

The Light of the Body

By A. C. Benson

It was high noon in the little town of Parbridge; the streets were bright and silent, and the walls of the houses were hot to the touch. The limes in the narrow avenue leading to the west door of the great church of St. Mary stood breathless and still. The ancient church itself looked as if it pondered gravely on what had been and what was to be; and the tall windows of the belfry, with their wooden louvres, seemed to be solemn half-shut eyes. At the south side of the church, connected with it by a wooden cloister, stood a tall house of grey stone. In a room looking out upon the graveyard sate two men. The room had an austere air; its plain whitened walls bore a single picture, so old and dark that it was difficult to see what was represented in it. On some shelves stood a few volumes; near the window was a tall black crucifix of plain wood, the figure white. There was an oak table with writing materials. The floor was paved with squares of wood.

The two men sate close together. One was an old and weather-worn man in a secular dress of dark material; the other a young priest in a cassock, whose pale face, large eyes and wasted hands betokened illness, or the strain of some overmastering thought. It seemed as though they had been holding a grave conversation of strange or sad import, and had fallen into a momentary silence.

The priest was the first to speak. "Well, beloved physician," he said, in a slow and languid voice, though with a half-smile, "I have told you my trouble; and I would have your most frank opinion."

"I hardly know what to say," said the Doctor. "I have prescribed for many years and do not know that I ever heard the like; I must tell you plainly that such things are not written in our medical books."

The priest said nothing, but looked sadly out of the window; presently the Doctor said, "Let me hear the tale from the first beginning, dear Herbert;—it is well to have the whole complete. I would consult with a learned friend of mine about this dark matter, a physician who is more skilled than I am in maladies of the mind—for I think that more ails the mind than the body."

Well," said the priest a little wearily, "I will tell it you.

"Almost a year ago, on one of the hottest days of the early summer, I went abroad as usual, about noon, to visit Mistress Dennis who was ill. I do not think I felt myself to be unwell, and was full to the brim of little joyous businesses; I stood for a time at the porch to speak with Master Dennis himself, who came in just as I left the house, and I stood uncovered at the door; suddenly the sun stabbed and struck me, as with a scythe, and I saw a whirling blackness before my eyes and staggered. Master Dennis was alarmed, and would have had me go within; but I would not, for I had other work to do; so he led me home; that afternoon I sate over my book; but I could neither read nor think; I was in pain, I remember, and felt that some strange thing had happened to me; I recall, too, rising from my chair, and I am told I fainted and fell.

"Then I remember nothing more but fierce and wild dreams of pain. Sometimes I heard my own voice crying out; at last the pain died away, and left me very weak and sad; but I was still pent up, it seemed to me, in some dark dungeon of the mind, and the view of the room I lay in and the sight of those who visited me only came to me in short glimpses. I am told I babbled strangely; then one morning I came out suddenly, like a man rising from a dive in a pool, and knew that I was myself again; that day was a day of quiet joy; I was weak and silent, but it

seemed good to be alive. It was not till the next day that I noticed the thing that I have tried to tell you, that haunts me yet—and I can hardly put it into words.

“It seemed to me that I noticed round about those who came to me a thin veil, as it were of vapour, but it was not dense like smoke or mist; I could see them as well through it as before; it was more like a light that played about them, and it was brightest over the heart and above the brow; at first I thought it was some effect of my weak state, but as I grew stronger I saw it still more clearly.

“And then comes the strangest part of all; the light changed, according to the thoughts that were passing in the mind of the person on whom my eyes were set—the thought that it was so came suddenly into my mind and bewildered me; but in a little I was sure of it. I need not give long instances—but I saw, or thought I saw, that when the mind of the man or woman was pure and pitiful, the light was pure and clear, but that when the thoughts were selfish, or covetous, or angry, or unclean, there came a darkness into the light, as when you drop a little ink into clear water. Few came to see me; and I suppose that they were full of pity and perhaps a little love for me in my helpless state, so that the light about them was pure and even; but one day the good dame Ann, who tended me, in stooping to give me drink, thrust a dish off the table, which broke, and spilled its contents, and a dark flush came into the light that was round her for a moment.

