

**A FEW FALLACIES OF THE
FAITH, BRIEFLY AND
RESPECTFULLY INDICATED
IN FIVE SUGGESTIVE LETTERS**

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A Few Fallacies of the Faith, Briefly and Respectfully Indicated in Five Suggestive Letters by S. C. Freeman

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S. C. FREEMAN

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IN FIVE SUGGESTIVE LETTERS**

H. H. C. Cunningham.

A FEW

FALLACIES OF THE FAITH,

BRIEFLY AND RESPECTFULLY ENDOAVORED IN

FIVE SUGGESTIVE LETTERS.

WITH A POSTSCRIPT.

BY S. C. FREEMAN.

"Even some Unitarians may condemn those of their body who, differing from them in some respects, have not as yet got, but may hereafter get, some other name."—*Dr. Priestley on Free Inquiry.*

"The spirit of the *Brevitas* lives in Christendom."—*Archbishop Whately.*

C,
LONDON:

CHARLES FOX, 67, PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1855:

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- LETTER IV.—Social Worship; its holiness and hollowness; with comments on "Bible-only Christians," &c.
- LETTER V.—What is the meaning of "The New Testament," and "The Will of God," regarded as Book-names?
- POSTSCRIPT.—On the Rite of Baptism.

TO
MY WIFE,
MY SISTER, MY SISTER-IN-LAW,
AND SEVERAL OTHER SYMPATHISING FRIENDS,
- THESE
FIVE LETTERS ON MORALS, RELIGION, ETC.
(WRITTEN DURING 1881-2-3-4-5,
WITH MANY OTHERS)
ARE
CORDIALLY INSCRIBED.

READER,—Should you care to ask—What is the sense or use of a man's letters to his friends, upon his faith and feelings in religion being thus printed and published?—answer to yourself, that he gives you thereby a chance of setting him right where he is wrong, and may, perchance, help you at the same time to rid yourself of unknown error. And, if you love *truth*, and such FAITH as is based on truth, this will be no worthless opportunity of service for both reader and writer. The contents have done such good in private. Why not in public? And, if the writer do thee wrong, forgive him this wrong, as you and he hope to be forgiven.

8, *Grove-terrace, Kentish Town.*

MIDSUMMER, 1855.

November 21st, 1855.

N.B.—A delay in going to press, caused by professional advice and absence at the sea-side, and in Paris, has enabled me to welcome the second volume of the "Spirit of the Bible," by my highly respected fellow-student, Higginson. To that critical product of a singularly honest mind, I would fain call the careful attention of my religious friends; whom I simply warn that, agreeing as I do with much of the complete work, I take strong exception to some points of his argument. I demur considerably to the hypothesis that he has given us THE SPIRIT of the Bible. He seems to me rather to have dissected *the body* of the Bible, upon modern principles.

S. C. F.

FALLACIES OF THE FAITH.

LETTER I.

November, 1851.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

What I shall put upon paper will sufficiently express my actual state of mind, and may arouse yours likewise, upon subjects which have been, for longer or shorter periods, the trials of our hearts' most holy affections, and which, in all probability, will continue so while life and sense are ours.

I do not pretend to give, in so small a compass, anything like a disquisition or an exposition of the several topics mooted. Regard the contents rather as akin to those pages of "Promiscuous Questions" in well-known books of arithmetic, whereof two or three may be worked out into nearly full development as examples, a few presented in skeleton form, and the major part remain for your own wits to exercise themselves withal, as freely and fully as they may.

At the same time, those of you who know me best will not need to be assured that, upon all or any of the questions or suggestions introduced in this desultory style, I have thought both gladly and sadly, and am

ready and happy to enlarge, as far as my perceptions reach, in public discourse or private conference. I would courteously but absolutely remind you of one condition which I make in case of personal conference in such matters, viz., that you or others agree to meet me as fellow-seekers of truth and progress, in singleness of heart and hope, and not as sticklers for any *ism* or *dogma* or "foregone conclusion." You will assure me that you are willing, with myself, to rid yourselves of wrong, and rest again and again in right, whenever you feel or ferret out the one—wherever you frame or find the other. Safe in this assurance, I offer no fulsome apology—no deprecation of censure—for whatever may by literary formalists be termed "*crude*" or nakedly suggestive; inasmuch as I do not proffer here anything more than, as it were, a sample of the raw materials out of which much of "meat, clothes, and fire," for the mind and heart, may haply be produced. If you and I, through a friendly and fearless comparison of ideas on such subjects as are here sketched, can but forward each other's love and quest of truth in matters of doubt or of doctrine, my self-convicted committal to press will not have tried you and me in vain. If we shall have purely convinced ourselves that our *will* to do good service for truth and mankind is far from being equalled by our *deed*—that we are incompetent or unsuccessful in our aims at posts of active honour—let us take comfort enough in thinking, "those also serve who only stand and wait."

It has become almost a void as well as a vulgar truism, to say that our times are broadly characterised by a SCEPTICAL SPIRIT—a sort of intellectual *grin* of doubt on

matters of the gravest moment. In effect, the spirit of doubt develops itself in so curious a form of mingled credulity and incredulity, that one scarcely knows sometimes whether to stand aghast in serious horror of soul, or to be "all agog" with diversion.

It is as though Janus had become twin-made of Democritus and Heraclitus pericranially compounded, and Diogenes had lent the creature his tongue and his tub, or were agreed to become this novel Janus's own genius. My friends, this, or something very like this, appears to me to be the spirit of mid-century nineteenth, especially as it regards education, religion, and "the Life that now is;" and not altogether irrespectively, alas! of the obnoxious verities of "that which is to come." Fast, very fast, I apprehend, "the spiritual" of human SOUL is giving place to "the secular" of human SOCIETY; and that, too, in circles which still claim specially to be religious, exemplary in doctrine, bent on making their "calling and election sure," as churches, as christians, as children of God! Observation and experience compel me to believe that the class just signified is very large and swelling, and accumulates its adherents from all sects and parties, without exception. Its person and pretensions and family connections will be best comprehended by naming it L. S. D. Legion and Co.; and its many members find their prototypes in the constituent parts and particles of the human body, from the hair on the head down to the little toe of the full-grown assemblage. This fact, in the form and pressure of the time, is so patent, that one born blind could well-nigh see it; for it might almost couch his vision.