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FROM PELOUBETS' SELECT NOTES.

Second Quarter.

Lesson 8.—May 25. 2 Cor. 9: 1-15.

LIBERAL GIVING.**GOLDEN TEXT.**

God loveth a cheerful giver.—2 Cor. 9:

7.

1. For—Connecting this chapter with the last. *As touching the ministering to the saints*—In regard to the collection that was to be taken up for the aid of the poor Christians in Judea, see Rom. 15: 26; 1 Cor. 16: 1; 2 Cor. 8. *The saints*—"The holy," "the set apart for God's service"; the title and characteristic of all true Christians. *It is superfluous for me to write to you*—Because I have written before.

2. *I know the forwardness of your mind*, your readiness or disposition to give. Paul gives them honor, and praises them whenever he has opportunity. The best thing in giving is the heart to give, and this may be in all, in the poor as abundantly as in the rich. The heart to give, not the amount at its disposal, is the true measure of liberality. *For which I boast of you, glory on your behalf.*

We are said to boast of the good qualities of a friend when we proclaim them to his honor, and not our own. *Achaia*—Achaia was that part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital. *Ready a year ago*—Does the urgency of his present appeal, coupled with the fact that a year has passed, and the "will" has not yet become a deed, indicate a latent mis-giving whether he had not unconsciously overstated the fact, and had mistaken the "will" that had shown itself for an actual readiness to send off the money whenever it was called for? *Your zeal hath provoked*—The word means to excite, whether the feeling called into exercise be good or bad. *Very many*—Their example had done much good. One of the best and most efficient schools for adults is the observation of what others are doing.

3, 4. *I have sent the brethren*—Titus and his two companions mentioned in chap. 8: 6, 16, 22, who were about to proceed to Corinth to attend to this matter. *Lest our boasting*, our glorying, our praise of your generosity. *Should be in vain*—What a slur upon them, what an evil example to others, what humiliation to himself, if their generosity should be but wind and clouds of promise, without the rain of good deeds! *That . . . ye may be ready*—Prepared with the money, called from week to week, as the Lord had prospered them.

5. *Exhort the brethren*—Titus and his companions. They must be entreated, because they would rather stay and comfort Paul, and accompany him to Corinth. *Make up beforehand your bounty*—By the weekly offering system proposed by Paul to them in his former letter. (1 Cor. 16: 1-4.) The weekly offering is no modern idea. It is not a departure from the Gospel, but a return to it. *That the same might be ready as a matter of bounty*, that it might appear to be as it is, an act of your own free generosity, and not forced by our presence and appeals. *Not as of covetousness*—Not having upon it the marks of a stingy spirit.

6. *He which soweth sparingly*—A man that sows little must expect to reap little. If he sows a small piece of land he will reap a small harvest; or if he is niggardly in sowing and wishes to save his seed, and will not commit it to the earth, he must expect to reap little. So it is in giving. The two laws of sowing are, first, We shall reap what we sow, or what naturally grows from the seed. If we sow to righteousness we shall reap righteousness; if we sow to the happiness of others we shall reap that happiness; and we must not be disappointed if, when we sow to heavenly good we do not reap earthly good, though God generally gives it in addition. The second law is That we shall reap in proportion to the sowing, only more abundantly. If we do little for others, if we give little for the progress of the world, if we spend little time or effort in growing good,

or doing good, the results will be small. But in liberal sowing there is a harvest often beyond all expectation, more good done than we dreamed of.

7. *According as he purposeth in his heart*—His sowing must spring out of deliberate preference, not out of a state of mind in which grief is felt, nor in which a man thinks he must give, whether for respectability, reputation, position, or from urgent admonition. *Not grudgingly or of necessity*, i. e., constrained by circumstances to give, when you prefer not to do it. *God loveth a cheerful giver*—God desires the heart in every service. No service that is not cheerful and voluntary; none that does not arise from true love to Him can be acceptable in His sight.

8. *God is able to make all grace abound*—Grace,—favor, gift, whether temporal or spiritual, the means of giving, as well as cheerfulness in the act. Here the reference is to earthly good, that kind of good favor is intended which enables those who receive it to give abundantly. The idea obviously is, God is able to increase your wealth. *Abound*—"Make to overflow." He can make your wealth overflow, so that having a sufficiency for yourselves, you may overflow in good deeds to others. Giving is to the natural eye, the way to lessen our store. The Bible says it is the way to increase it. To believe this it is only necessary to believe in the power, providence, and promise of God. God is able to make the paradox, "he that scattereth, increaseth," prove true. *Always having all sufficiency in all things*—The expression here is striking, in all things, always, all. God is able so to enrich you that you shall have in every respect, at all times, all kinds of sufficiency, i. e., a competency in everything. *That ye . . . may abound to every good work.*

—God has dealt bountifully with us that we may be able to be bountiful in helping others. What we wait for, and are looking hopefully to see, is a consecration of the vast money power of the world to the work and cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ. For that day, when it comes, is the morning, so to speak, of the new creation.

9. *As it is written*—(Ps. 112: 9.) Paul had said that he who gives shall have abundance to give. This is precisely what is said in Ps. 112. *Dispersed*—as seed sown with full and open hand without anxious thought in what direction each grain may fall. It is implied, also, that he has always what he may disperse.

10. *Now he that ministereth, i. e., God. Bread for your food*—He will take care that your own wants are cared for. *Multiply your seed sown*—Your means of liberality, of doing good to others, and the results and harvest. *Increase the fruits of your righteousness*—This is parallel with the preceding clause and means the same thing.

11. *Being enriched in everything* Temporally and spiritually. *Bountyfulness*—The apostle loves the words which express free large-heartedness, abundance of fruits in us, and abundance of blessings from God. *Which causeth through us*—By one ministry, Paul had been instrumental in exciting the liberality of the Corinthians and in effecting the contribution for the poor at Jerusalem, and therefore he could say that the thanksgiving to God which was thus called forth was through him. *Thanksgiving to God*—on the part of the recipients, and on the part of the givers. Property should always be so employed as to produce thanksgiving. If it is made to contribute to our own support and the support of our families, it should excite thanksgiving.

12. *The administration of this service*—The distribution of your liberal collection for the saints. *Supplyeth the want*—It not only meets the needs of those to whom the help was given but it does another great and blessed good. *But is abundant also by many thanksgivings to God*—It will make thankful hearts, and honor God by the thanksgivings of those who are blessed by the liberality God by the Gospel inspires. Grateful hearts remembering God as the ultimate source of their blessings, and God himself receives honor and praise for his manifested love toward his poor.

13, 14. *Which long after you*—Yearn for personal intercourse with

you. They had caused other Christians to love them. Love is the best and most precious gift one person can confer upon another. *For the exceeding grace of God in you, i. e., on account of the surpassing grace or favor of God manifested towards or upon you; in that He had rendered them so liberal, and so filled them with a Christian spirit.*

15. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift*—His gift whose greatness and value no language can express. God having given us the best possible gift,—His Son; and all that we have and hope for of good having come from Him as a free gift, we ought to be glad to give our lesser gift to God's children, as the one chief way in which we can express our gratitude for His unspeakable gift. God's unspeakable gift is His Son. The passage ought to stand, as we doubt not the vast majority of the readers of the Bible understand it, as an outburst of gratitude to God for the gift of His Son.

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