

# CHAPTER LXXVII.

## Memories of my Father.

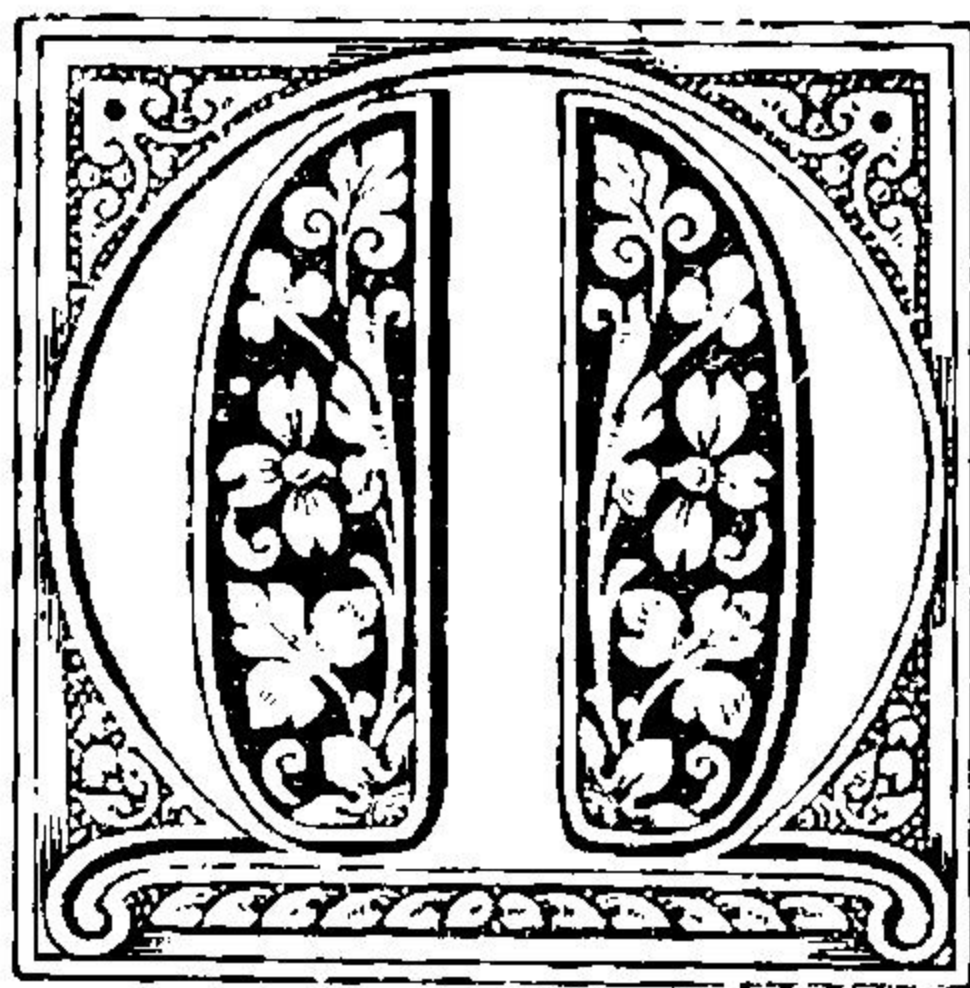
BY PASTOR CHARLES SPURGEON.



C. AND T. SPURGEON AT THE AGE OF 7.

Charlie and Tommy are good little boys ;  
When they're asleep, they don't make any noise.—C H. S

That is a very precious Name which Christ puts into our mouths when He bids us say to God, "Our Father, which art in Heaven ;" and there is a wonderful sweetness when we come to know that we may call Him our Husband. I do not like to compare the two, and say which title is to be preferred,—whether Husband or Father ;—they are both unutterably sweet when they are enjoyed to the full.—C. H. S., *in sermon preached at the Tabernacle, March 1, 1883.*



Y dear mother has told, and is telling, in the sweetest manner possible, much of tender interest concerning her beloved husband. She records, in her own inimitable fashion, many touching incidents in the life of him who is so dear to her heart ; and her charming writing proves how "unutterably sweet," because "enjoyed to the full," the title "my husband" is to her. There is only one other who can write the words "my father" after the illustrious name of Charles Haddon



Spurgeon ;—and such a father ! Blessed be his dear memory ! Oh, for “the tongue of the learned,” and “the pen of a ready writer,” for then could I hope to speak and write love’s eulogy on one whose like we cannot hope to see again. Never had any son a kinder, wiser, happier, holier, or more generous sire ; and I count it one of the highest honours of my life to be permitted to place within the already well-stored casket, a few gems which memory has preserved through that sweet relationship, which, in God’s great goodness, I, as one of my father’s sons, was privileged to enjoy.

