

PREFACE



THE BEAUTIFUL STORY is a book conceived in an hour of solemn meditation upon sacred things. From my youth the Bible has been to me a volume of revelations; a repository of divine knowledge that can only be unlocked by the key of faith and love; a grand conservatory of precious growths in the garden of human nature; a treasury of illimitable gifts of God's providence; a record of relationship between the Holy Spirit and mankind; all of these, and yet more; for in it we perceive the handwriting of Deity tracing a history of the race from birth to death and regeneration, and to the glory of a reunion with the eternal Fatherhood.

God speaks in all tongues and through all things, yet the original Bible was given us, common heritage as it is, through the medium of only two languages, the Hebrew and Greek. The English-speaking people have therefore to accept the versions of appointed translators, which give rise to differences, not always material but often confusing, since it is not possible to preserve the sense and idea of an original writer in a literal translation.

Thus the aid of commentaries becomes necessary, and yet, as each commentator has to rely upon his individual interpretation of history, and his translation as well, it follows as a natural consequence that there now exists a wide divergence of opinions among learned men in the interpretation of the Scriptures, that scarcely stops short of the methods of true worship and even of the means of salvation itself. While we may deplore, we cannot avoid this result, and must therefore be content to search the Scriptures for ourselves, with an