

should find *life*, and *life eternal*—that is, as I have said, life in the knowledge and in the love of God, which will *satisfy* and endure for ever; or, that if this is already found by us, we should possess it “more abundantly.” Now, whatever tends to make us feel that what we often call and think to be “our life,” is no life—that money, friends, or earthly enjoyments cannot fill the immortal soul, and cannot be its portion for ever;—whatever awakes us from this dream and dispels this delusion, and makes us know the excellence and *reality* of that true life, *must* be a blessing of the highest and richest kind. Yet what has such a tendency to do all this, as sorrow and those very trials we so much deplore? The pain is no doubt great—often agony—a very cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye; but the gain intended by the operation is incalculable, endless! Yet, what if all the good is lost through blindness, ignorance, and unbelief? Alas! alas! if we “go away sorrowful” from Christ, when He threatens to take away our “much riches,” in order through this discipline to induce us to follow Himself, so that by the cross we might have life eternal! Alas! when it can be said of us, “Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see and ears to hear, unto this day; that ye might know that I am the Lord your God.” “Comfort, comfort!” is the one cry of the mourner. Oh! that he sought *good*, that he sought *God*, that he sought to follow *Christ*; then, indeed, would comfort come with a *sanctifying Comforter*! But, if this end of affliction is refused, then may the sufferer be permitted to obtain the miserable delusive comfort which he alone seeks, and sorrow may pass away, and all may be loss and bitterness without gain, and the awful judgment may be passed of his *being afflicted no more*. “They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward. *Why should ye be stricken any more?* Ye will revolt more and more!” Ye who have experienced comfort from good in affliction, bless God! “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” Let the remembrance of the past, also, strengthen your faith for the future. As you let your “requests be made known to God with prayers and supplication,” do not forget the “*thanksgiving*,” for this will help you henceforth to be “careful for nothing.” He who hath led you out of Egypt, through “the depths,” and across the desert, is sufficient for you, and will never leave you or forsake you. “They who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee!”

3. But what of the *sins* you remember? You think you remember them all. No, not a tithe of them! yet if you could enumerate each sinful thought, word, and action committed during the past year and during your past life, there is something in man *worse than these*, and that is, the evil heart, the wrong mind, out of which they all proceed. The corrupt tree is worse than any definite quantity of fruit which it has produced, especially if it is to live and produce for ever. The ever-flowing bitter fountain is worse in degree than any quantity of water which can be gathered from it. Now, from what you know, and remember of sin, how do you intend to act now? To continue in sin, and possibly to perish? However dreadful the thought is, you will get many to agree with you, if such is your real intention. Many do continue in sin, and perish as sure as there is a God. Will you, then, permit this year to close, and, with all its sins, added to those of other impenitent years, to be finally sealed up for judgment? How will you stand the reading of your own biography thus written by yourself, though as unconsciously as your portrait might be daguerretyped? Read over every page, peruse the life of each day, its end and motives, and ask, Has this been the life of a man who believed there was a God to whom he was responsible? Point out one solitary proof in all these chapters of a heart which loved God, or had one mark of a sincere though an imperfect follower of Jesus Christ? And will you permit the volume to close for ever without a cry for mercy, without imploring God to wipe out or destroy in the atoning blood of Jesus these pages, which cry “Guilty” in every line? Will you not resolve through the grace given to every honest man who wishes it, to begin and write a new volume, which shall witness to a changed life, and be inscribed no longer with all that is selfish, and of the