There was one trait in his noble and godly character, which, among many others, always shone with a lustre peculiarly its own. His humility was of a Christlike character, and it demands heartiest commendation from those who speak or write about him. Words of eulogy concerning himself were ever painful to him, his motto in this, as in all other matters, being, “not I, but Christ ;” yet, from his own loving child some meed of praise may surely come, and the son would fain render all due honour to the best of fathers. His blameless example, his holy consistency, his genial love, his generous liberality, his wise counsel, and his fearless fidelity to God and His truth, are all on a par with his fatherliness ; and in my heart, as in all those with whom he came into contact, these qualities have been enshrined. The matchless grace and goodness, manifested in the home, found their counterpart in his public career, and proved how completely the spirit of the Master permeated the whole life of His servant. What my father was to me, to the Church of Christ, and to the world at large, none can ever fully estimate ; but those who knew him best understood the secret of his magic power, for they felt that he “had been with Jesus,” and that Jesus lived in him.

The earliest recollections of my dear father, which I have retained, are, naturally, those associated with my childhood ; and my heart is filled anew with joyful pleasures as I think again and again of the doings of the days gone by. I must have been a very small boy when I capered about, with great delight, because my father had provided, for the entertainment of the natives of Walton-on-the-Naze, a firework display on the sands ; and, among the visitors for a season, at the then slightly-known and out-of-the-way watering-place, little Charlie was made glad by looking at sky-rockets, and listening to the bang of squibs. This may seem a small matter to report, but it is indicative of a prominent feature in my father’s character, inasmuch as he constantly rejoiced in giving pleasant surprises wherever he could ; nor was this the only time when, to give his children some fun, he made the fifth of November an excuse for indulging in works of fire.

I well remember, too, how an improvised swing had been hung between two trees for the amusement of the boys ; but an untimely fall of one of the twins



precluded all further use of this out-door gymnasium. Father felt, however, that athletic exercises were conducive to the health of growing lads, so he arranged for the erection of a substantial horizontal bar and swing for their use, thus giving evidence of his thoughtful love and sympathetic consideration for their well-being.



THE TWIN-SONS AT THE AGE OF 9.

I can seem to see, as if it were but yesterday, his bright face beaming with smiles, as he gave his would-be carpenter-sons a present, in the form of a basket of tools and a box of nails. All the implements needed for the full equipment of a master in the trade were to be found within that workman's basket; and I shall never forget how father watched and waited for us to discover, among the tools, a neat roll of rag! While we were puzzling our brains to find out why this was included, he laughingly explained that, in all probability, when we had cut our



fingers, we should find out the use of it. The providing of the bandage for wounded amateurs, exemplified his power of forethought, and also his profound common sense.

I still have in my possession a silver medal, bearing the following inscription :—

“Presented to  
MASTER CHARLES SPURGEON  
by the  
United Kingdom Band of Hope Union,  
January, 1865.”

It calls to mind a notable occasion when the Tabernacle was crowded with a vast audience gathered to hear the famous lecture on “Sermons in Candles” delivered by my dear father ; and well do I remember coming forward to receive, from Mr. W. R. Selway, a broad band of blue ribbon, to which was attached this medallion of membership ; and how, after he had placed it around my neck, with trembling



PROFESSOR SELWAY, AND C. AND T. SPURGEON.

