

**THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN
DISCOVERED; OR, THE
FALSE PROFESSOR TRIED
AND CAST**

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The almost christian discovered; or, the false professor tried and cast by Matthew Mead & David Young

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MATTHEW MEAD & DAVID YOUNG

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MOSES BLESSING

Engraved by J. G. Kneller

Then Aaron said unto Moses,
Must thou render us to be a burden?

—EXODUS 17.

—EXODUS 17. VERSES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

THE
ALMOST CHRISTIAN
DISCOVERED;
OR, THE
FALSE PROFESSOR TRIED AND CAST.

BY THE
REV. MATTHEW MEAD.

WITH
AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY THE
REV. DAVID YOUNG,
PERTH.

GLASGOW:

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1825.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

It is a very possible thing for a man to talk about Christian experience, till he has talked himself out of every thing like sober thought, or temperate feeling. Forgetting the weightier bearings of his subject, the severe discipline which it inculcates, and the progressive refinement of the moral principle to which it tends, he may work himself into the delusion that the whole of it is comprised in present sensible enjoyment. In this state of mind, he may find no difficulty in hiding himself under the still grosser delusion, that the revelation of mercy through Jesus Christ, has simply for its object the production of happiness, without any particular concern about the moral condition of its subjects. He may bring himself to applaud Christianity, not because it yields an adequate atonement to the offended Majesty of Heaven, and "crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts," but because it furnishes him, or is supposed to furnish him, with the means of immediate gratification. On this topic he may expatiate incessantly, to the neglect of every thing higher or collateral, till it is found

that he has nothing to think about, or talk about, or supplicate, or extol in the whole range of Christian exercise, or Christian ordinance, but his successes or reverses in the pursuit of pleasurable emotion. This line of conduct may be marked withal by a penury of thought, an incoherence of mind, a sickening sameness of sound and sentiment, and an imposing whine of ostentatious piety, which make it quite apparent that what he means by pleasurable emotion is not the fruit of that genuine enrichment of intellect, and healthful exhilarations of heart, which comes forth as a consequence from subjection to the gospel, but the shallow illusion of a distempered imagination. All this may prevail and multiply, showing itself in the most disgusting deformity, and meriting the keenest sarcasm with which ungodliness has ever assailed it; but it is no proof whatever, that Christian experience is, in itself, a thing to be despised.

There may be *caut* associated with any thing which interests the heart of man, from the play-thing of his childhood to the gravest pursuit of his ripened years: and to discard the culture, or the development, or the guardianship of those specific impressions which Christianity engraves on the hearts of its subjects, because they have been leagued with absurdity, or hackneyed in the jargon of fools, would be to adopt a principle which goes to the subversion of all confidence in human affairs—a pretext which would never be thought of but for a deep and deadly dislike to the spirit of Christianity itself. Instead of being an argument for discouraging such

impressions, or slighting the means of promoting them, that they are often rendered ridiculous, or carried out into extravagance, it argues the very reverse; for affectation, in all cases, supposes excellence in that on which it fixes; and were there not an intrinsic worth in the experiences of the Christian—were there not an abiding reality in that new order of things, which it establishes within him, the forms of distortion into which they are thrown, or the offensive mimeries which flutter around them, would speedily disappear. It is the existence of the genuine which gives currency to the spurious in any department; and, so far from allowing the latter to generate dislike at the former in the department of Christianity, it is the duty of every man who is the friend of practical piety, to increase his solicitude about it on this very account.

Thus much is required of him, in common justice to the subject itself; and, on this ground alone, he ought to feel himself interdicted from either joining the fellowship, or giving in to the sophistries of those who hold it in derision. Every thing else which is capable of touching the heart of man, is found to yield its experiences. To say nothing of the sciences or arts, or the fascinations of taste, or the varied kinds of innocent recreation, there is not an instance of forbidden indulgence, from the most excusable to the most debasing, but has its chambers of imagery within its votary, and invariably renders him familiar with its own specific sensations; and, surely, it were strange if Chris-

tianity, which is fraught with an efficacy so thoroughly influential, were an exception to the general rule. But we have more to do here than to speak of what is due to the claims of the subject. This is a matter of personal interest to every man who prefers alliance with the Christian brotherhood, or hopes to share in their heritage, either present or to come. The possession of Christian principle, deep in its influence, and defined in its operation, is essential to the production, or the keeping alive of a warranted hope of immortality. The man who possesses such an experience, and preserves it in vigour, is refreshed with a well-spring of perennial joy, while the man who possesses it not, must either be the dupe of delusion, or the victim of constant alarm. To be in the former state of mind is to be shielded against all the calamities of the present precarious existence, and prepared to meet them with unshaken fortitude; but, to be in the latter, is to be exposed to all the miseries, and enveloped in all the gloom of infatuation or suspense. But to sustain the ascendancy of Christian principle, to cherish its influence, and give way to its control, however desirable a thing in itself, or however well entitled to eager and continued exertion, is found to be very difficult by all who make the attempt. Christianity in hearts like ours, is not a plant of native growth. In its grand essential principles it is an exotic, transferred from a region of kindness to one that is bleak and sterile, where the soil in which it is inserted, and the moral atmosphere which hovers over it, are alike at variance with its