

**BRIEFS.**

The best thing you can do when you make a mistake is to make it teach you something.

We have heard of people too poor to take a good newspaper but who ever heard of one too poor to smoke a pipe.

The truest words we ever speak,

Are words of cheer ;

Life has its shade, its valleys deep,

But round our feet the shadows creep,

To prove the sunlight near.

THE BETTER WAY.

Paul's plan for collecting money was to have the people "lay by in store, upon the first day of the week, as they may prosper." "Let each man do according as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

The Lord not only loves a cheerful giver, but he will prosper such an one. This stands to reason. If the Lord loves us, and he sees that prosperity makes us selfish, and in the end prove our ruin, he will withhold from us, or send losses into our plans as rods of correction. But, if we cheerfully give as we are prospered, and it is a real means of grace to our souls, then the Lord will bestow liberally upon us, for in such instances prosperity does not spoil us.

Settle it in your own mind that you are the benefitted party in every act of benevolence. Herein is this saying true, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Let us pass over the line into the New Year with malice toward none, with charity toward all, with true patriotism toward our own country, and with love toward all men as we would have them love us, and at the same time with supreme love to God, the giver of all good gifts.

THE CLOSING YEAR.

The old year will soon end. Some of us began the year with serious inquiry. We have met its storms, its defeats and disappointments. We have been lifted up and brought low. We have found its alternations of sunshine and shadow, and are brought through infinite mercy almost to its close.

The future is unrevealed to us. What shall be its demands upon our steadfast patience, our poise of spirit, our good will, our forgiveness, our control of temper, our pious zeal ?

We are solemnly impressed with the errors and demerits of our past lives, that our best efforts made in our own strength will not bear divine scrutiny. How much weakness through indecision is apparent; how much shrinking from self-denial.

But amid it all everyone has been the special object of divine care and has had occasion to magnify God for His special deliverances. Some of us have experienced the blessings of renewing grace; a marvellous change has been effected by the Holy Spirit. Once the seductive world established its ascendancy over our hearts. Now we loathe its folly. We were once in a most galling servitude; once ambition beckoned us to the high seats of power and opened before us earthly glory, but how we exclaim, "God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ!"

Some of us have risen to a higher Christian life, and now walk with God continually. We have been drawing refreshing waters from the wells of salvation, have enjoyed clearer views of his redemption; our experience has been tested in the furnace of trial, but the flames have not touched us, for the form of the Son of God has been there, and we now exclaim, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Farewell, Old Year, the rustle of whose garment,

Fragrant with memory, I still can hear;

For all thy tender kindness and thy bounty

I drop my thankful tribute on thy hier.