

drawing near to the courts of God's house, and be-
take himself with greater ardour to dissipate, by
flat infidelity, his unpleasant reflections, and se-
cure what he calls his peace of mind from the inva-
sions of truth.

Again, such is the purity, and so broad the mea-
sure of God's law, as to produce almost of neces-
sity, a dislike and revulsion in the mind of the natu-
ral man. The length and breadth of the duties
which bind the disciples of Christ, alarm his fears
and reprove his defects. The self sacrifice which
they require, is deemed too great, yea, impossible
to be borne. If the terms of salvation had been
easier, his belief of divine truth would have been
wonderfully facilitated. But how, for instance,
can he brook to become humble, according to the
example and express precepts of the Redeemer?
Nothing can be more at variance with the most
powerful principles of his nature and the ends
which he has proposed to himself as absolutely in-
dispensable to his present happiness. This first
commandment of Jesus, therefore, were sufficient
to turn the full tide of his affections against the be-
lief of the gospel.

Again, it is requisite for him that would become
wise unto salvation, to receive the truth in Christ
with docility of mind, and with meekness of heart,
willing to be led, as it were, by the hand, into the
road to heaven, praying to be filled with God's
love, and to be enlightened with the knowledge of
divine truth; and surely no disposition and practice
could be more becoming in a creature towards its
Creator, in him who was fashioned out of the dust
towards an infinite and glorious God. But this is
not a rule which can very readily commend itself
to a person over-confident in his own wisdom.
He will condescend to be a believer only in his
own way, and supposes himself qualified to de-
monstrate the truth or falseness of God's word.
He will feed his objections, demur and stagger at
every seeming obstacle, till he becomes as blind to
the open radiance that beams from every page as
he that is blind is to the beauty and magnificence of
external nature.

In the same manner, it might be spoken of every
other besetting sin and sinful error. Single or
combined, they form a barrier to the reception of
the truth into the soul that can be broken down and
removed only by the power of an Almighty God.
Reason cannot surmount the fence which innume-
rable sinful habits have drawn around it. It is car-
ried captive by every passion, or thrust aside when it
refuses to judge on the side of inclination. "I will
do whatever I please," is the natural language of

every human heart; "I will believe only what
pleases me," is its no less natural and universal sen-
timent.

What then is the main distinction of the chris-
tian character? What is that which is the chief
badge of his profession? Is it that he loves to
contemplate the mysteries of christianity, that he
roves in imagination among the stately pillars and
through the magnificent and splendid apartments
of the temple? Or is it that he has duly studied
the proportions of the edifice and is acquainted with
its whole plan from the foundation upwards,
through all its passages and inmost recesses? Nei-
ther of these constitutes the chief distinction of a
believer. Neither the lofty imagination of reli-
gious things, nor the sharp understanding of reli-
gious truths can save the man in the hour of his need.
His gifts may perish with him and may only load
him, in his condemnation, with a heavier curse.—
What then is that, being possessed of which, we
possess all things, and wanting which, we yet want
all things? It is that which the Lord our God has
promised in the text, "I will take away the stony
heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart
of flesh."

A heart of flesh is one of those general expres-
sions which designate that great moral and spiritu-
al change which is at once the effect and evidence
of faith. Is it not the great and declared intent of
the scriptures, of that revelation which God has
there recorded for our use, to prepare the heart—
to furnish the soul with meekness to dwell with him
in heaven? And is this present life of believers
not manifestly represented as a condition of proba-
tion, in which by manifold trials, by unwearied pa-
tience and constant endeavours there is, as it is
represented, a race to be run, and so run, as that
the prize be obtained—a work to be achieved while
it is day, and a battle to be fought. This being the
nature of his state, it is evident that the believer
will have to encounter and overcome a multitude
of dangers and difficulties. His faith is no faith
unless it have the power to sanctify him, unless it
teach and dispose him to die unto sin and live unto
righteousness—that is, unless his heart is changed,
so as to love what God loves, which it did not do
before, and to hate what God hates, which it did
not do before. Else, why in almost every page of
the sacred word are there precept upon precept,
and line upon line—moral directions inexpressibly
various and innumerable? Else, why do we find
such minute distinctions laid down for us between
the sins that God abhors, and the acts of righteous-
ness and mercy which he loves? And why has
the believer written for him an elaborate chart of the