

**THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN
DISCOVERED; OR, THE
FALSE PROFESSOR TRIED
AND CAST, PP. 21-237**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649044238

The Almost Christian Discovered; Or, The False Professor Tried and Cast, pp. 21-237 by
Matthew Mead & William R. Williams

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MATTHEW MEAD & WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS

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THE
ALMOST CHRISTIAN
DISCOVERED;

OR, THE
FALSE PROFESSOR TRIED AND CAST.

BY THE
REV. MATTHEW MEAD.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY WILLIAM E. WILLIAMS,
PASTOR OF THE ANITY STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, N. Y.

NEW YORK:
SHELDON, BLAKEMAN & CO.,
115 NASSAU STREET.

1853.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850,
BY LEWIS COLBY,
In the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New York.

THOMAS B. SMITH, STEREOTYPED,
215 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

It can scarce be needed, for most of the readers into whose hands this volume may come, to commend a writer so well known as the Nonconformist worthy, Matthew Mead, or to bespeak respectful and devout perusal for a book, so long and widely circulated, and so greatly useful, as has been his treatise, "THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN."

He was of the times of Owen, Bunyan, and Baxter. How high a place the man and his writings occupied, in the esteem of the eminent author of the "CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED," and of the "SAINTS' REST," a single reference may sufficiently prove. In the great work of Richard Baxter, on the morals and casuistry of the gospel, his "CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY," he furnishes lists of volumes suitable to form the library of a Christian. Classifying his catalogues according to the probable extent of the means, that

various classes of his readers would possess for the purchase of books, he begins with those purchasers of most limited resources. "I will name you, first," (says Baxter) "the poorest or smallest library that is tolerable." Enumerating as its basis, a Bible, Concordance, and Catechisms, he proceeds to name some scores of writers on practical religion. In some cases he commends but a single treatise of an author, and in others, his entire writings; this latter and higher honor, he accords to his contemporary and fellow-confessor, Matthew Mead. Among the "affectionate practical English writers," as he describes them, and of which he advises the poor man to secure "as many of them as you can get,"* he places "*Mr. Mead's works*." To those remembering the practised sagacity, the long and varied experience, the discursive reading, and the profound piety of the Kidderminster pastor, nothing need be said as to the value of his commendation, in favor of the character, or the compositions, to which it may be given.

But Mead had other and not less eminent friends, among the great and good men of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. By the ap-

* Baxter's Practical Works, Orme's Ed. vol. v. pp. 585, 586.

pointment of Oliver Cromwell himself, he held the New Chapel at Shadwell, in Middlesex. On the fatal St. Bartholomew's day, he was ejected thence, among those illustrious nonconformist confessors, whose praises even the poet Wordsworth, attached as he is to the English Established Church, could not forbear to sing. In one of his ministerial charges, he had been associated with Greenhill, the author of a commentary on Ezekiel, of high repute. After some liberty granted to the Dissenters, he was a preacher at Stepney, where a large congregation gathered around him; and where, in 1674, a spacious house of worship was erected for their use. Accused, with the excellent Dr. Owen and others, of some participation in that Rye House Plot, for which Lord William Russel suffered death, Mead retired for a time to Holland, though conscious of entire innocence; but returned to Britain, and continued his labors until his death, October 16, 1699, at the age of seventy. His funeral sermon was delivered by the great John Howe, with whom his friendship stretched over more than half a life-time, having, as Howe declared, continued through some forty-three years. When asked, in his last sickness, how he was, his reply had the quaint, but earnest simplicity of