“Then too as I got better, and was able to see and speak with my people, there came to me several in trouble of different kinds, and the light was sullen and wavering; one, whose name I will not tell you, came to me with a sin upon his mind, and the vapour was all dark and stained; and so it has been till now; and these last weeks it has been even stranger; because by a kind of practice I have been led to infer what the thoughts in the mind of each person are, at first seeing them. It is true that they have not always told me in words what the light would seem to suggest; but I have good reason to believe that the thoughts are there behind.

“Now,” he went on, “this is a sad and dreadful gift, and I do not desire it. It is horrible that the thoughts of men should be made manifest to a man, the thoughts that should be read only by God; and I go to and fro in the world with this cruel horror upon me, and so I am in evil case.”

He ceased, as if tired of speaking, and the old Doctor mused, looking on the floor—then he shook his head and said, “My dear friend, I am powerless at present; such a thing has never come to me before—you are as it were in a chamber of life that I have never visited, and I can but stand on the threshold and listen at a closed door.” Then he was silent for a little, but presently he said, “This light that you speak of—does it envelop every one?—do you see it about *me* as I speak with you?” “Yes,” said Herbert, turning his eyes upon the Doctor, “it is round you, very pure and clean; you are giving all your heart to my story; and it is a good and tender heart. You have not many sorrows except the sorrows of others,” and then suddenly Herbert broke off with a vague gesture of the hand and looked at the Doctor with a bewildered look. “Finish what you were saying,” said the Doctor with a grave look. “Nay, nay,” said Herbert with a sad air, “you have sorrows indeed—the light changes and darkens—but they are not all for yourself.”

“This is a strange thing,” said the Doctor very seriously—“tell me what you mean.

“Then you must keep from thoughts on your trouble, whatever it is,” said Herbert. “I would read no man’s secrets; but let this prove to you that I am not speaking of a mere sick fancy—turn not your thoughts on me.” Then there was a pause and then Herbert said slowly, “As far as I can read the light, you did a wrong once, long ago, in your youth, and bear the burden of it yet; and you have striven to amend it; and now it is not a selfish fear;”—the priest mused a moment—“How, if the deed has borne fruit in another, for whom you sorrow, for you think that your wrongdoing was the seed of his?”

The Doctor grew pale to the lips, and said in a low voice, "This is a very fearful gift, dear friend. You have indeed laid your finger on the sore spot—it is a thing I have never spoken of to any but God."

Then there was a silence again; and then Herbert said, "But there is another thing of which I have not told you; it is this; you know what I was before my illness—simple, I think, and humble, and with a heart that for all its faults was tender and faithful. Well, with this gift, that has all departed from me; I seem to care neither for man nor God; I see the trouble in another heart, and it moves me not. I feel as if I would not put out a finger to heal another's grief, except that habit has made it hard for me to do otherwise." And then with a sudden burst of passion, "Oh, my heart of stone!" he said.

The Doctor looked at him very sadly and lovingly, and then he rose. "I must be gone," he said, "but by your leave I will consult, without any mention of name, an old friend of mine, the wise physician of whom I spoke; and meanwhile, dear friend, rest and be still. God has sent you a very strange and terrible gift, but He sends not His gifts in vain; and you must see how you may use it for His service."

"Yes, yes, I doubt not," said Herbert wearily—"but the will to serve is gone from me—I would I were sleeping quietly out yonder—the world is poisoned for me, and yet I loved it once."