*Mr Selway placing the medals of the Bands  
of Hope upon C & T Spurgeon*



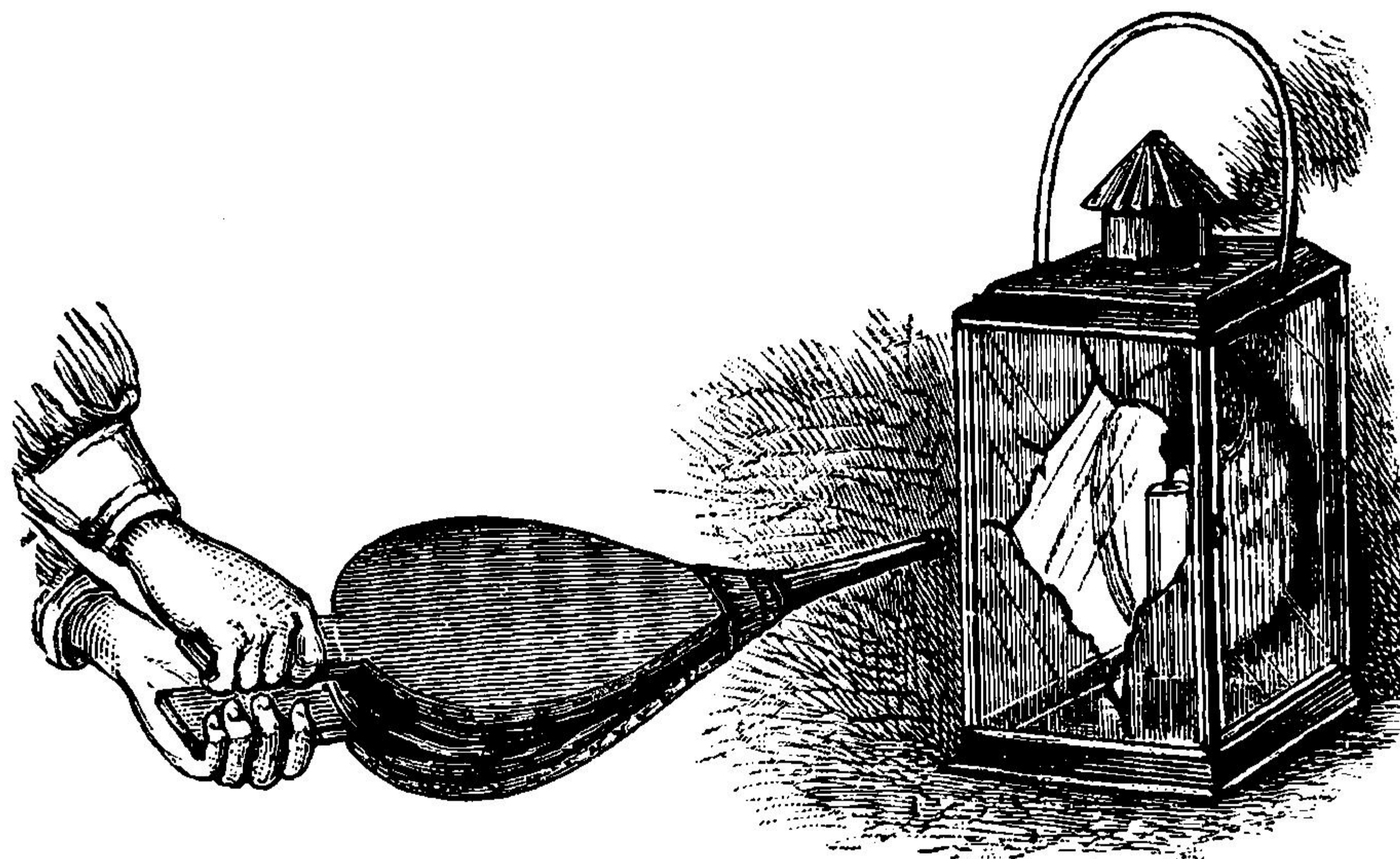
voice I acknowledged the kind gift, and expressed the hope that I might be a teetotaller all my life.

What a wonderful light the lecturer threw upon his subject! It can well be imagined with what interest the little lads, in their ninth year, looked and listened, as the different candles were lighted, and the sermonettes sparkled. Most vividly do I recollect how daintily my dear father walked across the platform,—as if to avoid the pools of water and heaps of refuse to be found in the streets of an Oriental city,—bearing in his hand a small cane, at the end of which hung a coloured paper lantern, thus illustrating Psalm cxix. 105: “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” I must confess that I had, even then, a wish to do the



“A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.”

self-same thing, little dreaming that, in after-life, the dear father, whom I was watching with such intense delight, would make over to me, as a love-gift, the whole of the apparatus he had used, with a bound copy of the lecture, saying, “There, Charlie, my boy, you can go on giving it.”

