

## CURRENT TOPICS AND EVENTS.

### THE LESSON OF THE SEASON.

The close of the old year and the beginning of the new is a time which should touch even the most trivial natures to thoughtfulness. Then, if ever, should we look back with devout gratitude on the past, and remember all the gracious dealings of God toward us. Then should we look forward with hope and confidence to the future, trusting that the guidance and grace which have been vouchsafed in the past will be sufficient also in the time to come.

These anniversary seasons are milestones, as it were, by which we may measure our progress through life. They are hill-tops which we may climb and get clearer views of the winding way by which we have been led, and brighter prospects of the end of the journey and the goal of our hopes. And doubtless, as we look we shall note many crooked steps; many mistakes and falls. Let us be admonished by the past and make straight paths for our feet in the time to come, avoiding the causes of stumbling and failure which impeded our progress and marred our life work.

Travellers crossing the Alps, as they climb higher and higher by the devious zig-zags of the road, seem to turn in aimless windings, sometimes apparently going directly away from their destined goal. But as they reach the summit of the pass, and see the winding way spread out like a map beneath their feet, they see that every one of those windings was necessary to overcome some cliff-like obstacle, or escape some yawning ravine. So as we climb life's mountain slopes, and get broader, clearer views of the way in which the Lord our God has led us, from the vantage ground of the added years, we are able to understand much that at the time seemed incomprehensible. Many strange experiences, many

losses and crosses, which seemed only evil, we now know were only good. And, doubtless, when from the vantage ground of the higher life of heaven, we see clearly spread out like a map the life-path of the past, we shall see that not a single crook in our lot, not a single steep and arduous place, was unnecessary for the accomplishment of our journey.

The season should be one also of spiritual stock-taking, as it were. We should balance our books and count our gains. If we look abroad in nature we shall find that everything has marks of growth and progress. The forest trees have added another ring to their girth; the orchards and fields have brought forth their fruit; the barns are filled with ripened grain. How is it with our spiritual husbandry? Have we garnered wisdom from the past? Have we brought forth the fruits of holiness? Are our characters ripener, and mellowed into richer sweetness? What account, to change the figure, shall we render to the Lord of the harvest for our stewardship? Have we put out our talents to usury and improved the opportunities of the past? Have we gained yet other talents? Are we richer in spiritual graces? Have we more of the mind that was in Christ? Have we more power over sin? or alas! has sin more power over us?

Let us deal faithfully with ourselves. We are a year nearer our grave; we are also a year nearer our salvation or our condemnation than we were a year ago. Let us sit in honest judgment on our own souls. Better that our hearts should condemn us now than that God and our hearts should condemn us hereafter, when it shall be forever too late to retrieve the wasted past.

Swift years, but teach us how to bear,  
To feel, to act with strength and skill,  
To reason wisely, nobly dare,  
Then speed your courses as ye will.