

The Experience of Life:

In an issue dedicated to discussing the corporate Christ, the matter of dealing with sins may seem unconnected and less than significant in comparison with the loftiness of the heavenly vision which should govern our living and our work in the Body of Christ. It is often, however, the very presence of undealt with sins which obscures not only our fellowship with the Lord but also our fellowship with the members of the Body. May this article encourage us in our pursuit of a basic life practice which can serve as a foundation for not only seeing but entering into a fuller experience of the corporate Christ. This article is taken from the 1968 edition of *The Experience of Life* published by Living Stream Ministry.

Now that we have considered consecration, we must look into various dealings. "Dealing" implies that we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to purge away all the difficulties which hinder the growth of life. The more we are being dealt with, the more God's life grows in us. The more God's life grows in us, the more we are being dealt with. These two cannot be separated; they are two aspects of the same matter. Therefore, the dealings constitute an extremely important position in our experience of life. We can say that this is a major portion of experience in life.

Why do we approach the subject of dealing directly after consecration? Because it is the natural result of consecration. Once we have consecrated ourselves to God that He may use us, God must cleanse us, deal with us, and purge away all our problems so that we may be fit for His use. If we wish to use a glass, we would first want it to be washed. When it is completely clean, it is a glass which we can use. Before we consecrate ourselves, or when we depart from a consecrated position, we do not realize that we need to be dealt with. When we consecrate ourselves, or when we return to the position of consecration, we immediately discover that there are many difficulties in us which prevent God from using us. Therefore, if we desire to fulfill the purpose of our consecration, we need to have all our difficulties dealt with one by one. When we have purged ourselves in such a way, we will become a vessel unto honor, meet for the Master's use (2 Tim. 2:21). We



by Witness Lee

should, therefore, deal with ourselves directly after consecration.

Of course, in the clearance of the past when we were newly saved, there were many dealings involved, but these dealings were primitive and shallow. The thorough and deep kind of dealings take place after consecration. We have said that under normal circumstances, once a person is saved, he will have a proper clearance. This proper clearance will bring forth a sound consecration. However, after we have consecrated ourselves, we discover that there are more things to be dealt with, and we deal with them more thoroughly. Thus, sound consecration brings forth proper dealings. The stronger the consecration, the more severe are the dealings; the truer the consecration, the more thorough are the dealings. When we have been completely dealt with so that there are no further difficulties in us, we shall be wholly used by God, and the purpose of consecration will be fully attained.

Among all the difficulties which need to be dealt with, sins are the crudest, the most defiling, and the most evident. After having consecrated ourselves, the first thing we need to deal with is sins. Dealing with sins is the first lesson in our experience of dealings.

The Scriptural Basis

The following references give the scriptural basis for dealing with sins:

Matthew 5:23-26, "If therefore thou art offering thy gift

at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way: lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the last farthing.” Here, “reconciled” and “agree with” refer to dealings concerning our relationships with others.

2 Corinthians 7:1, “Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Here, “cleanse” also refers to a kind of dealing. First John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Here “confess” is again a kind of dealing.

Proverbs 28:13, “He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.” Here “confesseth” and “forsaketh” speak also of a dealing.

We see from the above Scriptures how we are to deal with sins: towards men, we must be reconciled with them and agree with them; towards God, we must confess our sins; and concerning sin, we must forsake it. These kinds of settlement of sin are what we mean by dealing with sins.

The Object of Our Dealing with Sins

The object of our dealing with sins is the sins themselves. There are two aspects with regard to sin: the nature of sin within and the action of sin without. The nature of sin within us is in the singular form; the action of sin without is in the plural form. The singular form of sin is the life of Satan within us, with which we have no way of dealing—the more we deal with it, the more alive it becomes. The dealing with sins of which we are speaking is our dealing with the sins which we commit outwardly, the sins in our actions.

What are the sins in our actions? First John 5:17 says, “All unrighteousness is sin.” First John 3:4 says, “Sin is lawlessness.” Both references show that in our actions all acts of unrighteousness and lawlessness are sins. It is difficult to distinguish between unrighteousness and lawlessness. All lawlessness is unrighteousness, and all unrighteousness is lawlessness. Therefore, all deeds of unrighteousness and lawlessness are the sins of our actions and the object of our dealing.

Romans 2:14-15 says that those of the nations which have

no law are a law to themselves: they show the work of the law written in their hearts. Their conscience is the law within them which bears witness, and their thoughts either accuse or else excuse them. All deeds which are right and lawful are justified by our conscience; all deeds which are not right and lawful are condemned by our conscience. All actions, therefore, that are contrary to our conscience are actions of sins and the object of our dealing.