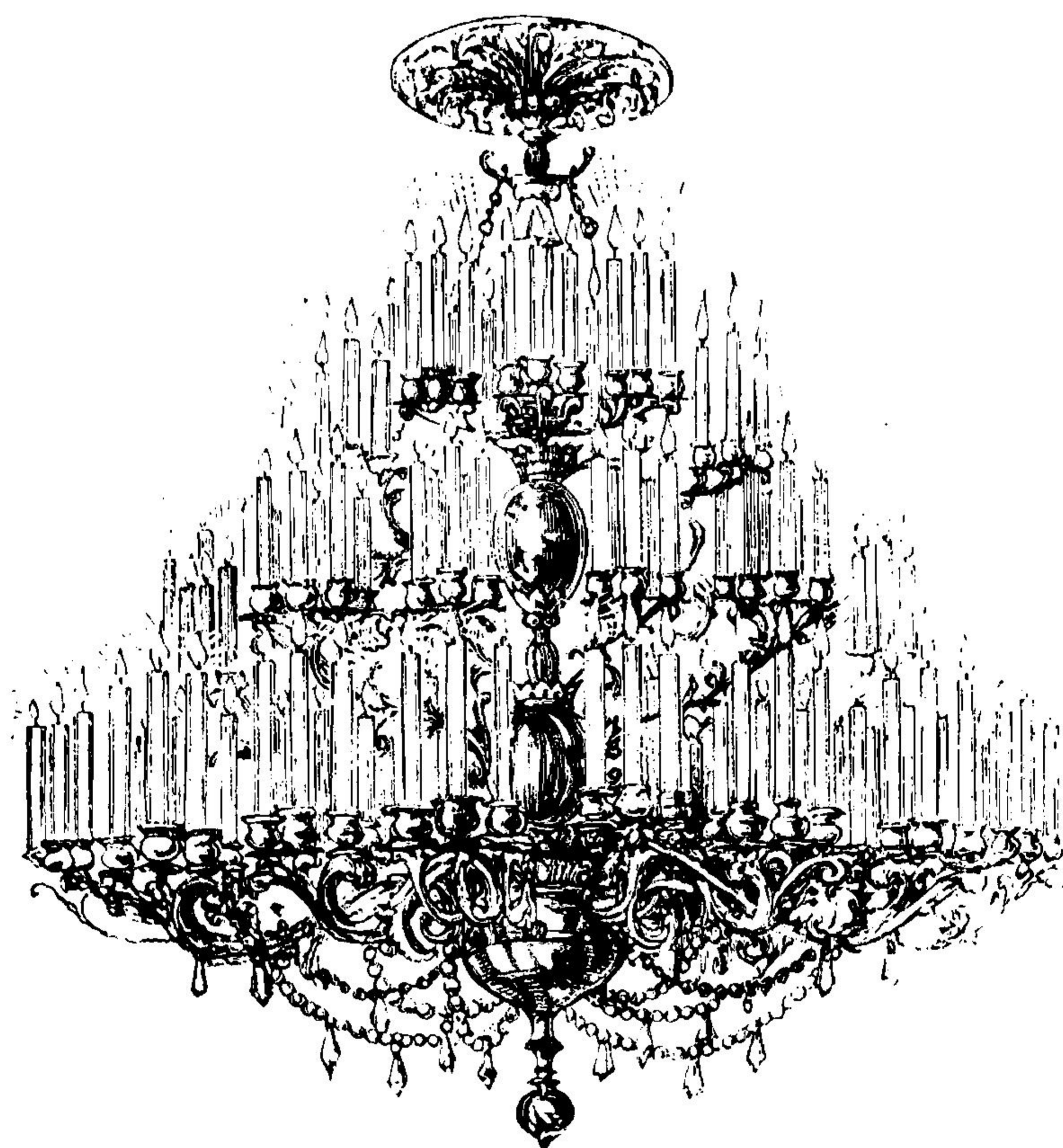


THE BELLOWS AND THE BROKEN LANTERN

Two other illustrations fastened themselves upon my youthful mind; the first being the one in which the lecturer's assistant represented the tempter discovering



the weak place in the Christian's character. Watching for the defective spot in the lantern, the helper, by the use of a pair of bellows, soon put the candle out.



THE CANDELABRUM.

The other emblem which I specially noted was the one described by dear father as "the greatest display of our fireworks." Suspended from the roof of the Tabernacle was a massive candelabrum which, to the young onlooker, was most attractive for its brightness and beauty; and, though one of such tender years could hardly appreciate all that was then said concerning "the Church of Christ in its multiplicity, variety, and unity," he cannot forget the harmless mirth, expressed in guileless laughter, which followed the lecturer's remark that one strong old Baptist had assured him that the "Dips" gave the best light!

These are only a few of my happy memories of that memorable Band of Hope meeting.

