

TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION.

FATHER HENSON'S STORY

OF

HIS OWN LIFE.

Henson

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY MRS. H. B. STOWE.

BOSTON:
JOHN P. JEWETT AND COMPANY.
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For copy of Henson's

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PREFACE.

THE numerous friends of the author of this little work will need no greater recommendation than his name to make it welcome. Among all the singular and interesting records to which the institution of American slavery has given rise, we know of none more striking, more characteristic and instructive than that of JOSIAH HENSON.

Born a slave—a slave in effect in a heathen land—and under a heathen master, grew up without Christian light or knowledge and like the Gentiles spoken of by St. Paul, “without the law did by nature the things that are written in the law.” One sermon, one offer of salvation by Christ, was sufficient for him, as for the Ethiopian eunuch, to make him at once a believer from the heart and a preacher of Jesus.

To the great Christian doctrine of forgiveness of enemies and the returning of good



Engraved by J. C. Freeman, Boston.

Josiah Henson

PATRICK HENSON'S STORY

BY MISS HENSON.

BY MISS HENSON.

P. D. JEWELL, BOSTON.

HENRY D. JEWELL, BOSTON.

Father Henson's Story

OF HIS OWN LIFE

Introduction by Walter Fisher



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INTRODUCTION

UNCLE TOM, the main character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), an elderly Negro slave devoted to his kind master but mistreated by the cruel Simon Legree after the master's death; sometimes applied contemptuously to Negroes whose behavior toward whites is regarded as fawning or abjectly servile.

—*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (1951)

It is one of the ironies of American history that Josiah Henson, the prototype of "Uncle Tom," should have been in his total life so much the opposite of what Harriet Beecher Stowe's fictional projection of a segment of his life ultimately came to make of him.

This contradiction is only partly of Mrs. Stowe's making. Basing her fictional Uncle Tom upon a fragment of *Father Henson's Story of His Own Life* and using the novelist's prerogative, she proceeded to interpolate according to the purpose she had set for "the great Abolition novel." Out of this exercise of creative license and reforming zeal

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Josiah Henson

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