

We are glad to have you good people here to night. You encourage our hearts. We welcome the other denominations in these services and want you to feel that the services are yours as well as ours. I like the spirit of cooperation manifested among the different denominations. I am glad we have different denominations for otherwise we might become too independant.

I read of a man the other day who was a merchant in a certain town and the firm from which he had bought a bill of goods sent him a stiff letter wanting him to pay up. This merchant wrote him back something as follows:

Dear Sir:

I got your letter demanding payment of ~~my~~ my bill. You wrote to the mayor about my honesty and being mayor of the town I have that communication. You wrote to the depot agent to know if I got the goods and being the agent I will say yes I got them. You wrote to the president of the bank as to my financial standing and being president of the only bank in town I will say my standing is good. And I just want to say that if I were not a minister-and the only pastor in town I would tell you to the hot country.

## HOW MUCH ARE YOU IN DEBT?

Text

"How much owest thou unto my lord?"

Luke 16:5

*Read Eccles 5:1-9*

Debt is not necessarily disgraceful within its self, for if it were then every body would be disgraced some time in their lives. The disgrace comes from the attitude we may take toward our financial obligations. Here is a young man on a Mission charge and he has made an honest debt. He writes me if the Board of Missions could send him a small donation that he might keep his name clear in the community where he preaches. We send him a pittance and he settles a part of his obligation and renews his note thereby doing the best he could. Debt in that case was not disgraceful. Here is another young man and I send him his quarterly check that the Board has appropriated to him. He deposits that check in a bank and draws out half of when he is informed by the bank that the bank at Booneville was closed before his check reached there and the bank here could not realize the money on his check. He is asked to come around to the bank and settle for money drawn out or make a note for same. He disregards letter after letter for almost one year. In that case debt becomes disgraceful. A colored brother came to me during their conference here and asked for me to lend him some few dollars that he might pay out his claims, for said he if he could pay in full it would get him a good appointment as no one else in his district would pay in full. He was to pay me when he was paid off for secretarial work. When paid he did not have enough to settle with me. He paid part and was to pay ~~rest~~ in ten days for he was appointed to the good charge. About four months have passed and he has never answered a letter yet. His brother found out I HAD LOTS OF MONEY and came to borrow enough to pay R.R. fair home. I let him have it. In a weeks time I received a M.O. for the amount. You can see the point I am sure. *If I can't pay what I owe I ought to tell them so*

I do not want to know your business obligations to day and I am not asking for any information on that. I am intensely interested in your business and crave that every body may be at ease as to those things. Debt is looked upon with such importance (Debt even to man) that when a young preacher is received into the conference he is asked "Are you in debt so as to embarrass you?" And there is hardly anything will shear a preacher of his good influence quicker than being in debt..if he will not make some arrangement about it.

"How much owest thou my lord?"

1. In the first place I owe to my Lord a clean life. I nor any one else has any legal or moral excuse for not living for Jesus a life that is clean...snowy white.
2. Along with a clean life I owe to Jesus an active life so far as my physical life is concerned. Ill Mr. Cavett.
3. I owe it to my Lord to build the right sort of home. I am not speaking of residence for many can not do that, but the real home.
4. Then there is that further debt that I owe to my Lord to keep my vows that I made to the church.

When a party becomes a member of the church he becomes obligated to its program. Just like a man taking oath of office to execute the laws of the town. If he keeps one or some of those laws and enforces one or some of them but fails to enforce the others he has violated his oath. Such practice kept up will ruin the town government. So when I take the vows of my church I become party to its program. I am obligated to carry out its program.

The question arises, "What is the program of the church to which I have become a member?" That is a good question to ask. Any person ought to be intelligent concerning any organization that he is a member of.

Now the program is something like this: Preach and teach the gospel of Jesus. Begin that preaching he said in Judaea~~n~~ Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Then it is to be preached and taught at home. Keep the home fires burning so that the light may shine into the other parts of the world. He wants the word to get to the uttermost parts of the world. Now to do that is a debt I owe to my Lord.

Now how are you going to get it to the outer edges of the world?

1. Let us try this method, close up your churches at home. Have no weekly meetings. How long would the gospel go into the other parts of the world?
2. Do not close the doors of the church but turn off the pastors. That might be a good method to be tried out as a matter of economy. Some have tried this and for some cause it was not long till the owls and bats were its attendants. There is a church less than ten miles from Water valley in this condition and the only thing prominent about it now is the grave yard
3. The only method left is to open your church, have a pastor to move around amongst the people, bury their dead, baptize the babies and adults, marry those in love---none others---and preach the gospel. Then keep up a live S.S. wherein you teach the children to support the home church and send off to missions. Teaching them that every item contained in the church budget is vital. These are:
  - a. American Bible society.
  - b. Hospitals
  - c. Superannuates
  - d. Rel education
  - e. Pastors salaries
  - f. General conference expenses
  - g. Bishop and P.E.'s salaries.
  - h. Salaries for home and foreign missionaries.

Aside from the budget you have other organizations that raise money for various causes. The W.M.S., the S.S. and Epworth Leagues or as it now is the young peoples division. Your main contribution to the Kingdom is thru the budget of the church. If the budget is not supported then the churches hospitals, colleges, most of the foreign and home missionaries will have to cease their activities. Now when you join the church you take this vow:

"Will you be subject to the discipline of the M.E?Church South, attend upon its ordinances, and support its institutions?" Your answer was:

"I will endeavor so to do by the help of God."

It is my duty to keep this vow. I can do so by supporting the budget, obeying the discipline, and attending the ordinances of the church. Not only should I keep these solemn vows but should encourage others so to do. Therefore I owe it to my Lord to keep my vows. The thing that makes the church come up short to day is not the "Depression" but it is the "Transgression" of our vows on the part of so many of the people on the church rolls.

A campaign must begin right away to stimulate peoples consciences to keep their vows and when that is done you have done a gracious work.

Some one will ask, "Where does the Kindom extension Special come in?" It just simply comes in to take care of the deficit caused by people failing to support the budget, which is necessary to carry on the full program of the church.