

**BOSTON MONDAY LECTURES,
1880-81. CHRIST AND MODERN
THOUGHT. WITH A PRELIMINARY
LECTURE, ON THE METHODS OF
MEETING MODERN UNBELIEF**

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Boston Monday Lectures, 1880-81. Christ and Modern Thought. With a Preliminary Lecture, on the Methods of Meeting Modern Unbelief by Joseph Cook

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JOSEPH COOK

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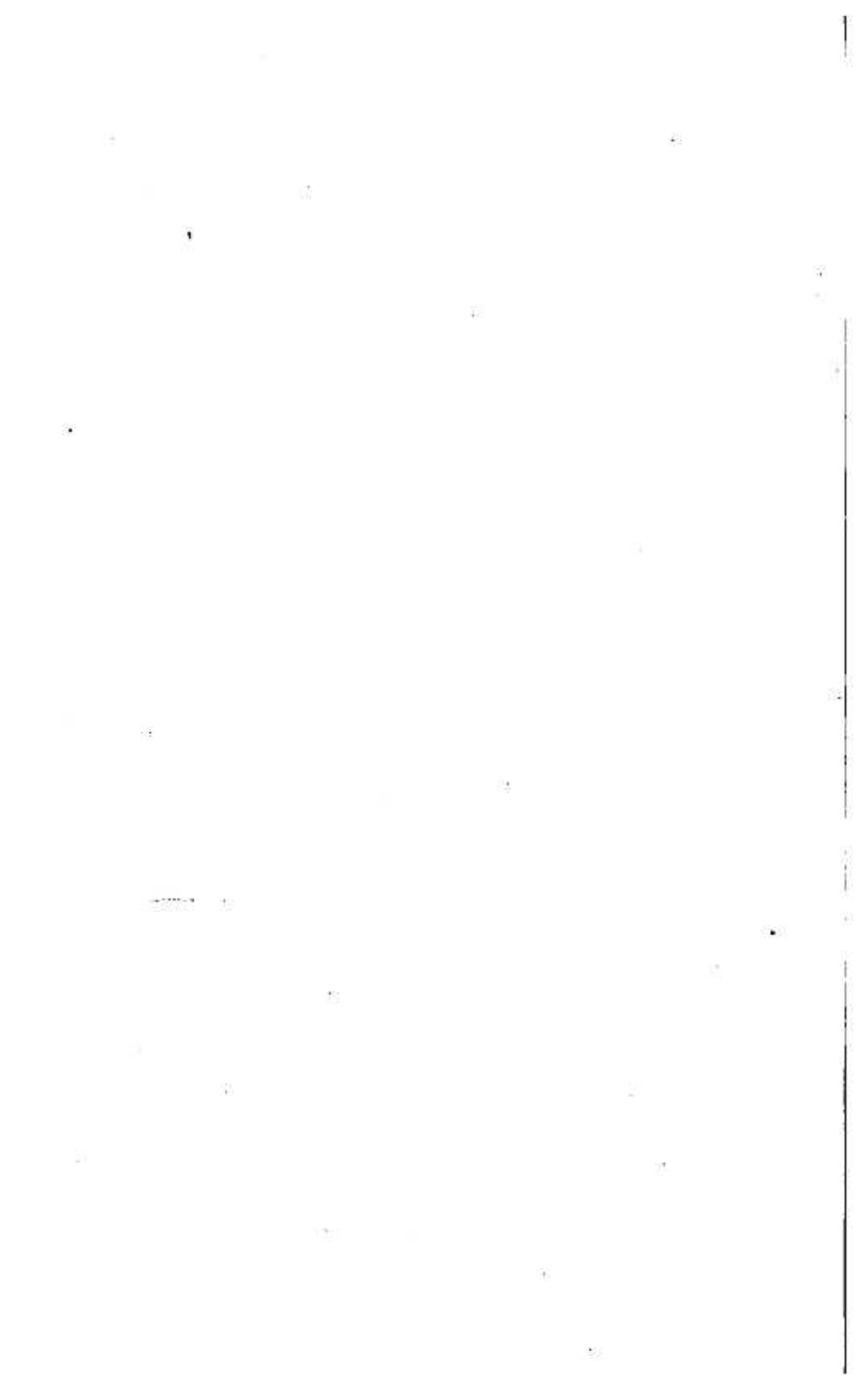
By JOSEPH COOK.



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"Before the close of the present century, the supreme questions before men for their final decision will be the religious questions."—GUIZOT.

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PRELIMINARY LECTURE.

By JOSEPH COOK.

METHODS OF MEETING MODERN UNBELIEF.

