

**THE HOUSE AND ITS
BUILDER, WITH
OTHER DISCOURSES: A
BOOK FOR THE DOUBTFUL**

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The House and Its Builder, with Other Discourses: A Book for the Doubtful by Samuel Cox

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SAMUEL COX

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*H. Knight from J. K.
Dec. 14/88
H.C. Hesketh.*

THE HOUSE

AND ITS BUILDER

With other Discourses

OR
A BOOK FOR THE DOUBTFUL

BY

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"SALVATOR MUNDI," &c. &c.

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TO MY FRIEND
JESSE HIND, ESQ.

IN MEMORY OF
MUCH KINDNESS AND MANY SERVICES.



PREFACE.

THIS little book, or booklet, like the landlord's chest in The Deserted Village, is "contrived a double debt to pay."

First, it includes the last ten Sermons I have been allowed to preach, the only sermons I was able to preach during the last six months of a pastorate extending over a quarter of a century, and of a ministry which has lasted some forty years. My Congregation, as was natural perhaps, seeing that it consisted of personal and attached friends, expressed a strong desire to have these Sermons printed, that they might read and retain them in a permanent form. With their request I very gladly comply, as indeed I should be happy to comply with any request they could make of me; for I owe them much, and love them much.

And, then, I am not without hope that at least some of these discourses may prove useful to many who did not hear them. In the introduction to Sermon II. I have related the curious—and, to me, impressive—combination of circumstances that led me to take up the theme discussed in Sermons I.–VI., while the opening sentences of Sermon X. explain how I came to follow them up with a final appeal to the reason, conscience, and charity of those who had listened to that series with interest.

These seven discourses are all, as will be seen, addressed to those who have been infected by the doubts which are in the very air of the time, doubts which every thoughtful mind is, sooner or later, compelled to face. In the course of my life I have met with so many young people who have been, unwillingly and reluctantly, driven into scepticism by the hard and narrow dogmas in which they were bred, or by the pitiless severity with which these dogmas have been thrust upon them, that I have felt it my duty to devote myself to their service, and to consider again and again how I could best serve them. And hence I held it to be a happy accident, or, rather, a happy providence, that I was led, by no design or intention of my own, to conclude my ministry with words addressed to them.

In these discourses I have used arguments and

followed a line of thought which, in many private conversations, have proved useful and effective with those whose minds were clouded with doubt, though they desired nothing so much as to see the light and walk in it. And I found them not less effective when they were reduced to form, and preached to a Congregation in which there were many young and inquiring minds. Hence I indulge the hope that they may still prove useful now that they are addressed to a wider circle. I can at least say this for them: that they have served to recover to an active and cheerful faith in the Father of all men, and the Saviour of all, some who once found themselves alone in the world, without a God whom they could love, or a hope which they could cherish and in which they could confide. And I trust and pray that they may yet do that great service for many more.

These Sermons are not addressed to those who are either hostile to religion or indifferent to it; but to that large and increasing class to whom the loss of a reasonable faith is as a sentence of death, who long to believe and yet find the dogmas in which they have been reared growing more and more incredible to them; and who forbode with a sinking and reluctant heart that they may be compelled to renounce the faith they once held. By

its timidity, its narrowness and hardness, its controversies and divisions, the Church is largely answerable—more answerable, I fear, than that advance of scientific thought and method which it too often condemns as alone responsible—for the existence of this class ; and those of us who love the Church, and believe that it carries the fortunes of the world, while yet we see and confess how much of the existing unbelief it has to answer for, are bound to do what we can for those who, through no fault of their own, but rather by our faults and defects, are being driven from the true home and sanctuary of the soul.

One other reason may be alleged for the publication of these discourses. They contain an exposition of one of the noblest passages in the writings of St. Paul, Romans viii. 18-27, a more detailed and complete exposition than any I can find on my shelves : and this may prove welcome even to those who have long since faced their doubts and fought them down.

THE HOLME, HASTINGS.



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