

The history of heresy is a history of interesting and singular details. Taking a glance of incidents and events, things national and ecclesiastical, from the days of Moses, the first and most famous leader of the Lord's chosen, with a special regard to heresy and heretics, let us turn over a page or two of this history, and mark a few places and take notes.

The reader may be startled when we mark down Moses himself as a heretic, and receiving the hint as a new idea, may be induced to believe that heresy in the mouth of some is an appellation not so dishonorable as formerly understood. Whether or not, however, we again affirm that Moses may be fairly accused of heresy: for he was compelled to escape for his life from the court of Pharaoh, after he had the fortitude and the zeal to maintain the rights of his brethren in the land of their enemies. It is worthy of observation too, that although the charge of heresy may be preferred against any one for views and feelings not of an ordinary caste and color, yet his heresy is not so obnoxious or odious until he has the courage to act against the interests of certain associations of authority, such as the priests, captains, nobles, lords, or rulers of the land; for Moses had now lived forty years in Egypt, if not upon peaceable terms with the authorities we have named, at least upon such terms as interfered not with his presence and safety in the Egyptian court; but so soon as he proves his courage in vindicating his views of right by the decision of action, so soon he is compelled to avoid the presence of his enemies and seek refuge in another country.

"Will you slay me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" What a question! Who can tell the curses, judgments, imprecations, invocations, and terrible prayers that followed the meek man Moses from the mouths of sorcerers and gold-loving priests. The red sea, or some other sea, may have been the burying place of their dying echoes, shutting them from the ear of Moses himself; but when we think of the invective epithets pronounced against all heretics, whether they have been imprisoned, banished their country, or tried by fire, we are assured that Moses escaped not from the eager power of his persecutors without being followed by the severest denuncements of ministerial and sacerdotal indignation.

Passing over a period of nearly five hundred years, it is remarkable to find another instance of heresy in some respects bearing a resemblance to the one already mentioned. Almost every novice in the bible is familiar with the story of Saul and the son of Jesse. Saul was a king and David was a servant. God loved the servant more than the king; and, therefore, from being a favorite in the king's court, he is treated with disrespect, viewed with envy and jealousy, hated, and finally persecuted. Nothing