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Principal Contents

	Page
About the Pledge	1
Beginnings and Endings	2
E. L. Stock-Taking by Districts	4
World-wide Young Methodism	7
Religious Education in Y.P.S.	7
Andrew the Personal Worker	8
The New Year	8
Citizenship Ideals	9
Christ's Doctrine of Society	10
The Forward Movement	11
R. of Q. Presidential Messages	10, 14
Charles Wesley	12
Our Obligation to the Foreigner	13
Bay of Q. Official Messages	14
Letters from Missionaries	16
Bay of Q. Summer School	18
Junior Topic Outlines	18
Weekly Topic Calendar	20
What the Leagues are Doing	21
Prize Competitions	23

Our Pledge

Trusting in the help of the Holy Spirit, I promise

that I will follow the example of my Saviour and Lord, and make an honest effort daily in all things to do the will of God my Heavenly Father.

January

How beautiful thy frosty morn,
When brilliant gem each feathery thorn!

How fair thy cloudless noon!
And through the leafless trees at night,
With more than summer's softened light,
Shines thy resplendent moon.

—Barton.

January is derived from Janus, a heathen deity, who was supposed to preside over the gates of heaven. He was represented with two faces, one looking towards the old year, the other towards the new. He was the first King of Italy, and the ancient Romans used to give the doors in their houses the name of Janus. The heathens of old used to celebrate the festival of New Year's Day with every sort of veneration, and the primitive Christians kept it as a solemn fast which is still partially observed in England. The Saxon name of January means "Wolf month," as the wolves at that season are desperately mischievous, from being unable to procure food.

—Loaring.



What shall I wish for you at this the opening of the New Year? What better can I wish than that in the deepest purpose of your heart you will give first place to the principles of our Pledge, that you will cherish nothing in your thoughts that will mar its high ideals, that you will permit nothing in your daily habits that will militate against its fulfilment? To do the will of your Heavenly Father as Christ your Saviour and Lord has set the shining example, and as the Holy Spirit will graciously help you, is surely the holiest resolve you can make, and to realize it in regular practice each day, is the highest attainment possible to any earthly mortal. That you may know the purifying and ennobling influence of our Pledge in your personal character and public conduct is the best way I know of wishing you A Happy New Year.

A New Year's Wish

Our Heavenly Father's will has a two-fold aspect, and consequently a dual bearing on our lives. He speaks to us in His will of Control, and again in His will of Command. We believe the former is being fulfilled in the world about us, and that eventually the course of all human events will demonstrate His unchallenged sovereignty. But it comes more closely home to us than in this general sense. To me as His child, His will of Control calls for humble submission. To it I must consent, no matter what may be involved. It may mean that I lie passive in His hands and patiently endure, or it may require that I sit quietly at His feet to study. It may ask of me the relinquishment of all I hold dear, or that my whole plan of life be changed from my own fond wishes to conform in all things to His purposes for me. In it all I must learn to say with unquestioning resignation, "Thy will be done." But to most of us, it is His will of Command that most appeals. This summons us not to a mere passive submission, but to active obedience. It appoints me to some positive, practical course of activity and enterprise in which doing is paramount. It

is not enough that I should be willing that my Heavenly Father should do with me what most pleases Him, but I should be willing to actually perform for Him what He most wants done. We should keep this two-fold meaning ever in mind.

To ascertain clearly the will of God in the details of daily life is not always easy; yet, such knowledge is not denied as if we seek aright. As a

What is God's Will

general principle of character, therefore, I know that my Heavenly Father wants me to be as good as I have the capacity and power to be. As a general principle of conduct, I know that He wants me to do all the good I have opportunity to do. We may be always sure, therefore, that all habits and practices that tend to growth in Christian character and promote spiritual fruitfulness, are His will for us. There should be no room for question in the mind of any young disciple as to whether or not it is the Heavenly Father's will that he should pray in private, read the Bible, keep the Lord's Day, attend Divine worship, or do some kind of active personal work in the Church. These and similar duties are so fundamental, so vital, that no one need for one moment hesitate about accepting and doing them as a part of daily life. They are always according to God's will for His children, and the doing of them should be as natural and regular as eating, or drinking, or sleeping, in the daily routine we follow. Neglect of them means loss of soul health, depletion of spiritual power, impoverishment of Christian character, estrangement from God, and ultimate apostasy. We know instinctively that such essential practices admit of no debate. They are, and must ever be, our Heavenly Father's will.

There are other matters, however, concerning which we all need guidance. Problems of conduct, especially such as relate to our associates, often arise to give us more or less anxious thought or even worry. The solution of them is not always plain. Questions of policy are unexpectedly thrust upon us, and we