Then the old physician went away, lost in thought, and Herbert made attempt to address himself to his book, but he could not; he looked back over his life, and saw himself a simple child, very innocent and loving; he saw his eager and clean boyhood, and how the thought had come into his mind to be a priest—it was not for a noble reason, Herbert thought; he had loved the beauty of the dark rich church, the slow and delicate music of the organ, the singing of the choir, the faint sweetness of the incense smoke, the solemn figures of the priests as they moved about the altar—it had been but a love of beauty and solemnity; no desire to save others, and very little love to the Father, though a strange uplifted desire of heart toward the Lord Christ; but as he thought of it now, sitting in the afternoon sunshine, it seemed to him as though he had loved the Saviour more for the beauty of worship which surrounded Him, throned as it were so piteously upon the awful Cross, lifted up, the desire of the world, in all His stainless strength and adorable suffering, to draw souls to Him.

Then he had gone to Oxford, and he thought of his time there, his small bare rooms, the punctual vivid life, so repressed, yet so full of human movement. Herbert had won friends very easily there, and the good fathers had loved him; but all this love, looking back, seemed to him to have been called out not by the lovingness of his own heart, but by a certain unconscious charm, a sweet humility of manner, a readiness to please and be pleased, a desire to do what should win his companion, whoever it might chance to be.

Then he went for a time as a young priest to the cathedral, as a vicar, and there again life had been easy for him; he had gained fame for a sort of easy and pathetic eloquence, that allowed him to make what he spoke of seem beautiful to those who heard it, but now Herbert thought sadly that he had not done this for love of the thoughts of which he spoke, but for the pleasure of arraying them so that they moved and pleased others; and yet he had won some power over souls too, he had himself been so courteous, so gentle, so seeming tender, that others spoke easily to him of their troubles and seemed to find help in his words; then had come the day when the Bishop had sent him to St. Mary's, and there too everything had been as easy to him as before. Yes, that had been the fault all through! he had won by a certain grace what ought to have been won by deep purity and eager desire and great striving.

And this too had at last begun to come home to him; and then he had half despaired of changing himself. He had been like a shallow rippling brook, yet seemed to others like a swift and patient river; and he had prayed very earnestly to God to change his heart; to deepen and widen it, to make it strong and sincere and faithful. And was this, thought Herbert, the terrible answer? was he who had loved ease and beauty on all sides, had loved the surface and the seeming of things, to be thrust violently into the deep places of the human heart, to be shown by a dreadful clearness of vision the stain, the horror, the shadow of the world?

But what was to him the most despairing thought of all was this—and thinking quietly over it, it seemed to him that if this clearness of vision had quickened his zeal to serve, if it had shown him how true and fierce was the battle to be waged in life, and how few men walked in the peace that was so near them that they could have taken it by stretching out their hand—if it had taught him this, had nerved his heart, had sent him speeding into the throng to heal the secret sorrows that his quickened sight could see, then the reason of the gift would have been plain to him; but with the clearer vision had come this deadly apathy, this strange and bitter loathing for a world where all seemed so sweet outwardly and was so heavyhearted within. And Herbert thought of how once as a child he had seen a beautiful rose-bush just bursting into bloom; and he had gone near to draw the sweet scent into his nostrils, and had recognised a dreadful heavy odour below and behind the delicate scent of the roses, and there, when he put the bush aside, was the swollen body of a dog that had crept into the very heart of the bush to die, and tainted all the air with the horror of death. He had hated roses long after, and now it seemed to him that all the world was like that.

He came suddenly out of his sad reverie with a start; the bell of the church began to toll for vespers, and he rose up wearily enough to go. His work, he hardly dared confess to himself, was a heavy burden to him; of old he had found great peace, day by day, in the quiet evensong in the dark cool church, the few worshippers, the gracious pleading of the ancient psalms, so sweet in themselves, and so fragrant with the incense of immemorial prayer; and he thought that, besides the actual worshippers, there were round him a great company of faithful souls, unseen yet none the less present—all this had been to him a deep refreshment, a draught of the waters of comfort; but now there was never a gathering when the dark trouble of thought in other souls was not visibly revealed to him.