We have said that the object of our dealing with sins is the external actions of sins. This external action of sins has two aspects: the record of sin and the fact of sinning. The record of sin denotes the unrighteous and lawless deeds which offend the righteous law of God and result in our having a record of sin before the law of God. In the future, God will judge us according to this record. The fact of sinning is the very act which establishes the record of sin. These sinful acts always fall short of the glory of God and, in either a perceptible or an imperceptible manner, hurt others. For example: stealing is an act of sin. By so doing, not only do we put the name of God to shame, but we also cause damage to others. This constitutes the fact of sinning. At the same time, we have offended the law of God. Henceforth, before His law we have a record of sin. Therefore, whenever we commit a sin, we have immediately the fact of sinning not only against God, but many times also against man. At the same time we have a record of sin before God.

Since the action of sins has these two aspects, the object in dealing with sins likewise has two aspects. One is the record of our sin before God, the other is the fact of sinning. On one hand we need to deal with our record of sin before God, and on the other hand we need to deal with the fact of our sinning.

The Basis of Dealing with Sins

Our object in dealing with sins includes all the sins we have committed. In carrying it out, however, God does not require us to deal with all the sins at once, but to deal with all those that we are conscious of while in fellowship with Him. We do not mean to say that we must deal with all the sins that we have actually committed, but only with those we are conscious of while in fellowship with God. The basis, therefore, of dealing with our sins is the consciousness we have while in fellowship with God.

We read in the Scripture concerning this in Matthew 5:23 and 1 John 1:7. Matthew 5:23 says, “If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother have aught against thee...” then go and deal with it quickly. Offering the gift is for fellowship with God. Therefore this means that when we are having fellowship with God and are conscious of any discord between ourselves and others, or vice versa, we should immediately

endeavor to rectify this situation lest our fellowship with God be affected or hindered. First John 1:7 indicates that if we have fellowship with God, we can see our sins in His light; then, according to what we have seen in His light, we are to confess this to God and deal with it before God in order to obtain God's forgiveness and cleansing. Matthew 5 speaks of our problems with others, 1 John 1 about our problem with God. One is the remembering by the altar; the other is the seeing in the light. Both indicate our consciousness while in fellowship with God. It is based on this consciousness that we have dealings towards man and God. Therefore, the basis for our dealing with sins is our consciousness while in fellowship with God.

Our dealing with sins is based only on the consciousness while in fellowship with God, not on all the facts of all the sins we have committed. Therefore, the realm of the basis is much smaller than the realm of the object. For example: if we have actually committed one hundred sins, but when we approach God we remember only ten sins while in fellowship with Him, we should deal with those ten sins of which we are conscious. If we are aware of only ten percent, we deal with ten percent; if we are aware of twenty percent, we deal with twenty percent. In other words we deal only with the number of sins which we remember. The number of sins we recognize are the ones with which we are obliged to deal. This is the principle of remembering as stated in Matthew 5, and this is our principle in dealing with sins. We can leave undealt with for the time being the sins of which we are not aware, until such time as we do become aware of them in fellowship with God. Practically speaking, dealing with sins is not an ordinance of the law, but a requirement of fellowship.

How is it that we can leave those unconscious sins undealt with for the time being? We can do so because unconscious sins do not affect our fellowship with God. If a person is guilty of an unrighteous act, others may become conscious of his wrong doing, but he himself may not be aware of it. His conscience is still blameless. For this reason he can still pray and have fellowship with the Lord, and he can serve God and testify for God as usual; his spiritual life and service remain unaffected. But whenever he is aware of this sin and still does not deal with it, he has a guilty conscience; his fellowship with the Lord is hindered, and his spiritual life and service are not normal. According to Matthew 5, if one remembers something which needs to be dealt with and neglects to deal with it, his fellowship with God is immediately interrupted. He must deal with it quickly until it is completely cleared up; then he can have fellowship once more with God. First John 1:7 states the same fact. If one recognizes his sin while in the light of fellowship and does not deal with it, his fellowship is immediately hindered. Therefore, if we

are not conscious of the sins which we have committed, we do not need to deal with them. If, however, we are aware of them, we should deal with them quickly; otherwise, our conscience will accuse us, our faith will become shipwrecked, and all spiritual things will thereby leak out (1 Tim. 1:19).

