

dicted, that the glory of it should exceed the glory of the former. Then were the children of Zion like those that dreamed. Their mouth was filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing. It was said among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them, and verily, they were glad because it was so, and because though they had sown in tears, they had now a reaping time of joy.

Need I say, brethren, that it is our duty and privilege to follow the prophet's example in the fervency of our prayers, and to cherish the prophet's confidence founded on the experience of God's former dealings with his people.

We may have cause to mourn over the low and apparently deserted condition of the church. But, if from looking back upon the past, the prophet gathered hope for the future, how much more may we? For we have many a glorious season of deliverance and revival to remember in the ages which have elapsed, since the prophet was gathered to his fathers—seasons in which the church was brought as low, as in Egypt or in Babylon, but in which, also, the arm of the Lord did as signally awake and put on strength, as when leading Israel from the house of bondage into the land of promise, or the children of the captivity from the streams of Babel to the hill of Zion.

Can we not look back, for instance, to the time of the advent of the Messiah? How melancholy and hopeless seemed then the state of the Church and people of God. The Jewish nation was groaning under a foreign yoke. The spirit of piety and faith seemed almost wholly to have forsaken the land. The true meaning of the sacred writings was perverted by the traditions and the glosses of men. The spiritual import of the splendid ritual of the temple worship was forgotten. Some were the victims of an austere and melancholy fanaticism; many were open unbelievers; and almost all were satisfied with the outward form of godliness alone. But there were a few even in that season of darkness and decay, who waited with devout expectation for the fulfilment of the prophecies, and longed and prayed for the coming of Him who was to prove the consolation of Israel. And was their expectation disappointed; their prayer unanswered? Oh no. The arm of the Lord awoke. The Desire of all nations came to his temple. After the long interval of four hundred years, a new season of miracles and prophecy commenced. Angels celebrated with songs of praise the birth of a Saviour. A star guided the sages of the East to worship at his feet. A voice from heaven declared him the beloved Son of the Father. The winds and waves were hushed to rest at his bidding. The devils trembled at his word. The counsels of the Father's love were revealed. Life and immortality were brought to light. The promises, which for four thousand years had gladdened the hearts of the people of God, were fulfilled; and a new day of prosperity and glory dawned upon the Church.

Can we not also look back to the morning of the resurrection, as another season when the mighty power of God was specially put forth in a time of doubt, and alarm, and misgiving to the scattered and dispirited members of the Church? It seemed to the enemies of Christ that a final triumph over him had at length been gained, and that all his lofty pretensions were for ever laid to rest. It seemed as if the powers of hell were at length triumphant; as if the purposes of God's love were to be frustrated, and the race of man left to perish without a remedy. Even the confiding followers of Jesus could not understand how the Redeemer of Israel should perish on a cross, and were ready to bury every hope they had formed in that lonely sepulchre, where the body of the Lord was laid. But in the hour of darkness and dismay, the arm of the Lord awoke. Angels were sent to watch at the Saviour's tomb. An earthquake rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and the Redeemer came forth travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save. Then was the redemption of man completed. Then the seal of the divine approbation was affixed to the sacrifice of the cross. Then was a way opened up for sinners, even the holiest of all. Death was robbed of its sting, and the grave of its victory. And he who amidst sighs and tears, and blood and death had avouched himself the friend and brother of our race, sat down on the throne of the universe—Head over all things to the Church.

Can we not also look back to the early triumphs of christianity over Jewish bigotry and Heathen superstition, as another instance, when 'the arm of the Lord did signally awake, and put on strength for the support and the advancement of the Church?' Feeble, indeed, seemed the means provided by the wisdom of God, for carrying the gospel into a dark and unbelieving world. But the spirit of the Lord accompanied them, and gave them a mighty and resistless efficacy. Before the unlettered fishermen of Galilee, the wisdom of the wise was confounded. The sword of ruthless and bloody persecution failed of its purpose. The altars of Pagan superstition crumbled into dust. Soon their lessons reached even to the throne of the Cæsars. The symbol of the faith shone resplendent on the banners of the Roman empire, and every where the cross of Christ, which had been to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, was acknowledged to be the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Can we not look back also to the glorious era of the reformation from Popish superstition and idolatry, to a time when almost the whole visible Christian Church was involved in thickest darkness, when anti-christ reigned, when the man of sin was revealed sitting in the temple of God, and exalting himself above all that is called God, and the few genuine followers of Jesus were persecuted to the death, even in their last retreats, among the rocks and the secluded valleys