He went slowly across the little garden in front of the house; there by the road grew a few flowers—for Herbert loved to have all things trim and bright about him. A boy was leaning over the rail looking at the flowers; and Herbert saw, in the secret light that hung round the child, the darkening flush that told of the presence of some conscience-stricken wish. The child got hurriedly down from the rail at the sight of Herbert, who stopped and called him. “Little one,” he said, “come hither.” The child stood a moment absorbed, finger on lip, and presently came up to Herbert, who gathered a few of the flowers and put them into the child’s hands. “Here is a posy for you,” he said, “but, dear one, remember this—the flowers were mine, and you did desire them. God sends us gifts sometimes and sometimes not; when He sends them, it is well to take them gratefully, thus—but if He gives them not, and the voice within says, ‘Then will I take them,’ we must fly from temptation. Do you understand that, little one?” The child stood considering a moment, and then shyly gave the flowers back. “Ay, that is right,” said Herbert, “but you may take them now—God gives them to you!” and he stooped and kissed the child on the forehead.

A few days after the old physician came again to see Herbert, evidently troubled. He told Herbert that he had consulted his friend, who could make nothing of the case. “He said—” he added,

and then stopped short. "Nay, I will tell you," he went on, "for in such a matter we may not hesitate. He said that it was a delusion of the mind, not of the eye—and that it was more a case for a priest than for a doctor." "He is right," said Herbert. "I had even thought of that—and I will do what I ought to have done before. I will take my story to my lord the Bishop and I will ask his advice; he is my friend, and he has been a true father to my spirit—and he is a good and holy man as well."

So Herbert wrote to the Bishop, and the Bishop appointed a day to see him. The cathedral city was but a few miles from Parbridge, and Herbert went thither by boat because he was not strong enough to walk. The river ran through a flat country, with distant hills on a far horizon; the clear flowing of the water, the cool weedy bowers and gravelled spaces seen beneath, and the green and glistening rushes that stood up so fresh and strong out of the ripple pleased Herbert's tired mind; he tried much to think what he would say to the Bishop; but he could frame no arguments and thought it best to leave it, and to say what God might put in his mouth to say.

He found the Bishop writing in a little panelled room that gave on a garden. He was in his purple cassock; he rose at Herbert's entrance, and greeted him very kindly. The Bishop's face was smooth and fresh-coloured and lit with a pleasant light of benevolence. He was an active man, and loved little businesses, which he did with all his might. He, like all that knew Herbert, loved him and found pleasure in his company. So Herbert took what courage he might—though he saw somewhat that he was both grieved and surprised to see—and told his story, though his heart was heavy, and he thought somehow that the Bishop would not understand him. While he spoke the Bishop's face grew very grave, for he did not love things out of the common; but he asked him questions from time to time—and when Herbert said that the trouble had come upon him after a stroke of the sun, the Bishop's face lightened a little, and he said that the sun at its hottest had great power.

When Herbert had quite finished, the Bishop said courteously that he thought it was a case for a physician, and Herbert said that he had himself thought so, but that the doctors could do nothing, but had sent him back to the priests. Then the Bishop made as though he would speak, and cleared his throat, but spake nothing. At last he said, "Dear son, this is a strange and heavy affliction; but I think it will give way to rest and quiet—and prayer," he added a little shamefacedly. "These bodies of ours are delicate instruments, and if we work them too hard—as methinks you have done—they get overstrained in the place in which we drive them; and just as a scholar who has been disordered dreams of books, and as a doctor thus afflicted would have grievous fancies of diseases, so you, my dear son, who have been a very faithful priest, are thus sadly concerned with the souls of the flock of Christ—and so my advice is that you go and rest; and if you will, I will send you a little priest to help you for awhile—or you may travel abroad for a time, and see fresh things; and, dear son, if there be any narrowness of means, I will myself supply your necessities, and deem the money well lent to the Lord—and so be comforted!"—and he put out his hand to bless him.