Hence, when we help others to deal with sins, we do not ask them to deal with their unconscious sins, but with their conscious sins. When one becomes aware of his sin and either neglects or refuses to deal with it, then we can help him and lead him to deal with it.

The same is true when we examine our experience in dealing with sins. We do not ask how many sins we have committed which we have not dealt with, but how many conscious sins we have not dealt with. We can leave our unconscious sins undealt with for the time being, but the conscious ones should be dealt with speedily. Up to the present time there are many brothers and sisters who have not come to absolute obedience with regard to the feelings they have while in fellowship with God. For example, someone may have committed one hundred unrighteous deeds and has become aware of twenty of them while in fellowship with God, but in practice he deals with only five. A problem, therefore, exists in his fellowship with the Lord. His spirit is not strong, and his prayer cannot be released. His condition before the Lord is greatly damaged.

We see, therefore, that the consciousness of fellowship upon which we base our dealing with sins is not absolute, but differs according to the degree of depth of fellowship the individual has with the Lord. The same unrighteous deed may be a sin in the eyes of one person, whereas in the eyes of another it is not a sin. This is because the degree of fellowship in the one is deeper than in the other; so the consciousness of fellowship of one is keener than that of the other. For instance, one may tell a lie in a very evident manner, and everyone knows that it is a sin; others may lie by telling the truth. To the average individual the latter may not be sin, but those in deep fellowship with the Lord know that this also is a lie and must be dealt with.

For example, Brother A is entering the room of Brother B. Brother B sees him coming and hurriedly arranges his bed. Brother B comes later to Brother A in order to deal with this situation, saying: "Brother, when I saw that you were coming into my room I arranged my bed; this is pretension." By arranging his bed in such a way he felt that he was pretending; hence, he had sinned and wished to clear it up. Others who are not quite so sensitive would consider this act as a polite and necessary gesture. This is because the degree of fellowship differs, and so also the consciousness differs.

Furthermore, the feeling in the same individual may also vary according to the difference in his stage and depth of fellowship. Should someone have told him about a certain sin two years ago, he would not have admitted it, but his fellowship during the past two years has deepened, and he has become more sensitive. No longer does he wait for others to condemn him; within himself he recognizes the sin and realizes that it must be dealt with.

Dealing with sins, therefore, is based on the consciousness we have while in fellowship with the Lord, and the consciousness we have while in fellowship with the Lord in turn is based on the depth of this fellowship. If the degree of our fellowship is deep, our consciousness will be keen and strong. If, on the other hand, the degree of our fellowship is shallow, our consciousness will be dull and weak. It is similar to the air in the room, which at first glance seems quite clean and free from dust. The fact is that the light is not strong enough, so that our vision is not able to pierce the atmosphere and detect the dust. When the sunlight enters the room, under such strong illumination, we may observe many dust particles in the air. In like manner, we are guilty of many unrighteous and unlawful deeds, among which may be

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the coarser and more serious sins, which are easily recognized; but there are many finer or less serious sins which are not so easily discerned. Not until our fellowship in life deepens will we be enabled to recognize these and deal with them. Hence, we should never measure others by the yardstick of our own consciousness, nor should we accept the consciousness of others as a yardstick by which to measure ourselves. Everyone should learn to deal with sins only according to his own consciousness at the time he is in fellowship with the Lord.

We should realize at the same time that although we deal with our conscious sins, this by no means indicates that all our sins have been completely dealt with, for there are still many facts of sins of which we are not conscious. If we wish, therefore, to deal with our sins thoroughly, we should strengthen our fellowship with God. As this fellowship is strengthened, our consciousness concerning sin will become correspondingly broadened, and our dealing with sins more thorough.

How should we strengthen our fellowship? First, we should enlarge the sphere of our fellowship. The extent of

our consciousness is the extent of our fellowship. In fellowship we unfold everything before the Lord. When we do this, we have a consciousness concerning everything and can thereby deal with everything. At the same time, as we deal with our conscious sin, our fellowship will naturally increase. Then, as our fellowship increases, more sins will be revealed, and we will increase our dealings. The more we deal with sins and the more our fellowship increases, the broader the area of our consciousness becomes, and the more our dealings increase. Thus, our dealings cover every aspect.

Secondly, we should deepen the degree of our fellowship. As the area of our fellowship broadens, we deal with every sin, but these dealings are not thorough. It is for this reason that our fellowship with the Lord needs to be deepened. As our fellowship is deepened, our consciousness is correspondingly deepened. Realizing that our former dealings were not sufficiently thorough, we deal again. More dealing brings in deeper fellowship, and as the fellowship is deepened, we experience more dealings. Then not only are all the sins dealt with which need to be dealt with, but they are dealt with in a very thorough manner.