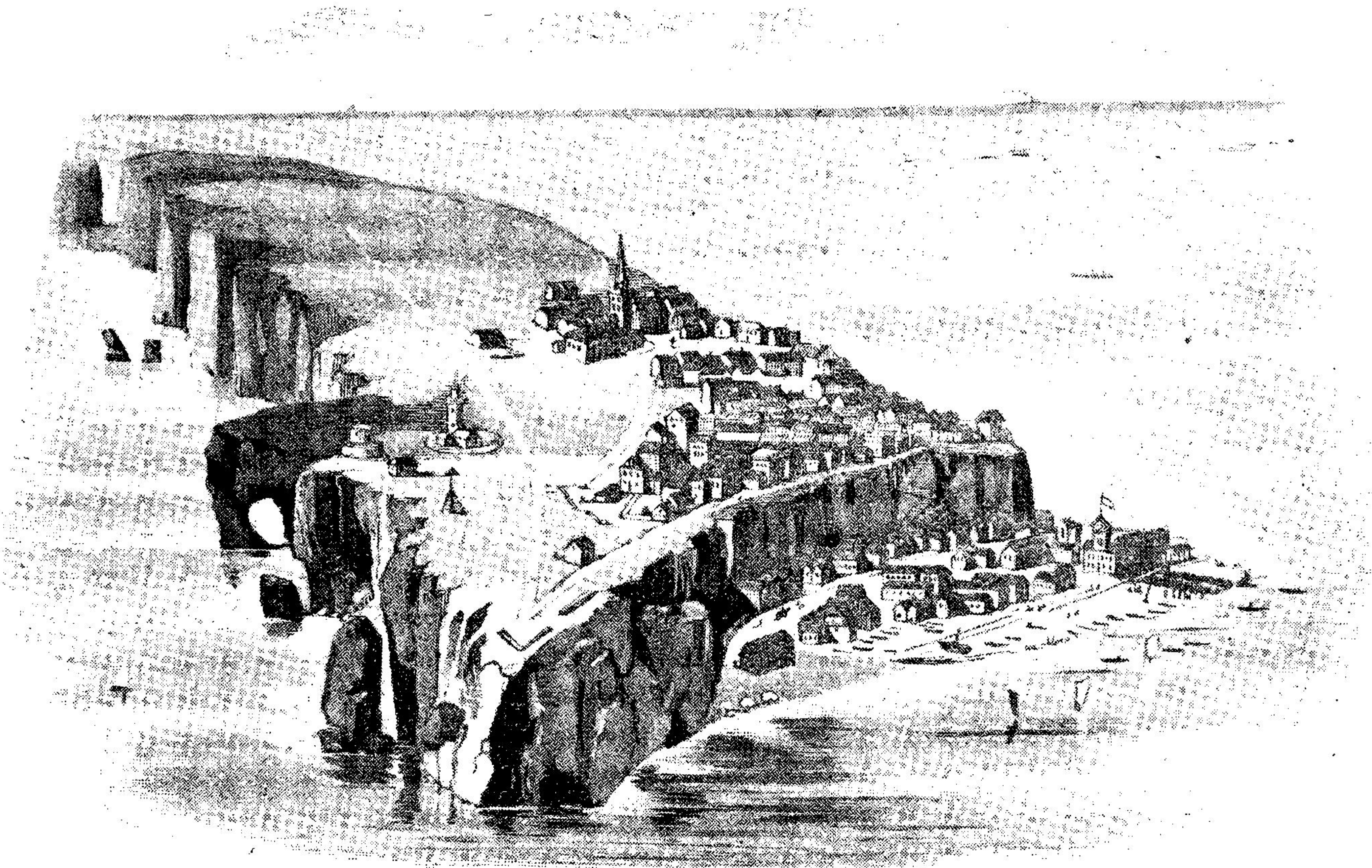
I prize immensely the first letter I ever received from my beloved father. It is written to a little boy, and has, therefore, on the top of the note-paper, a coloured view of Heligoland. I feel constrained to treat the publication of the letter in the same manner as age has treated the original, and to give it in pieces. It runs thus:—

"My Dear Charlie,

"I am very glad that you wrote a nice little note to your dear mother, and I hope it is a sign that you are always going to be diligent and thoughtful, and this will be a glad thing indeed. . . . I am delighted to hear that you are



doing so well at College. Give my love to all the students, and tell Mr. Rogers that it always cheers me to know that the brethren bear me up in their prayers.



HELIGOLAND.

“On this little island, there is a lighthouse ; you see it at the top, on the left of the picture. It is much needed, for many vessels are wrecked here. We live down below, on the beach, near the square tower with a flag on it ; that is a bath-house. Steamers come every two days, and then we can send letters ; at other times, we are far off from everybody, alone in the wide, wide sea. We have sheep’s milk, for there is no room for cows. Fish is very plentiful, and very good.

“My dear boy, I trust that you will prove, by the whole of your future life, that you are truly converted to God. Your actions must be the chief proof. Remember, trees are known by their fruit, and Christians by their deeds. God bless you for ever and ever ! Mother sends her kindest love, and so does—

“Your loving father,

“C. H. SPURGEON.”

The reference to “doing so well at College,” needs just this explanation. One of the students was, for a time, our tutor ; and, naturally, dear father took a deep interest in our educational progress. Pastor Harry Rylands Brown, now of Darjeeling, was the good brother who had us in training ; and, from that day to this, teacher and pupil have been close friends. This first letter to his firstborn exhibits the tender love that the President always had for the College, which he often termed, among his many works for the Lord, “his firstborn and best beloved.”

Among the many gifts we received from father, I recall one occasion, when a piece of gold was bestowed, as a birthday present, upon his two boys, who thereby



became the proud possessors of a magic-lantern and a few comic slides. When the toy was brought home, the kind donor gave instructions to the cook to allow the boys to show their pictures, as often as they liked, in that portion of the kitchen which would not interfere with culinary arrangements, saying, at the same time, "It won't last long, they'll soon be tired of it." This prophecy was quite sufficient to set up, within the minds of the purchasers of "this very pretty thing," a strong determination that they would not get tired of it. By the combined efforts of the two brothers, further pictures were produced upon glass, which necessitated the constant use of the lantern to test their artistic qualities; and, secretly, it was resolved that a special series should be prepared so that, during the coming Christmas, the services of Messrs. C. and T. Spurgeon might be requisitioned for the entertainment of the children who would frequent Yule-tide parties. Several engagements of this nature having been secured, and professional fees attending the lecturing exhibition having been received, they were able to hand over to the



THE YOUNG LECTURERS AND THEIR DEAR MOTHER.



