

who shall tell the rich what their luxuries are? All is luxurious around them, from the stables to the drawing-room. If you take away their luxuries you would leave them nothing. Then how is the word to be applied to the condition of the poor? Shall we say to them, "Cut off your luxuries, and apply the value to the support and advancement of the religion of Jesus Christ?" Where or what are the luxuries of the poor? Yet they, of all classes, must not be denied the privilege and joy of giving. The rule for some is what they gave the year before, or what their neighbor gave. And so on, and so on, forcing us to the conclusion that if there be no rule to guide us in the written Word, we must remain hopelessly at sea in respect of the fulfillment of this great and constant duty of honoring the Lord with our substance.

But that there is such a rule many competent Bible students assure us. Indeed the evidence is open to all who will take up the Bible with an earnest and prayerful desire to know what it teaches on the stewardship of our substance, with the view of practicing what it teaches thereon. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God."

The teaching that has come to many on this subject, with the assurance that

tingly break. The magistrate would say, "There are the Statutes." So we say to all sincere inquirers who would know the mind of God on this great duty of stewardship, "To the law and to the testimony!"

(EDITORIAL NOTE.—Some months ago we commended Mr. Duke's treatise on this important subject of giving, and at this opportune time, we strongly recommend our Leaguers to study it. It is entitled *The Great Ought* and is published and sold by the Book Room. Its price is ten cents a copy or one dollar for a dozen. Your society might well secure a number for use by the members in preparation for the study and discussion of this topic in your meeting. Send orders to Dr. W. Briggs, Wesley Buildings, Toronto.)

Realizing the Kingdom of God II. What Does the Fatherhood of God Mean to Me Here and Now?

John 14: 1-17.

TOPIC FOR THE CONSECRATION MEETING IN JUNE.

Introductory.—Last month's study was on the Kingdom of God, an expression suggesting a state or a social order with its King and government and citizenship and ideals, principles and laws and relations and obligations and development. In this conception of the human race God is set forth as the King and those in right relationships with Him as citizens. Our study this month is about God as Father. The human race is thought of as a great family. God is the Father. The members of His family are sons and daughters.

In beginning the preparation of the topic, let us first of all note its wording—"What does the Fatherhood of God mean for me here and now?" "The Fatherhood of God" is full of suggestions, isn't it? And then it's *for me*; and it's *here* and *now*. So in approaching this great theme let us make the study *personal* and the time the *present tense*.

THE MEANING OF HERE AND NOW.

This whole series of topics should be thought of from the standpoint of present conditions and relationships. It is true, as we shall see, there is in the Old Testament the beginning of the conception of the Fatherhood of God. God was the father to the Jewish nation. Israel was the son. But the conception lacked largely the personal touch and the sweet tenderness and yearning love which Jesus put into His revelation of this privileged relationship. This vital relationship with God as Father exists to-day, not as a thing of the past, but as a living fact. It is between God as Father and each of us. It is a relationship which is at once near, vitalizing and impelling. So a first suggestion to the leader is just to saturate himself through and through with this thought of Fatherhood and Sonship. Live with it day by day. Read and pray about it. Study it. Think of all the benefits and privileges of the relationship between your earthly father and yourself. Name them and put them down in order—forgiveness, interest, yearning, communion, protection, co-operation, encouragement, sympathy, helpfulness, inspiration to dare and do, filial pride, and so on. Ascribe these to God. Think of Him as Father. Know yourself as His son or daughter. Spiritualize these relationships. Think of Him as entering into all your experiences, so these things are not only that you yourself may have a richer experience, but that you may lead each one who attends the meeting to see the privilege there is in having an Eternal Father who

loves and cares for and impels each, here and now—to-day.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTION.

Although the Old Testament does not make Fatherhood the chief attribute of Jehovah, the conception is, nevertheless, present. God is looked upon as the Father of His people Israel (Deut. 14: 1; Deut. 32: 6; Jer. 3: 19). And Israel is regarded as His Son (Hosea 11: 1; Ex. 4: 22).