The Limit of Our Dealings with Sins

The limit of our dealing with sins is similar to that of our clearance of the past. It is life and peace. When we deal with sins, we should do it until we have life and peace within. If we follow our consciousness in dealing with sins, we will feel inwardly satisfied, strengthened, refreshed, and quickened; we will also feel joyful, restful, comfortable, and secure. Our spirit will be strong and living, and our fellowship with the Lord will be free and without hindrance. Our prayers will be releasing and with authority, and our utterance will be bold and powerful. All these senses and experiences are the conditions of life and peace. This is the limit of our dealing with sins, and this also is the result of our dealing with sins. What we have said before about dealing with sins thoroughly implies that we deal with sins to such a state of life and peace.

The Practice of Dealing with Sins

We have previously said that there are two aspects with regard to the object of dealing with sins: one is the record of sin before God, and the other is the actual deed of sin. When we practice dealing with sins, therefore, these two aspects must be dealt with. First, the record of sin must be abolished; and, second, we must deal with the actual committing of sin.

The abolishing of our record of sin before God is based upon the redeeming work of our Lord on the cross. Our

Lord bore for us the righteous judgment of God. His blood satisfied the requirement of God's law on our behalf; therefore, all our record of sin before God has been abolished. However, if this objective fact is to become our subjective experience, there is still the need of application. We will speak of this application by dividing it into two stages: before we are saved and after we are saved.

Acts 10:43 says: "Every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." These are the words of the apostle when preaching the gospel to the unsaved. He told them that all the sins they committed before being saved would be forgiven if they would only believe. The abolishing of our record of sin before we are saved depends upon our believing. The application, therefore, is through our believing.

First John 1:9 says that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." These words were written by the apostle to those who are saved, and they refer to all the sins we commit after we are saved. If we become conscious of them in His light, we must confess them before God; then we will be forgiven and cleansed. The abolishing of our record of sin after we are saved, therefore, depends upon our confession. Here the application is through our confession. If we do not confess, God will not forgive or cleanse. The moment we confess, we obtain forgiveness and cleansing. If we confess while still in this world, we obtain forgiveness while still here. If we do not confess while here, we will still have to confess in the coming kingdom before we can obtain forgiveness. This forgiveness is called the forgiveness in the kingdom. In conclusion, we obtain forgiveness for all the sins committed after we have been saved through our confession. This confession is our dealing before God.

How should we deal with the actual committing of sin? If we have offended God, we must deal with it before God and ask His forgiveness. If we have sinned against man, we should deal with it before man by asking man's forgiveness. If our act of sinning against man involves only a moral matter, we have only to confess this and apologize before man. If it also involves a loss of money and profits, then we should pay accordingly the amount we owe. This act of apologizing and reimbursing applies not only to sins committed after we are saved; we must also deal with all those sins committed before we were saved; we must deal with them one by one before man according to the inner consciousness. This dealing with sins before man is the major part of this matter of dealing with sins, and we should take heed to practice it.

When we deal with sins before man, there are four basic principles we should remember and by which we should abide.

The first principle is to dispel all discord between others and ourselves. Every sinful act of ours, when become known to others, whether it causes damage to them or not, results in a discordant condition between us. For instance: if we abuse or curse another person, we have on one hand a record of sin before God, and we have made on the other hand a bad impression upon the one we have cursed and also upon any others who were present. Thus, it is difficult for us all to live together in harmony as before. Therefore, if, after being enlightened, we become conscious of this, we have on the one hand to confess it to God and ask His forgiveness, and on the other hand to go to the persons concerned—the one who was cursed and any others who were present—to apologize and also to deal with what we have said. By doing this, the bad impression we have given them will be eradicated, and we can live together as formerly. The first principle, therefore, in dealing with sins is to dispel all discord between others and ourselves.

Therefore, under this principle, even our forgiving of others and our seeking peace with others are also included in this dealing. Whether we are forgiving others or seeking peace with others, the purpose is to dispel all bad impres-

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sions and discordant situations between others and ourselves, so that in the universe we can live peaceably and harmoniously with God and with man.