President of the Pastors' College the sum of ten guineas ; and, in doing so, perhaps somewhat saucily reminded their beloved father that "they weren't tired of the magic-lantern yet." This little episode greatly charmed the heart of the original donor of the ten shillings, and proved the possibility of making a small capital bring in large interest.

When I was about twelve years of age, I was riding home with my dear father, in the brougham, after an evening service at the Tabernacle. It was "blowing great guns," there was a heavy downpour of rain, and a keen East wind, with a cutting edge, was driving it upon the pavement. It was a dark, dreary night ; and, as we came to a point where cross-roads met, father's quick eye discerned a person, whom he judged to be a poor woman, hurriedly rushing across the stones through the storm. With her skirt gathered over her head, she looked a weird spectacle ; and, in a moment, his heart was moved with compassion toward her. He cried out, "Charlie, stop the coachman ; jump out, and see if there is anything wrong with that poor creature, and find out whether you can help her." Of course, I sprang out of the carriage at once ; but I wondered what I was going to say to the woman. I overtook her, and said, "Excuse me, but is there anything the matter ? Are you in trouble ?" She replied, "Oh, dear, no ! I have been to see a friend, and have been caught in the storm. I came out without an umbrella, so I am running home as fast as I can." On repeating to dear father what she had said, he exclaimed, "That is a relief to me !" But what would he have done if she had been in distress ? He was glad that she was all right ; but I remember thinking, as I sat there by his side, "Dear me ! That woman is nothing to him, yet his heart went out towards her in pity and sympathy." It went out after everyone who was in need and distress ; and if his hand could help, its bounty speedily followed the leadings of his great heart of love.

While my brother and I were at Mr. Olding's school at Brighton, I wrote to tell my father that we had started a little prayer-meeting, in the master's drawing-room, among our school-fellows. In reply, he wrote :—"Dear boy,—One of my sweetest joys is to hear that a spirit of prayer is in your school, and that you participate in it. To know that you love the Lord, and are mighty in prayer, would be my crowning joy ; the hope that you do so already, is a happy one to me. I should like you to *preach* ; but it is best that you pray ; many a preacher has proved a castaway ; but never one who has truly learned to pray."

I understand that, in the first chapter on "A Traveller's Letters Home," father describes the very tour concerning which he wrote to me in this interesting



fashion :—" I have had a very happy journey, and am very much better. You can trace my trip thus,—I have been in stately Brussels, sniffed in odoriferous Cologne, slept in Rhine-washed Mayence, inspected regal Munich, rested in rustic Botzen, floated in palatial Venice, eaten sausage in Bologna, tarried in flowery Florence, and roamed in imperial Rome."

This reference to various places on the Continent reminds me of the great enjoyment dear father gave his two sons, in August, 1871, when he took us to Antwerp. As we went through the different churches there, he seemed to know all about every picture, each pulpit, and even the tombs; and he could tell us about the famous artists, sculptors, and carvers, upon whose works we were gazing in boyish wonderment. It was a treat to hear him describe the "Calvary" outside St.