Herbert was moved by the Bishop's kindness; but he felt that the Bishop did not see the matter aright, but thought it all a sad delusion; and he made up his mind to speak. So he said, "Dear father and my lord, forgive me if I speak yet further—for I am greatly moved by your kindness, but in this case there is need of great frankness. It is not indeed as your goodness thinks; indeed there is no delusion, but a real and yet grievous power of sight—which I pray God would remove from me—and that as He took the scales off the eyes of the blessed Paul, so I pray that He would put them back on mine. For I see the things I would not, and to me is revealed what ought to be hidden."

Then the Bishop looked a little angered by Herbert's insistence, and said, "Dear son, if this were a gift of God to you, it would be more than He gave even to the blessed Apostles, for we read of no such gift being given to man. Some He made apostles, and some evangelists, but we hear not that He made any to see the very secrets of the soul—such sight is given to God alone—and indeed, dear son, for I will use the same frankness as yourself, it seems to me but a chastening from God. He delivers even those He loves (like the blessed Paul himself, and Austin, and others whom I need not name) to Satan to be buffeted; and though I have myself no fault to find with your ministration, it is plain to me that God is not satisfied, and by His chastening would lead you higher yet."

"But come, for I will ask you a question. This light that you speak of, that plays about the heads (is it so?) of other men, is it always there? Has it, to ask an instance, appeared to you with *me*? I charge you to speak to me with entire freedom in this matter." So Herbert raised his eyes, and looked the Bishop in the face, and said very gravely, "Yes, dear father, it doth appear."

Then the Bishop's face changed a little, and Herbert saw that he was moved; then the Bishop said with a kind of smile, as though he forced himself, "And what is it like?" And Herbert said, looking shamefacedly upon the ground, "Must I answer the question truly?" And the Bishop said, "Yes, upon your vows." Then Herbert said, "Dear father, it is strangely dark and angry." Then the Bishop, knitting his brows, said, "Does it seem so? And how is this a true light? My son, I speak to you plainly; I am a sinner indeed—we are all such—but my whole life is spent in labour for God's Church, and I can truly say that from hour to hour I think not of carnal things, but all my desire is to feed and keep the flock. How dost thou interpret that?" And Herbert, very low, said, "My lord, must I speak?" And the Bishop said, "Yes, upon your vows." Then Herbert said very slowly and sadly, "My lord, I know indeed that your heart is with the work of the Lord, and that you labour abundantly. But can it be—I speak as a faithful son, and sore unwilling—that you have your pleasure in this work, and think of yourself as a profitable servant?"

Then the Bishop looked very blackly upon him and said, "You take too much upon yourself, my son. This is indeed the messenger of Satan that hath you in his grip; but I will pray for you if the Lord will heal you—it may be that there is some dark sin upon your mind; and if so pluck it out of the heart. But we will talk no more; I will only tell you to rest and pray, and think not of these lights and flashes, which are never told of in Holy Church, except in the case of those who are held of evil." And he rose and made a gesture that Herbert should go; so Herbert kissed the Bishop's hand and went very sadly out, for it seemed as though his burden was too great for him to bear.

There followed very sad and weary days when Herbert hardly knew how he could bear the sorrow that pressed upon him. But he preached diligently, and went in and out among his people. And in that time he helped many sad souls and set struggling feet upon the right road, though he knew it not and even cared not.

One day he was walking in the street, and came past a little mean house that lay on the outskirts of the town. There was a small and pitiful garden, sadly disordered, that lay in front of the house. Here there dwelt a wretched man named John, who had done an evil deed in his youth. He had robbed his mother, it was said, a poor and crippled woman, of her little savings; she had struggled hard for her all, but he had beaten her off, and done her violence, and she, between grief and disease, had died. In her last hour she had told the tale; her son had been driven from his employment, and the hearts of all had turned against him. He had left the place, but a few years after he had returned, a man old before his time, with a sore disease upon him, in which all readily saw the wise judgment of God.