The second principle in dealing with sins is to have a clean conscience, void of offense. The dispelling of a discordant situation is in relation to man, but the possession of a clean conscience, void of offense, is in relation to ourselves. Every sin we have committed not only causes disapproval in others but also brings condemnation to our conscience. Not only will it cause others to have a bad impression of us, but it will also cause our conscience to have guilty stains. Therefore, our dealing with sin is not only to dispel the bad impressions caused in others, but also to remove the guilt in our own conscience, so that our conscience will be clean and void of offense.

The third principle in dealing with sins is to testify to the salvation of God. Because of the enlightenment of God's life, every person who has really been saved by God has a strong feeling about sins and therefore deals with them constantly. If one is willing to disregard loss and shamefacedness and deal with sins willingly and humbly, it is a

strong testimony that God's salvation has come upon him. If he deals with sins continuously, it is proved even more that the grace of God is still working in him. Each real dealing with sins, therefore, is the issue of the grace of God working in him and is a strong testimony of God's grace.

The fourth principle in dealing with sins is to benefit others. Every time we deal with sins, the object is not only to dispel the discordant condition between ourselves and others, to cause our conscience to be clean and void of offense, or to testify to the salvation of God, but also to benefit others. When dealing with our own sins, we should never cause damage or trouble to others. The result of our dealing with sins is peace within ourselves and peace also within others. Thus, we cause others to be benefited both spiritually and materially, and they are thereby edified.

The four principles in dealing with sins which we have mentioned are those to which we should give heed in carrying out these dealings. Irrespective of the sin with which we are dealing and regardless of how we deal with it, we should always take care of these four principles by asking: Will this dealing dispel the discordant condition between others and ourselves? Will it cause our conscience to be clean and void of offense? Will it enable us to testify to the salvation of God and thereby give Him glory? And can we benefit others by it? If the answers to these questions conform to the four principles, we may bravely proceed then to deal with the sin. If, however, one of the answers does not conform to one of these principles, we should be careful; otherwise, the enemy will take advantage of our dealing and use it to produce an opposite result. In order that our dealings be properly and soundly carried out to the end that God may be glorified, that we obtain grace, and that others be benefited, we shall now discuss a few technical points in accordance with the four principles we have mentioned.

First, the Object of Our Dealing. We should go to whom-ever we have offended and deal with the matter. If we have sinned only against God, we deal with God alone. If we have sinned against God and man, we deal with both God and man. We deal with sins according to the number of persons we have sinned against. It is not necessary to deal with those against whom we have not sinned. Concerning the principle of dispelling a discordant condition, we are obliged to go to those against whom we have sinned, who already have a bad impression of us, and deal with the sin in order that the discordant condition existing between them and ourselves may be dispelled. As for those against whom we have not sinned, the relationship is harmonious. If we go to them and deal with our sin, we thereby give them a bad impression about ourselves, thus violating the first principle of our dealing with sins.

If we confess our sin to those against whom we have not sinned or to those who do not know our sin, we not only give them a bad impression regarding us, but we may also arouse gossip, which would only do more harm to those against whom we have sinned. In the past there have been those who have not dealt with sins in a careful way. They confessed their sins publicly, with the result that those against whom they had sinned were completely ruined, even to the extent that husband and wife were divorced, and brothers hated each other. Irreparable damage was thus done. When we deal with sins, therefore, we should take the sphere of our sin as the sphere of our dealing. Our dealing should not exceed the sphere of the sin which we have committed. This is the safe way to obtain peace within and not harm others.

Second, the Circumstance of Our Dealing with Sins. In whatever circumstance we have sinned, we should deal with the sin accordingly. If we have sinned openly, we deal with it openly; if we have sinned secretly, we deal with it secretly. The sin we have committed in private does not require our dealing with it in public. If we have sinned against a person behind his back, we do not have to deal with him face to face; it is enough that we deal with it by ourselves secretly. Otherwise, we will increase the discordant condition and thus violate the principle of dispelling discord.

For example, if some have been dishonest regarding money matters in an organization, unknown to the one in charge, they are not obliged to announce it publicly; they need only repay in private according to the amount they owe. If we hate someone without his knowing it, we need only repent in heart, without going to him. Thus, by not dealing with him regarding this sin, he will have no knowledge of it and will not receive any bad impression of us. If we deal with him regarding this sin, we may leave an unhappy trace upon his heart. However, if we hate somebody and this has become known to him, we should go to him and deal with the sin so that the hindrance may be eradicated between him and us.

Third, the Responsibility of Our Dealing with Sins. When we deal with sins, we should only deal with that part for which we are responsible; never involve others. For instance, I and others have together committed the same sin. In dealing with this sin, I must use wisdom in handling that portion for which I am responsible. I should not expose what others have done and cause them difficulty. Otherwise, my dealing will not conform to the principle which we have mentioned of benefiting others.

