

**ALARM IN ZION; OR, A  
FEW THOUGHTS  
ON THE PRESENT  
STATE OF RELIGION**

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Alarm in Zion; Or, a Few Thoughts on the Present State of Religion by David Everard Ford

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# ALARM IN ZION;

OR,

A FEW THOUGHTS

ON

THE PRESENT STATE OF RELIGION.

BY

DAVID EVERARD FORD,

AUTHOR OF

"DECAPOLIS," "CHORAZIN," "DAMASCUS,"  
AND "LAODICEA."

"Watchman! what of the night? Watchman! what of the night? The  
watchman said—The morning cometh, and also the night."—Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

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1848.



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## PREFACE.

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THE following treatise relates to a subject of such vital importance, that I may be pardoned if I bespeak for it, and that right earnestly, a serious and candid perusal.

The question has long been one of private remark, and of ministerial conference; but, beyond an occasional reference in our religious magazines, I am not aware that it has ever been made a matter of distinct, and separate notice. If it had, it is not very likely that I should have given these "Few Thoughts" their present form. But, seeing that the ground was clear, and that some attempt of the kind was needed, (something, moreover, in the shape of a *little book*, which might be read without fatigue, and be carried about without inconvenience,) and

encouraged too, by the recollection, that some attempts of mine, in former days and on kindred topics, had received a measure of attention far beyond my expectations, I resolved to undertake this service. With what success, the public must decide.

My views, it will be perceived, are gloomy. All I can say about them is, that I have not taken them up hastily, or without opportunities of extensive observation ; and that I have not thus given them publicity, without much deliberation and prayer.

If, in these my apprehensions, I am right, most thankful shall I be, if any suggestion of mine, should in the slightest degree conduce to the production of a better state of things. And, if I am wrong, most willingly and most gladly will I confess my error.

D. E. F.

*Manchester, December 27, 1847.*



## ALARM IN ZION.

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### CHAPTER I.

“WATCHMAN! what of the night? Watchman! what of the night?” This was the burden of Dumah. This was the voice from Seir, Isaiah xxi. 11. And the response was both prophetic and admonitory.

If, some few years ago, the church had asked that question, the former portion of the answer would have seemed to suffice;—“The morning cometh.” But, were the inquiry repeated now, the sentence must be taken as it stands;—“The morning cometh, and also the night,” v. 12.

And is it really thus? In the middle of the nineteenth century, after all our compliments to “this enlightened age,” and all our boastings as to “the march of intellect,” are we going back again to the ignorance and superstition of

barbarous times? Or, must we conclude, as an alternative still more disastrous, that the age has grown too enlightened to need light from Heaven, and that intellect has marched too fast to notice such little things as those which relate to God and eternity?

Whatever may be the facts of the case, an impression is abroad, and is gaining ground among us, that the former days were better than these; that, instead of overtaking the increase of population, the proportion of the faithful, to the masses of society, is becoming less and less; and that this fearful state of things extends to every section of the catholic church. Indeed, if the representations of some are deserving of credit, no longer is the question, as to "the times and seasons"—When shall all men know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest; but—When shall the last survivor of the Christian faith, remain a witness, (as was once the beloved disciple, of an age of miracles, gone by for ever,) a solitary witness, to a new generation, that man was once a religious creature, and actually cherished the hope of immortality!

It may be, that in such forebodings, there is somewhat of malice, and not a little of exag-

generation. It may be, that the fears of the faithful have magnified their discouragements, and that the boastings of the faithless have accorded rather with their desires than with their convictions. But still, the *possibility* of such an impression, on either hand, is a matter which should awaken the deepest concern, of the entire church, through all its departments. For, if things were as we could wish them to be, and as it was imagined, only a little while ago, that they would speedily become, our profiting would appear unto all. It would then be abundantly seen, that our national progress relates not so much to the arts and sciences, or to commerce and legislation, as to the higher departments of truth and righteousness, Prov. xiv. 34.

If, for instance, the elders among us could testify, that, in their early days, irreligion was the rule and piety the exception, and our own observation could satisfy us that it is now, just the reverse. If they could tell, how then the ways of Zion did mourn because none came to the solemn feasts, and we could behold the mountain of the Lord's house established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations flowing unto it; if they