct interposition of miraculous power ; and the representation of Scripture, that the Gospel is suited to the necessities of all men, however low, degraded and vicious, is flatly contradicted.

The Bible has much to say on the *efficacy* of prayer. It assures us, that, when God's people cry to him for mercy, he hears and answers them. Abraham interceded for Lot, and Lot was delivered. Elijah prayed for rain, and the rain came. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." But Mr. Combe has no confidence in the power of prayer to affect the issue of events. It may do good to the suppliant. It may have a favorable influence upon his mind and heart. But that it has any power and influence with God, is

wholly incredible. Now we admit that prayer *does* have a favorable influence upon the mind and heart of the suppliant. No doubt of it. But is this the *great* benefit of prayer? Is this the main object and end of it, as set forth in the Scriptures? Who believes that the main object of Elijah, in praying for rain, was not to secure the blessing of rain, but to promote his own piety and spiritual improvement? Besides; how long would prayer be offered, and its good influences upon the suppliant be realized, if no other object were aimed at? How long should we continue to pray, if we believed that to petition God was but a form — fallacious, but yet wholesome — of preaching to ourselves, and promoting our own growth in grace?

We mention but another instance in which the teachings of phrenology seem to us to conflict with the Bible. The Scriptures assert that the soul of man is to exist, to be intelligent, conscious and active, while the body is in the grave. Paul expected, while "absent from the body, to be present with the Lord." He tells us that, in the heavenly Jerusalem, dwell "the spirits of just men made perfect." In the visions of Patmos, John saw them there. He beheld their glory, and listened to their songs. But if the whole man is matter, as some phrenologists pretend, then there is no soul to exist while separate from the body. We are all body, and the whole man sleeps together in the dust. Or, if we adopt the opinion of the better class of phrenologists, that, though there is a mind distinct from the body, yet that the brain is the indispensable *organ* of the mind, without which it cannot think, or feel, or do anything; then, when the brain is dead, must not the mind be dead with it? At least, must not all mental activity cease, and the soul pass into a state of entire unconsciousness?

We see not how such an inference is to be avoided, unless we say, with some, that, when the soul leaves this gross body, it enters at once into a spiritual body, rises in it at death, and that this is all the resurrection which is to be expected. But this again is to contradict the Bible, and that in two respects. First, the Bible teaches, that the *same body* which is laid in the dust is to be raised in the resurrection. The same *it* which "is sown in corruption, is to be raised in incorruption;" which "is sown in weakness, is to be raised in power;" which "is sown a natural body, is to be raised a spiritual body." The Bible also teaches, that this resurrection is to be accomplished, not in the

moment of death, but in the morning of the last day. "This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again *at the last day.*"

We here take our leave of the subject of phrenology; having looked at it in various lights, and treated it as largely as time and opportunity will permit. We have shown, first of all, that its fundamental principles are not to be relied upon. They are not supported by appropriate evidence; they are without foundation. We have traced the subject, also, in its social and practical, its moral and religious bearings, and have shown that it is of hurtful tendency in them all. It can never be reconciled with the Bible, or with the best interests of society, more than it can with physiology and the facts of science.

In view of all that has been said, we wonder not that phrenology is a favorite subject with innovators, sceptics, radicals and infidels. We wonder not that such men extol it, lecture upon it, make and read its books, and do all in their power to propagate it through the land. This is acting in character. It is just what might be expected of them. But we do wonder that intelligent Christians, members of our churches, who love and honor the Bible, and try to obey it, should be found in such company. We do wonder that such persons should countenance and uphold a system, which conflicts with the Gospel at almost every point, and which, could it have full scope in the earth, would shut the Gospel out of it, and keep it out forever.