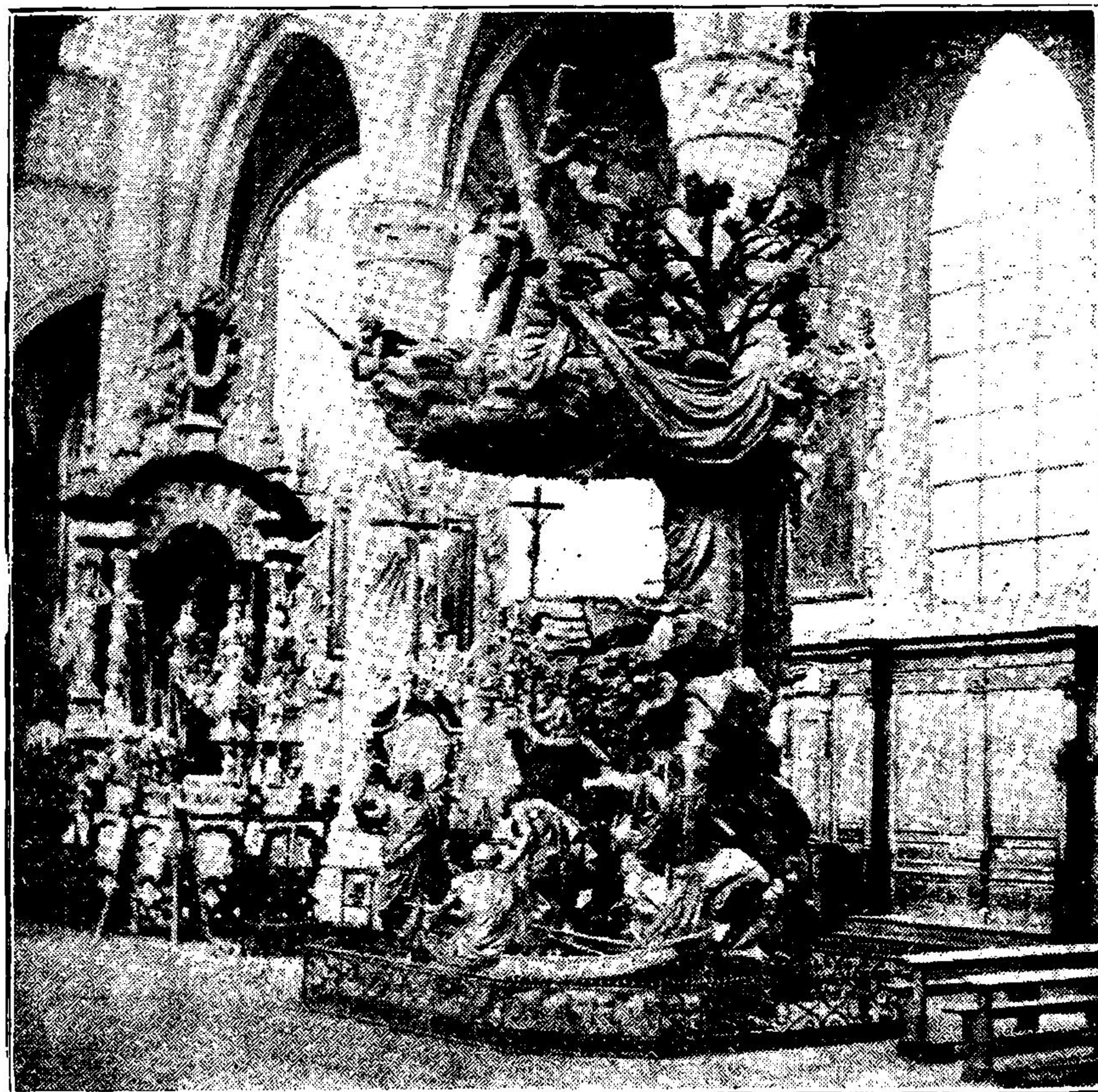


"CALVARY" OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, ANTWERP.

Paul's Church. Some persons, unacquainted with my father, have said that he was no artist; but if they had known more of him, and heard him dilate upon the noblest works by the best Flemish masters, they would have thought otherwise. He found sermons while he looked upon "The Elevation of the Cross" and "The Descent" from it, by Rubens; and with equal facility drew lessons from the masterpieces of Vandyck and Snyders. It needs a true connoisseur to discover the hidden meaning of the artist's mind, as portrayed upon the canvas, and thus to revel in the spirit of the picture; such a gift was his. Standing before the magnificent pulpit in St. Andrew's Church, he pointed out the cross which bears the apostle's name, and then gave us an exquisite sermonette upon the miraculous draught of fishes illustrated by the carved figures of Christ and His two disciples, with their fishing-boat and the nets containing the unprecedented "take." I well remember, too, how



father's righteous indignation was kindled as we stood in the famous cathedral,\* and witnessed the absurdities connected with the funeral obsequies of some great personage. No sooner had the gloomy *cortège* quitted the building, to a slow and solemn dirge rendered by the chorister monks, than a gorgeous wedding procession, with all the joyous accompaniments of marriage festivities, took its place; and thus the whole scene was quickly changed, and the mournful "*miserere*" was succeeded by the nuptial "*jubilate*." The experienced preacher extemporized a brief discourse upon the ever-varying vicissitudes of human life, as set forth by the two events; and the truths he thus inculcated, still abide, as we remember that our joys and sorrows are not so far apart as we are apt to think, for sunbeams and shadows are closely allied, after all. *Sic est vita.*



PULPIT IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, ANTWERP.

\* The mention of Antwerp cathedral always recalled to Mr. Spurgeon a memorable encounter that he once had with Rev. Edward White in that grand edifice. It took place some time after Mr. White had left the Baptist denomination, and joined (or, rather, returned to) the Congregationalists, with whom, apparently, he did not find himself much more at home than he had been with those he had left.

The dialogue that ensued, was thus reported by Mr. Spurgeon:—

Spurgeon.—Well, Mr. White, you don't seem to get on with your new friends any better than you did with your old ones.

White.—“New friends”? Why, I was a Congregationalist before I became a Baptist!

S.—Then it hath happened unto him according to the true proverb: “The dog is ——.” I need not finish the quotation (2 Peter ii. 22).

W.—Oh, you wretch, Spurgeon! What do you think would be the consequences if I were to kill you on the spot?