He had settled in the little house which had been his mother's before him, and had stood vacant. But none would admit him to their houses or give him work. Occasionally, when labour was short, he had a task given him; but he was slow and feeble, and those that worked with him mocked and derided him. He bore all mockeries patiently and silently, with a kind of hunted look; but none pitied him, and the very children of the street would point at him, call him murderer, and throw stones at him. He would seek at times to do a kindness to the poor and sorrowful by stealth, but his help was often refused even with anger.

Herbert had seen a little sight a few days before that stuck in his mind. He had been passing along the road that led into the country, and had seen some way ahead of him a little child, a girl, with a heavy burden. She had put it down by the wood to rest, when John came suddenly upon her from a lane, where he had been wandering, as his manner was. The girl had seemed frightened, but Herbert, making haste to join them—for he too had a great suspicion of the man—saw him speak gently to her and lift up her burden, and walk on with her. Herbert followed afar off, but gained on the pair, and as he came up heard him speaking to her, and as Herbert thought, telling her a simple story about the birds and flowers. The child was listening half timidly, when from a gate beside the road, which led to the farm to which the child was bound, came out her mother, a tall good-humoured woman, who snatched the burden out of the hands of John, and dusted it over with her apron, as though his touch had polluted it. Then she scolded the child and then fell to rating John with very cruel words.

Herbert came up and from a distance saw John stand very meekly with bowed head; and presently he turned away when the angry woman departed, and Herbert heard him sigh very heavily. He had then half formed a purpose to speak with the man, but he trusted him little, and the old story of his crime chased pity out of Herbert's mind.

Now to-day the sight of the neglected house and wretched garden drew his mind to the outcast Herbert could not think how the man lived, and his heart smote him for not having tried to comfort him.

So he turned aside and lifted the latch, and went up under an old apple tree that hung over the path, and knocked at the door. Presently it was opened by John himself, who stood there, a wretched figure of a man, bowed with disease, and his face all ugly and scarred. Herbert, who loved things beautiful, was strangely touched with disgust at the sight of him, but he overcame it, and spoke gently to him, and asked if he might come in and rest awhile.

The man, although he hardly seemed to understand, made way for him, and Herbert entered a room that he thought the meanest and ugliest he had ever seen. The walls were green with mould, and the paved floor was all sunken and cracked. There was no table, nothing but a bench by the fireplace, on which lay coarse roots and the leaves of some bitter herb.

Herbert went on talking quietly about the fine summer and the pleasant season of the year, and sate down upon the bench. And then he had a great surprise. All about the miserable man who stood before him shone the clearest and purest radiance of light he had ever beheld about a human being, gushing in a pure fountain over his head and heart, untouched by the least spot of darkness. It came into Herbert's mind that he had found a man who was very near to God; and so he put all other things aside, and saying that he was truly sorry that he had not sought him out before, asked him in gentle and loving words to tell him all the old sad story. And there, sitting in the mean room, he heard the tale.

John spoke slowly and haltingly, as one who had little use of speech; and the story was far different from what Herbert had believed. The board was not that of John's mother, but John's own, which he had entrusted to her. He had asked it of her for a purpose that seemed good

enough, to buy a little garden where he thought he could rear fruits and flowers; but she had had the money so long that she considered it to be her own. In telling the story, John laid no blame upon her, but found much to say against himself, and he seemed bowed down with utter contrition that he had ever asked it of her. She had struck him, it seemed, and so his wrath had overmastered him, and he had torn the money from her hands and gone out. Then she had fallen sick, and died before his return, and after that no one had been willing to listen to him. Herbert had asked him what had become of the money, and John told him, with a sort of shame, that he had thrust it into the church-box—"I could not touch the price of blood," he said.

Then Herbert spoke very lovingly to him and tried to comfort him, but John said that he knew himself to be the most miserable of sinners, and that he could not be forgiven, and that he deserved his chastising every whit. And he told Herbert a tale of secret suffering and hunger and cold and weariness, such as had never fallen on Herbert's ears, but all without any thought of pity for himself—indeed, he said, God was very good to him; for He let him live, and even allowed him to take pleasure in the green trees, and the waving grass, and the voices of birds. "And some day," said John, "when I have suffered enough, I think the Father will forgive me, for I am sorry for my sin."

