

### The Power Of Habit.

In the last few days probably many of you have had an experience like this: you began your letter, "January 1st" (or 2nd or 3rd) and then you had to erase "1939" and change it to "1940."

Surely habit is what St. Augustine called it, a second nature. Habit is something you have to watch, too, because it works automatically unless you check it with thought. A bad habit of profanity or filthy language, for example, can cause you the greatest embarrassment. You're in good company when somehow, unexpectedly, the "hell" or the "damn" or the obscene word "pops out." That's a tough situation.

If you go through life the mechanical way, without thinking, sloppy habits will very easily form and after a while they're your master.

Happily there are good habits as well as bad. If you think out a plan of good habits, you can establish or re-establish the kind of second nature that helps you.

It is the consoling, encouraging truth, there isn't a bad habit in life that a good habit can't overcome and finally even replace. Habits of sin, whatever they are, no matter how gripping, no matter how long their tyrannical reign, can be broken-- but not without thought, not without planning a new and opposite course of action.

In the simplest terms, "conversion" from a life of carelessness or of downright sin to a life of virtue and self-respect is a case of habits-- bad habits changed into good ones.

Good, strong, vigorous habits make it easy for a college man who decides once for all to throw off the curse of mediocre living to develop himself into a gentleman.

Habits of determination, courage; habits of living according to schedule, of being on time; habits of saying a sturdy "yes" or an unequivocal "no" (to a drink, for example, and without any simpering regret); habits like these make a man's man.

Applied to religion, vigorous habits of mortification and self-denial, of getting to bed within reason and getting up at the first peace-shattering clang of the bell; the habit of sticking to principle and the habit of loving not only his friends but the people who hate him; habits like these help a Christian carry his Cross after Christ.

Here is a question. Isn't the psychology of habits the substance of resolutions for the New Year? Why fuss around making resolutions if not to substitute good habits for bad?

### New Year's Resolutions.

First of all, did you personally make any resolutions for 1940? If you didn't, you did not profit by the passing of '39 into '40. If you didn't, you're either a fool or a saint. For fool is the man who needs to replace bad habits with good ones-- and won't. And saint is the man who has no bad habits at all but only good ones!

### A Proposition To Mull Over.

You're a normal man. You are not a fool. Rejoice over that. And you're not yet a saint. In your most conceited moment, you never thought that. You're a bundle of good and bad habits. Your aim, at the start of another New Year (thank God for it!), should be self-improvement (this is YEAR FOR SELF); it should be personal sanctification, which, being translated, means you should set about, seriously, changing what you have into good ones. And the proposition to mull over is this: