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RELICS IN GENERAL, AND THE IRON
CROWN OF LOMBARDY IN PARTICULAR.

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I HAD heard of relics before. Years ago I had read Mark Twain's account of the large piece of the true cross which he had seen in a church in the Azores; and of another piece which he had seen in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, besides some nails of the true cross and a part of the crown of thorns; and of the marble chest in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo at Genoa, which he was told contained the ashes of St. John, and was wound about with the chain that had confined St. John when he was in prison; and of the interesting collection shown him in the Cathedral of Milan, including two of St. Paul's fingers and one of St. Peter's, a bone of Judas Iscariot (black, not white), and also bones of all the other disciples (presumably of the normal color), a handkerchief in which the Saviour had left the impression of his face, part of the crown of thorns, a fragment of the purple robe worn by Christ, a picture of the Virgin and Child painted by St. Luke, and a nail from the cross—adding in another place that he thought he had seen in all not less than a keg of these nails.

But I had hardly taken Mark Twain seriously in these statements, not knowing at the time that his *Innocents Abroad* was one of the best guide-books to Europe that was ever written.

THE PALLADIUM OF VENICE.

I had read repeatedly the story of the bringing of St. Mark's bones from Alexandria, in Egypt, to their present resting-place in St. Mark's Cathedral at Venice—a story which is related as follows in that same lively volume:

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

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THE two hundredth anniversary of this great and good man has just passed. As he was one of the most remarkable men the American church has produced, and as, although a Congregationalist, his history often touched and influenced that of the Presbyterian Church, perhaps even a brief sketch of his life may not be altogether without interest to the readers of this Magazine.

He was born October 5, 1703, at Windsor, in Connecticut. His father was the Rev. Timothy Edwards, pastor of a Congregational church at Windsor for almost sixty-four years, and greatly esteemed and very useful. His mother, a woman of great intelligence and ardent piety, was a daughter of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, Mass., a man of great prominence and influence. He was the only son in a family of eleven children, of whom four were older than himself. Both families were of English descent, and, for a number of generations, had been distinguished for intellectual vigor, earnest piety and commanding influence.

Very early in life Mr. Edwards began to give evidence of unusual natural gifts. At six years of age he began the study of Latin. A little later he began the study of Greek and Hebrew in his father's family, and before he was thirteen he had a good knowledge of both. When only ten years old, he wrote a letter on the immaterialty of the soul, revealing an ability to discuss so difficult a subject quite extraordinary in a child, and when twelve years old he wrote some remarkable papers in natural philosophy. At fourteen years of age he read, with a pleasure he could hardly express, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*. At the very early age of thirteen, he entered Yale College, and four years later graduated at the head of his class with the degree of A. M. It may be added, just here, that this seems to be the only honorary title he ever received. Although one of the greatest theologians to which our country has ever

given birth, he seems never to have been honored with the title of Doctor of Divinity, clearly showing, it may be said for the comfort of any who may feel the need of it, that the lack of such titles does not always prove the lack of the merit which deserves them.

His first decided religious impressions were received when he was about eight years old, during a season of religious interest in his father's church. For several months he was quite active in religious duties. He prayed five times a day in secret, and talked and prayed with other children of about his own age. His judgment, however, in later life, was that these religious experiences were spurious; but some of his pious friends believed that at that early period the germ of spiritual life was implanted in his soul. In his own opinion, his Christian life did not truly begin until the latter part of his college course. His reasons for so thinking, and his remarkable religious exercises, are recorded very fully in his diary. There are a number of statements like the following: "I have given myself, all that I am and have, to God, so that I am not in any respect my own. I can claim no right in myself; no right in this understanding, this will, these affections that are in me; neither have I any right to this body or any of its members. I have given myself clear away, and have not retained anything as my own, and do now promise Almighty God that by his grace I will not." A careful review of his religious history as here revealed would show that a more remarkable instance of genuine and ardent scriptural piety in a mere youth could probably not be found in the annals of the modern church; and it was one of the things that fitted him, as it would fit any other young man, for eminent usefulness in the world.

After he had graduated at Yale, he returned to that institution and spent nearly two years in preparation for the ministry. In June or July, 1722, after the usual preparatory trials, he was licensed to preach the gospel, and was invited to a small Presbyterian church recently organized in New York city. There he remained about eight months, serving the congregation with much acceptance. Perceiving, however, that there were serious obstacles in the way of the growth of that church, he did not consider it his duty to remain longer, and returned home.

During this part of his life and a little later, he formed a number of resolutions for the regulation of his conduct, which reveal the fervor of his piety and strength of his purpose "to walk worthy of the Lord, who had called him into his kingdom and glory." These resolutions were seventy in number, and were formed from time to time as his religious wants seemed to require. As they are remarkable in character, and as a number of them have been adopted by other eminent men, and as they, no doubt, did much to mould their author for his future great career, a few of them may here be noted as exhibiting the spirit and purpose of the whole. They are introduced by an appropriate prayer: "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him, by his grace, to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake." His first resolution is, "I will do whatever I think to be most to the glory of God and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of time, whether now or never so many ages hence. I will do whatever I may think my duty and most for the good of mankind in general. I will do so, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many soever and how great soever." His fifth and sixth resolutions are, "Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I can, and to live with all my might while I do live." Other resolutions are, "Never to speak evil of any one so that it shall tend to his dishonor more or less, upon no account except for some real good;" "to study the Scriptures so constantly and frequently as that I may plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same;" "to strive every week to be brought higher in religion and to a higher exercise of grace than I was the week before;" "in narrations never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity;" "to ask myself at the end of every day, week, month and year, whether I could possibly in any respect have done better;" "constantly with the utmost niceness and diligence, and the strictest scrutiny, to look into the state of my soul to know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or not, that when I come to die I may not have any negligence respecting this to repent of;" "never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be." Such were some of these

resolutions, and his habit was to read them over once every week, "to mark, repent of and labor to correct his shortcomings." No wonder that a young man of ability and learning, constantly controlled by such principles, became "a prince and great man in Israel."

After his return from New York City, he spent two years in Yale College as a tutor, at the end of which time he was called to Northampton, to assist his aged grandfather, who for more than a half century had been the revered pastor of the Congregational church in that town. Here, on the 28th of July, 1727, he married Miss Sarah Pierrepont, the daughter of a prominent minister of New Haven, a lady of many accomplishments, who contributed much to his future success. About six years after entering on his labors here, a remarkable revival began, and continued, until every part of the town and much of the neighboring country and all classes had been reached. An interesting fact connected with this great religious awakening was that it culminated under preaching on controversial subjects. What was known as the Arminian controversy had begun in New England. Mr. Edwards proposed, during this period of religious interest, to discuss it before his people. Many objected that the time was unsuitable and that harm would be done. He, however, was of a different opinion, and preached a number of sermons on the subject, the religious interest all the time increasing. His sermons, however, had in them none of the usual acrimony of controversy, but in a plain and cogent manner, and in the way of solemn personal application to his hearers, he pointed out what he conceived to be the errors of the system he was assailing and the truths of God's Word by which they were controverted.

In 1740 another great revival began, of which his church seems to have been the centre. It spread from church to church, until more than one hundred and fifty churches in different parts of the country, North and South, had been greatly blessed, and many thousands, it was believed, had been soundly converted. Soon, however, abuses began to spring up; errors and fanaticism made their appearance, by which the movement was checked and its results greatly marred. This, in Mr. Edward's opinion, was largely due to the preaching of untrained and unqualified men. In many places such men undertook to direct

and promote the movement, and the loose system of congregationalism furnished no adequate checks. Against such preaching Mr. Edwards earnestly protested. "If one may do this," he said, "why may not another? And if there be no certain limits and bounds, but every one that pleaseth may have liberty, alas! what should we soon come to? If God had not seen it necessary that such things should have certain limits and bounds, he never would have appointed a particular order of men to that work and office, to be set apart to it in a solemn manner in the name of God. The Head of the church is wiser than we, and knew how to regulate things in his church." As an antidote for the evils which had arisen, he published his *Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival in New England*, in which he treats of the nature of true revivals; how they are to be obtained; by what marks they are to be recognized; the mistakes into which their friends are in danger of falling; and the best means of securing satisfactory and permanent results. This work has always been considered one of great value. Later, he published a work on *The Christian Affections*, suggested by the same cause as the former, which was immediately reproduced with much commendation, in both England and Scotland. This work has been sharply criticised by some as being too elaborate and subtle in its analyses and distinctions to be of much benefit to the ordinary Christian reader; and, no doubt, there is some truth in the charge; but it is, at the same time, a book that ought to receive the careful study of every Christian teacher.

Up to 1744, Mr. Edwards enjoyed, in fullest measure, the confidence and love of his large and important charge. No man in all the country, perhaps, seemed less likely to be disturbed by the alienation of his people. During that very year, however, a disaffection began that continued and increased until the saddest results were realized. The first occasion of trouble was in connection with the circulation amongst his young people of objectionable literature. He preached a sermon on the subject, and called special attention to the dangerous character of the literature. His congregation unanimously agreed with him that the matter should be investigated; but when it was found subsequently that almost every family in the congregation would be involved, angry opposition to any farther steps was made, and Mr. Edwards was severely criticised for what he had already

done. This, however, was but a mild prelude to a much more serious trouble that not long afterwards followed. Mr. Edwards' church, like many others in New England, had been organized on the principle of "strict communion"; that is, no adults were received into the membership unless they professed, and were judged to be, truly pious. His grandfather, however, the Rev. Mr. Stoddard, in the course of years, had, in this respect, after much opposition, brought about a great change. He taught that the Lord's Supper was a "converting ordinance," and that, therefore, unconverted persons could come into the church and partake of it. Mr. Edwards had long doubted whether this was scriptural. Hence, after Mr. Stoddard's death, he gave the subject careful consideration, and came to the conclusion that it was so serious a departure from the scriptural rule that it ought to be corrected. He foresaw trouble. He privately predicted to some friends that it would dislodge him from his pulpit. But he did not allow himself to be intimidated by apprehended consequences. His first step was to publish a pamphlet on the subject. As soon as it appeared he became the object of a storm of general and fierce denunciation. It seems almost incredible that a people for whom he had done so much, and who, only a little while before, held him in so exalted esteem, could so quickly be converted into the bitterest enemies, by a most humble and respectful attempt on his part to show them that one of their church usages was not in accordance with the Word of God. One explanation seems to be that a large number of unconverted persons by this usage had got into his and neighboring churches, and, for various reasons prizing their membership, bitterly resented the desire and purpose on the part of their pastor to thrust them out. Another explanation is found in the fact that church membership had become so general that it was considered a reproach to be outside of its pale; so much so that none but church-members could be elected to offices of trust and emolument. Mr. Edwards' effort, therefore, was regarded by a large number as practically not only an attempt to exclude them from the church, but from respectable society and from all public stations. Hence, the opposition was fierce and unrelenting, and resulted in his ejection from his pastorate, which he had so greatly adorned for more than twenty-three years.

For several months he was without definite work. The opportunity was seized to seek his services in Scotland, where his works had excited much interest and admiration. Dr. John Erskine inquired of him whether he could subscribe to the Westminster Standards and take a work which he indicated. His answer shows that while he had spent almost all his life in the Congregational church, in his convictions he was a Presbyterian. "As to my subscribing the substance of the Westminster Confession," he says, "there would be no difficulty; and as to the Presbyterian government, I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the Word of God and the reason and nature of things." This invitation, however, he declined, and after a delay of several months, in 1751 he accepted a call to a small church at Stockbridge, about forty miles from Northampton, where, besides serving his little church, he became, under a committee in Boston, representing an English Society, a missionary to the Housatonnuck Indians dwelling in the same community with his charge. Here he lived about six years; and while, because of insuperable obstacles in the way, he did little for his church and for the Indians, he did much of the most important literary work of his life. He wrote his works on *The Freedom of the Will*; *The End of God in Creation*; *Original Sin*; and *The True Theory of Virtue*. While at this place, his son-in-law, the Rev. Aaron Burr, President of the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, died, and he was promptly chosen his successor, on the 26th September, 1757. After much hesitation, he moved to Princeton, was received with great cordiality, and entered on his duties with much promise of distinguished usefulness; but died on the 22nd of March, 1758, just five weeks after his inauguration, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. His unexpected death was caused by vaccination for small-pox. His last words to mourning friends around his bed, who were lamenting the great loss the college and the church were about to suffer, were, "Trust in God, and ye need not fear." After very simple funeral services, which he had beforehand required, he was buried in the Princeton Cemetery, where a monument elaborately celebrating his virtues in Latin, now marks his last resting-place.

It remains to say something more definite concerning his character and writings.

1. He was a very diligent student. Near the close of his life, he, in quaint terms, described his health as having been generally bad: "a constitution in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sily, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits." Yet he accomplished with his pen an amount of work which has never, perhaps, been equalled in similar circumstances, except by a few persons, such as Calvin and Baxter. His fixed habit was to study thirteen hours every day; and while he studied, he kept his pen in his hand, to record important facts brought to his notice, to preserve new lines of thought suggested, and to note questions requiring further investigation. In this way a great mass of manuscripts was gradually accumulated, so indexed, however, that he could easily turn to any part of it. So eager, indeed, was he in the pursuit of knowledge, that he seems to have made the mistake of turning what he called his rest and recreation into work. When he rode out in the afternoons, his favorite exercise, he would take pen, ink and paper with him, that he might at any time dismount and record the results of his reflections, and at any hour of the night he would arise and set down any valuable thought that had occurred to him. No wonder he complained of "flaccid solids, vapid, sily and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits"! By this ceaseless effort, however, he made attainments in certain directions unequalled in his day by any of his countrymen.

2. He was a great philosopher and theologian. Dr. Chalmers, of Scotland, said, "On the arena of metaphysics, he stood the highest of all his contemporaries, and that, too, at a time when Hume was aiming his deadliest thrusts at the foundations of morality, and had thrown over the infidel cause the whole *éclat* of his reputation. The American divine affords, perhaps, the most wondrous example, in modern times, of one who stood richly gifted both in natural and in spiritual discernment." He also said that he recommended his book on the Will to his pupils "more strenuously than any other book of human composition," and added, "it has helped me more than any other uninspired book to find my way through all that might otherwise have proved baffling and transcendental and mysterious in the pecu-

liarities of Calvinism." Robert Hall said: "I consider Jonathan Edwards the greatest of the sons of men. He ranks with the brightest luminaries of the Christian church, not excluding any country or any age, since the apostolic." Sir James McIntosh spoke of him as "this remarkable man, the metaphysician of America. His power of subtle argument, perhaps unmatched, certainly unsurpassed, among men, was joined, as in some of the ancient mystics, with a character which raised his piety to fervor." Similar testimonies to his intellectual greatness could be given from a number of other distinguished sources. It may be interesting to know what such a modern philosopher as Prof. John Fiske thought of him, who certainly had little sympathy with his views: "The more one considers Edwards, the more colossal and astonishing he seems. Among writers on Christian theology his place is by the side of Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin. His character was as great as his genius."

The work which has given him most celebrity, and for which he has been most admired, is, of course, that on the *Freedom of the Will*, a glimpse of which may here be given. He defines the will as that by which "the mind chooses anything." By "determining the will," he means "causing that the act of the will or choice should be thus and not otherwise." In answer to the question, "What determines the will?" he replies, "It is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest." In view of this fact, he asserts that liberty belongs to the person rather than to the will itself, and that the liberty any one possesses is to act as he chooses. Any other kind of liberty, he maintains, must rest on *three* postulates: (1) "A self-determining power of the will." (2) "Indifference;" that is, "previous to the act of volition the mind is in a state of equilibrium;" and (3) "contingence;" that is, "events are not necessarily connected with their causes." These postulates, he undertakes to show, are absurd; and whatever fault may be found with certain infelicities of statement and with the validity of occasional subordinate arguments, the main structure of his demonstration, it may safely be said, stands to this day unharmed by all the assaults that have been made upon it.

In theology, it is very well known that he was thoroughly Calvinistic. The attempts that have been made in New England and elsewhere to appropriate the authority of his great name in

behalf of "improvements" in theology, inconsistent with sound Calvinism, have been based, not on the great regulative principles for which he always earnestly contended, but most unfairly on some argument, or form of statement, incidentally connected with his discussions and unnecessary to sustain the main conclusions which he reached. He is thus quoted as favoring views which he spent his whole life in efforts to refute. This statement might be illustrated at length, if space allowed, in connection, for instance, with his treatises on *The End of God in Creation* and on *Original Sin*.

His only work, perhaps, that must be condemned in its main principles is that on *The True Theory of Virtue*. This work he did not himself give to the world. It was not published until some thirty years after his death, and it would seem to be quite certain that if he could have foreseen the uses that would be made of it, he would never have published it in its present form.

3. He was a great preacher. He had, indeed, few advantages of person and manner, and his voice was feeble. He was so profoundly impressed by the transcendent importance of his themes that he seems somewhat to have overlooked the fact that a more attractive style and a more graceful delivery would have given him more ready and favorable access to the attention of his hearers, and so have greatly contributed to the success of his work. Still, so wide was the range of his knowledge, so thorough his mastery of his subject, and so intense his earnestness, that defects of style and manner were often completely overcome, and his preaching was followed by effects almost incredible, as, for instance, when he preached on the subject, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." During the great revival of 1740, Whitefield preached in his church and in the contiguous country. An opportunity to compare the two great divines was thus afforded, and it is said that sometimes the impression made by Edwards was hardly equalled by that made by "the prince of preachers." As to his method of preparation, it may be said that for many years he carefully wrote out his sermons in full and read them. He did not think, however, that this was the most effective method, but believed that it would have been better to have discarded his manuscript. His advice to young preachers was to write and commit to memory. Perhaps it should be said, however, that while no rule on the subject can

be given equally suitable to all, the consensus of opinion amongst the ministry now is, that the most effective method for most preachers is to write fully and carefully, and then charge the memory with the substance and order of the thoughts, and depend on the occasion for the forms of expression.

4. As has already been indicated, he was a man of great piety, and it was to this fact that his greatness in other respects was mainly due. No doubt he was richly endowed by nature; but that by no means insures a great character and a great life. It was his great piety that prompted him to give himself "clear away" to God, and "never to lose one moment of time," and "to live with all his might while he did live," and it was this persistent, untiring effort, day and night, for years together, that gave his natural powers their extraordinary development, and so led to his greatness in intellect. But this piety also lifted up his mind and fixed it in most intense contemplation all his life on the loftiest subjects of human thought, and so led to greatness in knowledge; and then it constrained him with all earnestness to employ all his powers and knowledge all his days in the divine service, and so it led to greatness in usefulness. He is thus an instructive instance of what Archbishop Leighton called the "greatening" power of true piety.

It is to be hoped that the recent celebration of the birth of Mr. Edwards will turn attention to his works. Much of the prejudice in this country against Calvinism and the Presbyterian Church is due to misrepresentation of his teachings. It is said that he denied the freedom of the will; that he taught that God created the vast majority of the human race only that he might damn it for his own glory; that he ascribed to God an arbitrary sovereignty; that he declared that there were infants in hell not a span long; that a part of the joy of the redeemed in heaven will consist in witnessing the sufferings of the lost; and that all this, and much more equally objectionable, "is Calvinism forced to its logical conclusion by a mind as inflexibly devoted to truth as it was powerful." Thus a strong prejudice against Calvinism has been created. If the works of Edwards were read, it would be seen how he has been grossly misrepresented. It would also be seen in how sharp contrast his teachings stand with the teachings of many who have just celebrated his birth. He taught that the human race is spir-

itually totally depraved; they deny it. He taught the unlikeness of fallen man to God; they teach the likeness of God to fallen man. He taught that the justice of God determines him to punish sin; they teach that the love of God forbids it. He taught that God is the Sovereign of the world, who will eventually judge every man according to his works; they teach that he is only the Father of the race, and that he is too kind to inflict a severe doom. He magnified the evil of sin: they minify it. He taught the doctrines of grace; they teach the doctrines of human ability and human dignity and worth. The writer has lying before him at this moment a New England publication of October 3, 1903, in which this contrast is admitted and emphasized in criticism of Edwards. If men could be brought to read the great arguments by which he supports his teachings, there might be a healthful reaction from the diluted and weak theology held by many at the present day, and the pulpit might be brought to proclaim afresh those great truths that stirred and transformed New England in his day as it has never been since, and never will be, by the theology that is now taught there.

This imperfect sketch cannot be concluded without an expression of regret that the biographies of Mr. Edwards once in circulation are now out of print. It has been found necessary in the preparation of this article to rely entirely on such brief sketches as that of Dr. Samuel Miller and those in the encyclopædias.