The water stood in Herbert's eyes, but he found some words of comfort, and knelt and prayed with the outcast, telling him that indeed he was forgiven. And he saw a look of joy strike like sunlight across the poor face, when he said that he would not fail to visit him. And he further told him that he should come to the Parsonage next day, and he would give him work to do; and then he shook his hand and departed, a little gladder than he had been for a month.

But on the next day he was bidden early to the cottage; John had been found sitting on the little bench outside his door, cold and dead, with a strange and upturned look almost as though he had seen the heaven opened.

He was buried a few days after; none were found to stand at the grave but Herbert, and the clerk who came unwillingly.

Then, on the next Sunday, Herbert made a little sermon at Evensong and told them all the story of John's life, and his atonement. "My brothers and sisters," he said very softly, making a pause, the silence in the church being breathless below him, "here was a true saint of God among us, and we knew it not. He sinned, though not so grievously as we thought, he suffered grievously, and he took his suffering as meekly as the little child of whom the dear Lord said that of such was the Kingdom. Dear friends, I tell you a truth from my heart; that in the day when we stand, if we are given to stand, beneath the Throne of God, this our poor brother will be nearer to the Throne than any of us, in robes of light, and very close to the Father's heart. May the Father forgive us all, and let us be pitiful and merciful, if by any means we may obtain mercy."

That night, in a dream, it seemed as if some one came suddenly out of a dark place like a grave, and stood before Herbert, exceedingly glorious to behold. How the change had passed upon him Herbert could not tell, for it was John himself, the same, yet transformed into a spirit of purest light. And he smiled upon Herbert and said, "It is even so, dear brother; and now am I comforted in glory—and now that you have seen the truth, the Father would have me visit you to tell you that the trouble laid upon you is departed. Only be true and faithful, and lead souls the nearest way." And in a moment he was gone, but seemed to leave a shining track upon the darkness.

The next morning Herbert awoke with a strange stirring of the heart. He looked abroad from his window, and saw the dew upon the grass, and the quiet trees awakening. And he could hardly contain himself for gladness. When he went to the church, he knew all at once that his sorrow

had departed from him, and that he saw no deeper into the heart than other men. The lights that had seemed to shine round others were gone. and his heart was full of love and pity again.

His first visit was to the house of the old physician, who greeted him very kindly; and Herbert with a kind of happy radiance told him that the trouble was departed from him as suddenly as it came; "and," he added, "dear friend, God has shown me marvellous things—I have seen a soul in glory." The old physician's eyes filled with tears and he said, "This is very wonderful and gracious."

The same day came a carriage from the Bishop to fetch Herbert, for the Bishop desired to see him. He went in haste, and was amazed to see that when the carriage came to the door of the Bishop's house, the Bishop himself came out to receive him as though he had waited for him.

The Bishop greeted him very lovingly and took him into his room, and when the door was shut, he said, "Dear son, I sent you from me the other day in bitterness of heart; for you had spoken the truth to me, and I could not bear it; and now I ask your forgiveness; you found as it were the key to my spirit, and flung the door open; and God has shown me that you were right, and that the most secret shrine of my heart, where the fire should burn clearest, was dark and bare. I gave not God the glory, but laid violent hands upon it for myself; and now, if God will, all shall be changed, and I will do my work for God and not for myself, and strive to be humble of heart," and the Bishop's eyes were full of tears. And he held out his hand to Herbert, who took it; and so they sate for a while. Then Herbert said, "Dear father, I will also tell you something. God has taken away from me the terrible gift; also He has shown me the sight of a human spirit, made perfect in suffering and patience; and I am very joyful thereat." So they held sweet converse together, and were very glad at heart.