

Pharaoh's underlings were goading to death were his own flesh and blood, his heart bled within him, the liquid fire of a patriot's enthusiasm ran through the veins of his great soul, and he determined to strike a blow for their freedom. As it turned out the blow he struck was premature. The smiting of the overseer did not awaken the response among his countrymen he expected. Four centuries of exile, mostly of oppression, had tamed their fierce spirit, and made them ignobly submissive. But in any case, it would have been strange had Moses not been a patriot.

Yet the writer to the Hebrews ascribes the decisive act of Moses mainly to religion, or to the opening of his soul's eye to the vision of the Unseen: "By faith Moses, when he came of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." He cast in his lot with the suffering Hebrews, not so much because these were his kinsmen, as because they were the people of God, and had among them the hope of Israel, which the writer identifies with the hope of Christ, though it must not be supposed either Moses or his countrymen knew Christ by that name. Then he esteemed the reproach of Christ, *i.e.*, whatever sufferings or obloquy he might encounter on account of such a hope, to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. And finally, "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward," *i.e.*, he had an eye to the inheritance above, in comparison with which the sweetest of earth's satisfactions were as nought. These were the three strands of the cord that drew him to the side of the down-trodden Hebrews. And these three principles of action had their roots in faith; that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," which enables one to discern realities both on earth and in heaven which are hid from sense and reason, and which supplies a solid ground for hopes and expectations which to the ordinary mind appear baseless and visionary. Whether Ewald¹ is correct or not in thinking that the emancipation of the Hebrews was the result of two simultaneous semi-patriotic and semi-religious movements, which, breaking forth in Asia and in Egypt, coalesced when Moses, returning from Egypt, was met by Aaron at Mount

¹ *History of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 36.