A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, NOVEMBER 2ND, 1880, IN CONNECTION WITH THE HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE LONDON CONGREGATIONAL UNION, HENRY WRIGHT, ESQ., J.P., IN THE CHAIR.

THE PERILS OF GREAT CITIES.

Cæsar could not drive around the Roman Empire in less than one hundred days; we now send a letter around the globe in ninety-six. London reaches all the zones as easily as Rome reached the territories of Augustus. You remember there was a day when a traveller might start from Alexandria, in Egypt, and, passing over the substantial basaltic pavement of the old Roman highways, drive to Carthage, then to Gibraltar, and on through Spain and France. He could then cross the Channel, drive north to the Scottish Border, return and go to Cologne, then to Milan, then under the shadows of the Alps and the Balkans to Constantinople, and so to Antioch and back to Alexandria,—a distance which could not be traversed in less than a hundred days. But not long ago there came a collection of more than three hundred mail-bags from Melbourne and Sidney to San Francisco; and they were four days ahead of time. The American Government asked the directors of our trans-continental lines to put them on a special train. They reached New York in six days from San Francisco; and if the Arizona, the speediest steamship afloat, did her duty, and your officers did theirs, these mails arrived here from more than half around the globe in forty-one days. There are no foreign lands.

Sursum corda! May God lift up our hearts to the breadth and to the height of our theme, so that we may not take provincial, insular, or even national views only. We want a Christian enterprise that shall at least fill the arms of England and America as they stretch towards the sunrise and towards the sunset. Perhaps God means to keep in order great portions of the human race by the arms of England and America stretched east and west, and ultimately locking hands. Only in this way can we obtain a "scientific frontier."

It is in our great cities that we are attacked; and it is there that our political arrangements are receiving their greatest strain. We are more and more, in the United States, aware of the perils of great cities. When you spoke, sir, of the unmanageability of London, I felt that in America we have more cause for fear than you. New York is a village yet, I know. When the bell strikes at noon in New York City there are about a million and a half of people within municipal limits; and in greater London you have four millions and a half. But we have not annexed to the city everything within twelve miles of our centre, as you have; we shall do it ultimately. In two centuries there will be a London at the mouth of the Hudson, perhaps another where Chicago now stands, and possibly a third at San Francisco. When the Duke of Wellington was in this city of the Thames, he could rough-grind his sabres and ride down a mob. We cannot do that in New York. We must manage there by count of heads and clack of tongues. We must manage by ward meetings and a multiplicity of party influences, often so complex that the average citizen does not understand them, and abstains from voting out of disgust or despair. As the power of the people advances, it will be found out ultimately under universal suffrage that Christianity is the only safeguard of civil liberty on both sides the sea. In a State filled with great cities, the only safety for the government of the people by the people, and for the people in the State, is to be found in the government of the saints by the saints, and for the saints in the Church.

I hold that it has been demonstrated by the experience in the United States for a century that the separation of the Church from the State has not injured either. American experience proves that the separation of Church and State prevents the State

from governing the Church, but does not prevent the Church from governing the State. It was the conscience of the North which held the nation up to its work in our civil war ; and if of late we have been paying our national debt, if the American conscience revolts at any idea of repudiation, if the sober American people are to-day bearing taxes as perhaps no equal number of millions ever did on the globe before,—it is because of the conscientiousness and the sobriety taught by a free Church in a free State. We have fifty millions of people already in the United States ; and when we have four times the present population of Great Britain we may easily have four Londons, and God knows that representative government, triumphant elsewhere, is sufficiently strained to-day in our large towns. There are in the United States fifty millions of people, and about five millions are church-members ; but if we had not one in five making a public solemn profession of Christianity, I for one should not have what I have to-day,—a firm hope that the future of government of the people by the people and for the people is safe. You know that I do not recommend English institutions to America. The opinion has been expressed by your great statesman, Mr. Gladstone, who is as much revered in America as here, that neither nation prefers the institutions of the other. To this proposition I venture to add that neither would do well now to exchange its institutions for those of the other. It is better that we should try two great experiments. But, sir, I believe that if that statesman were here he would justify me in the further assertion that the hope of civil liberty in Great Britain, and in your empire throughout the world, rests, as surely as it does in the United States, on the purity, the intelligence, and the activity of the Christian Church. The nations to which we are admitted by the growth of all lines of international communication depend for the progress of their civil liberties, no less than for the progress of their religious and intellectual culture, on our success in these two great experiments. I thank God that England and America are not circumstanced alike ; and that, if one fail, the other may keep up the hope of the race. Abraham Lincoln and Prince Albert are possibly now looking with equal interest on the two experiments. In the world above they are not national merely any more. The martyrs who perished on this spot are not de-