

**DECAPOLIS: OR, THE  
INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION OF  
CHRISTIANS TO SAVE SOULS  
FROM DEATH, AN ESSAY**

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Decapolis: Or, the Individual Obligation of Christians to Save Souls from Death, an Essay by  
David Everard Ford

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**DAVID EVERARD FORD**

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# DECAPOLIS:

OR,

THE INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIANS  
TO SAVE SOULS FROM DEATH.

AN ESSAY,

BY

DAVID EVERARD FORD.

*"Jesus saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel."*—*Mark v. 19, 20.*

*Fifth Thousand.*

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## PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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WHATEVER reception may await this book at the hands of the religious public, it is my consolation to know that the views which it advocates have been owned of God to the salvation of many souls.

This is my only apology for a style which may seem in some instances to savour of dogmatism. I have no wish to cast one unkind reflection on brethren who differ from me; to our Master we stand or fall: but I must express myself strongly, for I speak that which I know, and testify that which I have seen.

I have written for Christians. Should my remarks awaken attention, they will fall into the hands of many who have no right to that holy name. A previous question demands their notice, a question to which every other ought to be postponed, and from which I

would be among the last to divert them for one moment,—the question of the Philippian gaoler to Paul and Silas,—“What must I do to be saved?”

And who are Christians? The disciples of Christ; men who have given their hearts to God, and, on the ground of the great sacrifice for sin, have consecrated their bodies, souls, and spirits to the service and glory of their Creator and Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

To such, the following observations are addressed. Brethren! suffer the word of exhortation. Soon we must give an account of our stewardship, and, in the presence of Him who redeemed us unto God by his blood, narrate the efforts we have made to secure and extend the blessings of that atonement in the world where he laboured, and for which he died. The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day!

D. E. F.

*Lynington, May 29, 1840.*



## PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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Among the happiest recollections of my life, I shall henceforth regard the authorship of the following Essay. I am free to acknowledge that when I first committed it to the press, it was with fear and trembling. My misgivings arose not from any doubt as to the correctness and scriptural sanction of the views which I attempted to advocate; but from apprehensions as to the unpreparedness of the faithful themselves to admit representations of personal responsibility, so repugnant to the comfortable notions and sacred prejudices of men, whose highest wish is to be "at ease in Zion."

I then expected censure, and was prepared to meet it; but now I gratefully record the disappointment of my fears. From all quarters, I have received the most cheering assurances that the blessing of Heaven has already

attended this feeble endeavour to awaken the energies of the Christian world. Of this fact, almost every post brings me some pleasing intelligence; and among my correspondents on that subject, I can reckon some of the most distinguished servants of God, at present found in this earthly region of his universal church.

To the editors of the various religious periodicals which have noticed "Decapolis;" and not less to the numerous friends, known and unknown, who have publicly recommended it from the pulpit or the platform, I present my cordial thanks. But above all, to Him "whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son," my grateful acknowledgments are due, that he should have rendered my little book in any degree subservient to the promotion of his glory. To His gracious benediction I now commend this new and enlarged edition, with fervent prayer that every copy may awaken some disciple of Christ to renewed and successful exertion for the salvation of souls.

D. E. F.

*Lymington, October 19, 1840.*

## DECAPOLIS.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE apostles have now rested from their labours nearly eighteen centuries. Were they to return to earth again, would they find the world, would they find even the church, in that condition in which they expected it to be eighteen hundred years after their decease ?

We have no right to evade this question, or to answer it in the affirmative, on the ground of their inspiration : First, because we are not quite sure that it was given them "to know the times" or "the seasons," Acts i. 7 ; and, next, because knowledge derived from such a source, having no connexion whatever with human calculation and forethought, would not bear on the present inquiry. The question before us can only be entertained while we