In a deeper sense God sometimes refers to the *righteous* portion of Israel as His children (Mal. 3: 16, 17; Ps. 89: 26, 27). And now and then there is indicated a closer personal relationship (Ps. 103: 13). Because of this relationship of Father and Son the church or nation assumes the privilege of praying to God as Father (Is. 63: 16; 64: 8).

Do not spend too much time upon the Old Testament conception. Distribute a few of the above texts among the members and have them read at the proper time, just enough to show that the idea was there. And pass quickly on to the New Testament revelation of God as Father.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AS REVEALED BY CHRIST.

Show that while in the Old Testament the Fatherhood of God was but one among many attributes, Christ at once makes it the fundamental attribute in the New. Its tender side is developed, and it becomes at once the corner stone of New Testament theology and life. It is through His Fatherhood that we experience the fullest revelation of God.

Christ speaks of God as Father in at least three ways.

1. God is Father of all, even the evil and unthankful (Luke 6: 35; Matt. 5: 45).
2. Then there is the more intimate personal relationship (Matt. 6: 4; 6: 6; and similar texts; See page 109).
3. The unique relationship between God and Jesus as Father and Son (Mark 1: 11; Mark 9: 7; Matt. 11: 27; John 5: 18; John 20: 17).

Because of this unique relationship, in which Jesus truly reveals the Father, we, too, have the privilege of becoming sons and daughters (Matt. 11: 27; Matt. 5: 16; Matt. 6: 9, 14, 15; John 1: 12).

THE PRIVILEGES OF THIS RELATIONSHIP OF FATHERHOOD AND SONSHIP FOR EACH OF US.

It is here the leader should begin the practical discussion of this theme. The foregoing is merely the background. It may be that another may be persuaded to deal with this historical side, leaving to the leader the work of making the personal application. Or if that other cannot be found, and if you feel the introductory part might well be eliminated, then leave it out and make the discussion of the "meaning of the Fatherhood of God to me here and now" just as practical and concrete as you possibly can.

1. *This relationship implies similarity in disposition and natural endowment.*—One of the supreme reasons for God's creation of man was to have some one akin to Him, with whom He might commune. This purpose is indicated in the beginning of things (See Gen. 1: 27). Discuss the meaning of the statement, "Made in the image of God." Show how each one is made in the image and likeness; his mind like God's mind; his will to choose like God's will; his moral nature like God's moral nature—all under limitation, of course, because of our bodily organisms and other imperfections; and yet made in our Father's image, capable of developing more and more His likeness as He revealed Himself in Christ. Emphasize this great truth as strongly as you can. Emphasize

Paul's Plan of Giving

ERIODIC	Worshipful
	Prayerful
PERSONAL	Cheerful
	Each Man
PROVIDENT	Each Woman
	Each Boy
PROPORTIONATE	Each Girl
	No Fringes
REVENTIVE	No Mixing
	Forehand
REPUTATIONARY	Deliberate
	Intelligent
RENTIVE	Generous
	Responsible
RENTIVE	Faithful
	No Deficit
RENTIVE	No Interest on Loans
	No Worry
RENTIVE	That no collection
	Be made when loans

Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Richmond, Va.

It is of God, is that the basic principle for our guidance in the offering of our substance to Him from whom we derive a *legal minimum* offering for everyone, with an unmeasured privilege in respect to free-will thank-offering for all who are able to go beyond the legal tenth.

It will be found upon persevering and prayerful investigation that this principle runs through the Old Testament and is well sustained in the New; that it is primeval, and, therefore, for man as man, and not merely a law of the Levitical Code, designed only for the guidance of the Jewish people. It will also be found that the decimal proportion of income for all, with the undefined margin for free-will thank-offering for those able to go beyond is a principle for the regulation of giving that, on the one hand, does not press too heavily on the poor, and, on the other, does not cramp the outflow of the spirit of generosity in the rich. There is no space, in this short article, to support this position by evidence. I will ask the reader to open the Book and begin a study of this subject from Genesis to Revelation for himself. Ignorance of a revealed truth cannot be pleaded as an excuse for not walking according to that truth. This is not allowed the citizen in respect of any law which he may unwittingly break.