

**THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST:
OR, CHRISTIANITY VIEWED
IN ITS LEADING ASPECTS**

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The School of Christ: Or, Christianity Viewed in Its Leading Aspects by A. L. R. Foote

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A. L. R. FOOTE

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BY THE
REV. A. L. R. FOOTE,
AUTHOR OF "INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR," ETC.

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Preface.

EVERY one who keeps pace with the religious literature of his age must be struck with the number of books which bear on their title-page the word "Christianity."

It is an extremely general term* this, and the first feeling of the mind is one of disappointment, if not of positive dissatisfaction with what is so indefinite. And yet, after all, it is a fine, old, time-hallowed word, this *Christianity*. It can plead high antiquity, if not divine authority in its favor. The disciples were first called *Christians* at Antioch. Nor would it be easy to find a single word, a general

term—and we must have general terms—that better answers the purpose, embodying, as it does, that One Name in which it all originates, exhibiting that Divine Person who is the central object of it. When rightly understood, it brings us back to Christ himself, and to the glass of the gospel in which his blessed image may be discerned; and thus, losing all its abstractedness and indefiniteness, it becomes a term of vast meaning and compass, at once broad and distinct, at once catholic and scriptural. There is nothing narrow or sectarian about it, and it reminds us therefore—and do we not need to be reminded?—that there is a substantial unity of faith as to the great facts and truths of the gospel among all who have been brought to bow in reverence to the inspired volume—a unity which they are more likely to become sensible of, in proportion as

they find attacks made upon the very *substance* of their religion.

There is a growing feeling upon this point. And is it not this that has led to the fact to which we have adverted at the outset? It is now no longer a question about various forms of Christian truth. But it has come to this,—*Have we a Christianity at all?* Is there anything in the gospel of a distinct, substantive, specific character? It is not so much its form that is assailed as its substance. We are thus driven to the defence of the citadel rather than of the outworks. Christianity is being tried upon its merits. And need we be afraid of this? Should we not rather come boldly forward, and try, at least, as we best can, to show what Christianity really is—to exhibit its *inner truth*, its native grandeur, its perfect adaptation to man.

If the reader keep these things in view, it will help him the better to understand the direction of much of the most interesting religious literature of the day. It will explain the aim and end of the following chapters. They are not wholly, indeed, but in a great measure, *for the times*. They are not the result of any very definite and preconceived plan, but arose one after the other from associations in the writer's own mind, which the reader might not understand, or if he understood, might not feel much interest in. They would not have been published at all, so imperfect are they as exhibitions of Christianity in its more deep and spiritual aspects, if others had not thought them not unsuited for a certain class of readers.

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