Fourth, the Reimbursing of Others. If the sin we have committed involves material things or the gain of others, we should make restitution. When we restore what we have taken, we should pay according to the original value and

add a little more to compensate for the loss. In the Old Testament, in Leviticus 5, it is stated that one-fifth should be added. In the New Testament we have the example of Zacchaeus (Luke 19) restoring fourfold to those whom he had cheated. These are not laws or regulations, but principles and examples to show us that whenever we make restitution, we should add something to the original value. With regard to the amount to be added, we may be guided by our inner feeling and our financial situation at the time. However, if we can afford it, we should see that the reimbursement fully repays the loss of those whom we owe, and that we also have peace within.

Sometimes the amount we owe others is beyond our means to repay. In this case we should ask their forgiveness and request them to allow us to repay either when we have sufficient means or in installments until they are fully paid.

The object of our restitution, of course, should be the owner himself. If the owner has passed away, if he has gone to an unknown place, or if there is no way to communicate with him and it seems impossible for us to see him again, we can repay the debt to his nearest relative. If we cannot locate his nearest relative, we should give it to God (Num. 5:7-8). Everything comes from God and belongs to God. God is the origin of everything and the ultimate end of everything. Therefore, we give God everything in the absence of the owner.

Practically speaking, when we give to God, we give to His representative on the earth. God's representative on the earth today is first of all the church. We can, therefore, put the debt into the offering box of the church. God's representative is secondly the poor. Proverbs 19:17 says, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah." All human needs on this earth are supplied by God; therefore, when we give money to the poor, it is the same as giving to God. If there is no church where we live and it is not convenient to send the amount to another church in a different locality, we can give what we owe to the poor. In conclusion, the owner is the first to be reimbursed. If the owner is not available, we may give the amount to his nearest relative. If there is not such a relative, we should give it to the church. If there is no church, we give it to the poor.

Anything we find that has been lost comes under the same principle. If we know the owner, we should return it to him. If we do not know the owner, we should dispose of it in a suitable manner or give it to the poor.

In conclusion, the purpose of our dealing with sin is that we might have a clean conscience, void of offense, and also that our will might be subdued. Whenever God

enlightens us, we should be willing to deal with our sin, whatever it may be, not caring for our face or counting the loss. When we have reached such a stage, we can say that the purpose of God in having us deal with sins is accomplished. If at the time the environment does not permit, if we cannot possibly afford the financial burden, or if there is no value in dealing with the matter, we need not be too harsh on ourselves or adhere too much to the letter of the law. There is no harm if we do not deal with it. However, when we first begin to practice dealing with sins, it is better to be as thorough and severe as possible. Even if we overdo somewhat and afterward regain our balance, it is still well. This overdoing is also helpful in making our conscience clean and sensitive and our will subdued and tender.

Dealing with Sins and Life

If we have studied every point with regard to dealing with sins, we know that it is not an ordinance in the law, but a natural demand and urge of God's life within us. If we live in fellowship and obey the feeling of this demand of life to deal with sins, our spiritual life and service will be strong and released, we shall constantly receive light to know spiritual things, and God's life in us will be free and far-reaching in its growth. Conversely, if the spiritual condition is abnormal, light is absent, and the inner feeling is weak, miserable, and suppressed, whether it be in an individual saint or a corporate church, the reason is found largely in the lack of dealing with sins. This is a very accurate measurement.

Since dealing with sins has such a close relationship with our spiritual life, we should endeavor to experience this lesson continuously. Although this experience is not a deep one, yet no one can be so spiritual as to say that they have no need to deal with sins. It is difficult to graduate from this lesson. We should not only ask ourselves, therefore, if we have ever had these experiences, but we should also ask ourselves if we are now living in such an experience. We not only have to wash our face, but we need to wash it every day. If we washed our face three years ago and have not washed it since, it must be a dreadful looking face! In the same manner, unless we are free from committing sins every day, we need to deal with sins daily.

There was a young believer who came to inquire of a servant of God concerning how to grow in his spiritual life. The servant of God asked him: "How many days have gone by in which you have not dealt with sins?" How true it is that if we desire our spiritual life to grow, we need to deal with sins. The day that we do not deal with sins, our spiritual life does not grow. By dealing with sins daily, our spiritual life will grow daily. This is an ironclad principle. May God have mercy upon us so that we may continue to go forward. 