

abiding faith that God will help us to read aright His precious words, and lead us ever in the path of duty and obedience to His commands as we understand them.

I have sought to aid those interested in the Bible, in my humble way, by striving to bring into prominence many of the sublime beauties of the Holy Book that lie half covered under the shadow of the antique, if not obsolete, language of the text. But while attempting this, I have prayerfully endeavored to avoid doing violence to the established opinions of any denomination, respecting all beliefs alike, and holding specially sacred the truth as revealed by God, according to my understanding. My purpose, in pursuance of this resolve, has been to present a modern narrative of the Holy Scriptures, following the history as related by the Bible, except occasional changes which appeared to be useful in preserving the sequence of events and proper chronological arrangement, as well also the harmony, *morale*, and unmarred beauty of the story.

Beyond this, however, I have essayed to present the narrative in a manner and style most readily understood, for which purpose I have added from time to time such explanatory comments as would serve to render clear those texts which otherwise appear confusing. Nearly all the prominent characters of the Bible are described also in profane history, where we find many revelations quite as instructive, that enable us to better understand those passages of Scripture which sometimes excite doubt in the mind of the casual Bible reader. From these corroborative sources have I drawn largely, and with such borrowed light have I attempted to illuminate the entire narrative, that every portion may appear plain to the comprehension, not only of students of the Bible, but of children as well.

To the more profound scholars of sacred history, such as Josephus, Dr. Smith, Thomson, Beecher, and a hundred others whom I have consulted in the preparation of this book, I beg to make my acknowledgments, and to confess that without their aid I should have felt so poorly qualified for the really pleasurable task of writing *THE BEAUTIFUL STORY*; that I would never have attempted it. While exercising critical regard for exactness in the purely historical features of the book, I have endeavored to so write the story that all who read it will not only gather useful lessons therefrom, but will be also stimulated to a greater interest in the Bible and a stronger love, a better faith, a more perfect obedience, and a constantly growing devotion to God, in whose service may this effort of mine lead many to enter, is the earnest prayer of

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