S.—I don't know; you are a greater authority on future-life questions than I profess to be; perhaps, for such a crime as that, you would be sent to purgatory for ten minutes!

W.—Ah! you may make fun of my teaching, but dear Samuel Martin has embraced my views of the future.

S.—Oh! has he? I don't care what views he has embraced; he is a gracious, holy man, and I shall continue to love him.

There was a pause in the discussion here, and the two ministers walked together round the cathedral, pointing out to one another what each specially admired. Presently, in an unguarded moment, Mr. White said:—“You would be grieved if you could see poor Samuel Martin; his mind has completely gone, and he has become quite childish.” In an instant, Mr. Spurgeon replied, “That explains how it is that he has embraced your views!” After that retort, Mr. White judged it expedient to give up the contest.



It has been my privilege to accompany dear father, on many occasions, to "the land o' cakes" and the county of lakes; and never had any tourist a more excellent guide. He was a veritable walking Encyclopædia; so full of information, and so gracious in imparting it, that a holiday spent with him was as instructive as a term at school, and to me, far preferable. It sometimes became amusing to see how eager folks were to show any little kindness to him. On one occasion, we were passengers on Mr. Duncan's yacht, *Varina*, and had made the passage of the Caledonian Canal, as far as Loch Etive, where, in one of the sheltered and picturesque bays, we had anchored for the night. Next morning, when breakfast was being prepared, the steward discovered that the supply of milk had run short, and that he must needs visit the shore to replenish the store. Standing on deck, I watched the progress of our caterer as he climbed the hillside, and made application at a small cottage on the border of the wood which covered the slope. Presently, a woman made her appearance, and then it soon became evident that she and the steward were having a somewhat lively conversation. In a few minutes, the man returned; but, alas! minus the milk.

He told us, when he came back, that the lady of the house would only supply it on condition that he would let her see Mr. Spurgeon, whose name he had used as his last argument. Upon my dear father learning that his appearance was required for this purpose, with his usual readiness to supply "the milk of human kindness," he came up on deck, and waved his hand in the direction of the cottage. The woman at once recognized him, and commenced a "Scotch reel" of delight. The steward had, meanwhile, again pulled to the shore; he soon disappeared within the house, and, in a few seconds, he came out, bearing a huge jug, brimful of pure milk, for which the worthy dame would not accept even twopence a quart!

At another time, I was staying with my father in a much-loved, and oft-frequented spot, in dear old Surrey, where his presence was always looked upon as a high honour. The villagers had been successful in securing a fine large carp from the pond which skirted the green, and they thought that such a good catch should at once be sent to their notable visitor; so, with great ceremony, a deputation of rustics was appointed to wait upon him. The best that any could give to him, was never reckoned too good for the man they loved; and though, in both these instances, the gifts were small, they were sufficient to prove the affectionate regard in which he was held by multitudes of people of all classes. Testimonials, amounting to thousands of pounds, have been presented to him by admiring adherents; and while the plaudits of enthusiastic crowds have greeted him as the hero of the hour, he has, in grateful terms, acknowledged the favours showered



upon him, and, while passing on the praises to the Lord, he has handed over the purses and their contents to the service of his Master. Never did a more liberal soul, nor a more grateful man, breathe, than my father.

It was a memorable period in my history when, upon leaving school, in 1874, I decided to enter upon a commercial career. If every son, upon commencing his life's battle, received such a letter as the following, there would probably be fewer defeats sustained, and more victories gained :---

“ Winchester,

“ June 26th, 1874.

“ My Dear Charlie,

“ Your kind letter was very pleasant to me, and made my birthday much happier. I am right glad to see that you intend putting on the armour in earnest for the battle of life, into which you must now enter. We have to carry babies ; but it is always a glad occasion when they run alone. After that, comes another period of carrying on a larger scale ; and then comes (as now,) the time for another running alone, as to manly, serious, earnest, industrious life-work. We do not expect you to run, in this sense, all at once ; and we shall not be surprised if there are some stumbles and failures ; but we shall hope to see you an upright man, capable of any honest achievement, and bending all your strength to accomplish an honourable life-work. I am full of hope about you ; and if I feel any anxiety, it is because I love you so well that I want you to be a greater success than other young men. I believe you love the Lord, and that is the main thing ; the next is, *stick to it*. Leave childish things once for all, and buckle to the work. It will not be pleasant, and it may even become irksome ; but the harder you work, at first, the less you will have to do in later life. The times are so pushing that you must put out all your energies ; and, above all, you must be careful, and very persevering ; and then, with God's blessing, you will soon take a position to which your father and mother can point with pleasure. If you do not preach the gospel, you must help me to do it, and make money for Jesus. With my two sons at my side, I shall be able to do marvels, if the Lord be with us.

“ Letters from your dear mother are encouraging. Do not write to me here, as I am flitting.

“ Your loving father,

“ C. H. SPURGEON.”