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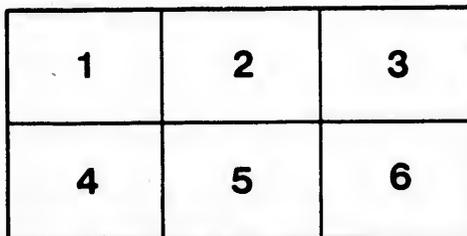
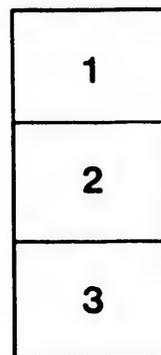
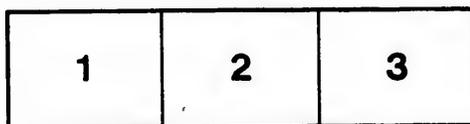
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"BEGIN WELL:"

A New Year's Address

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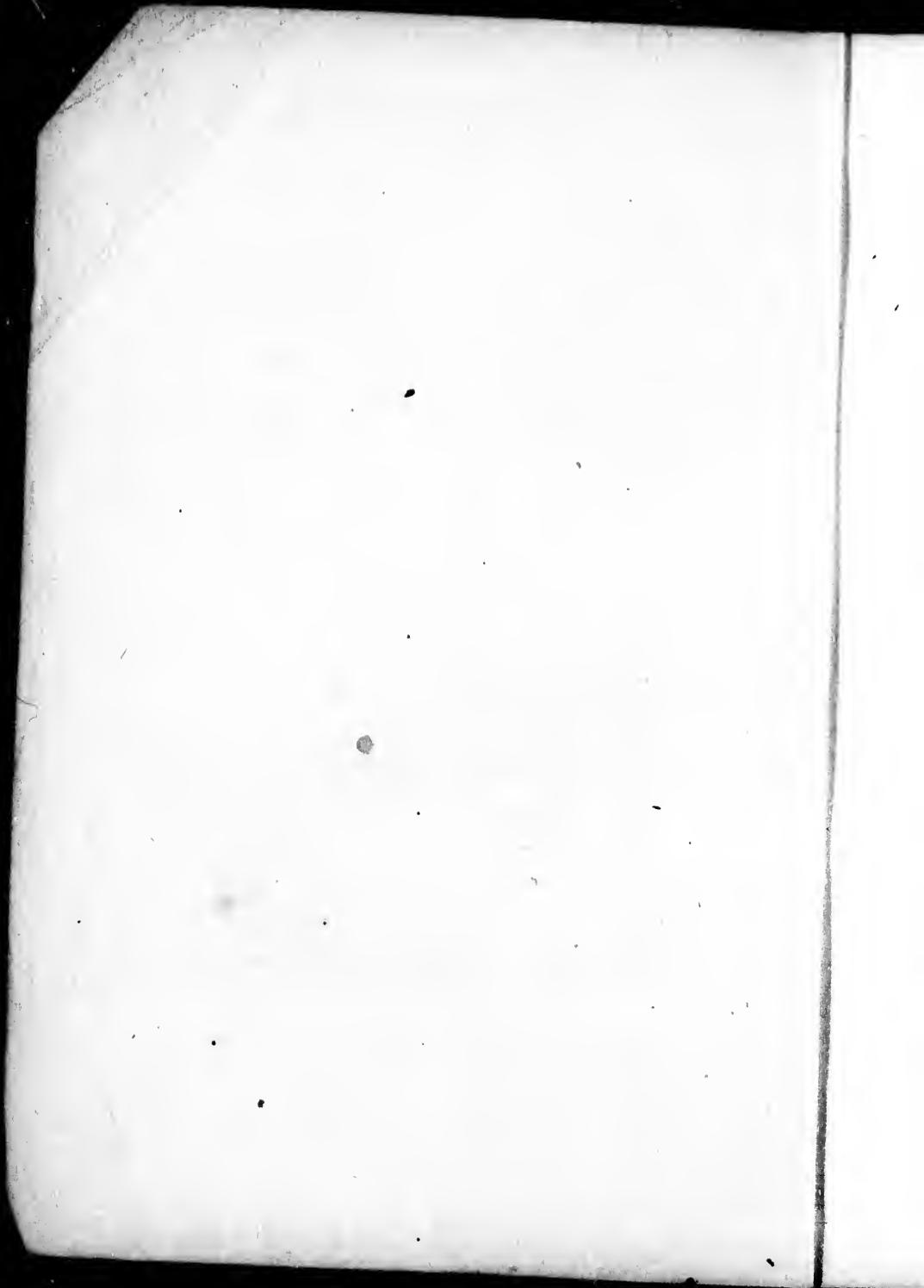
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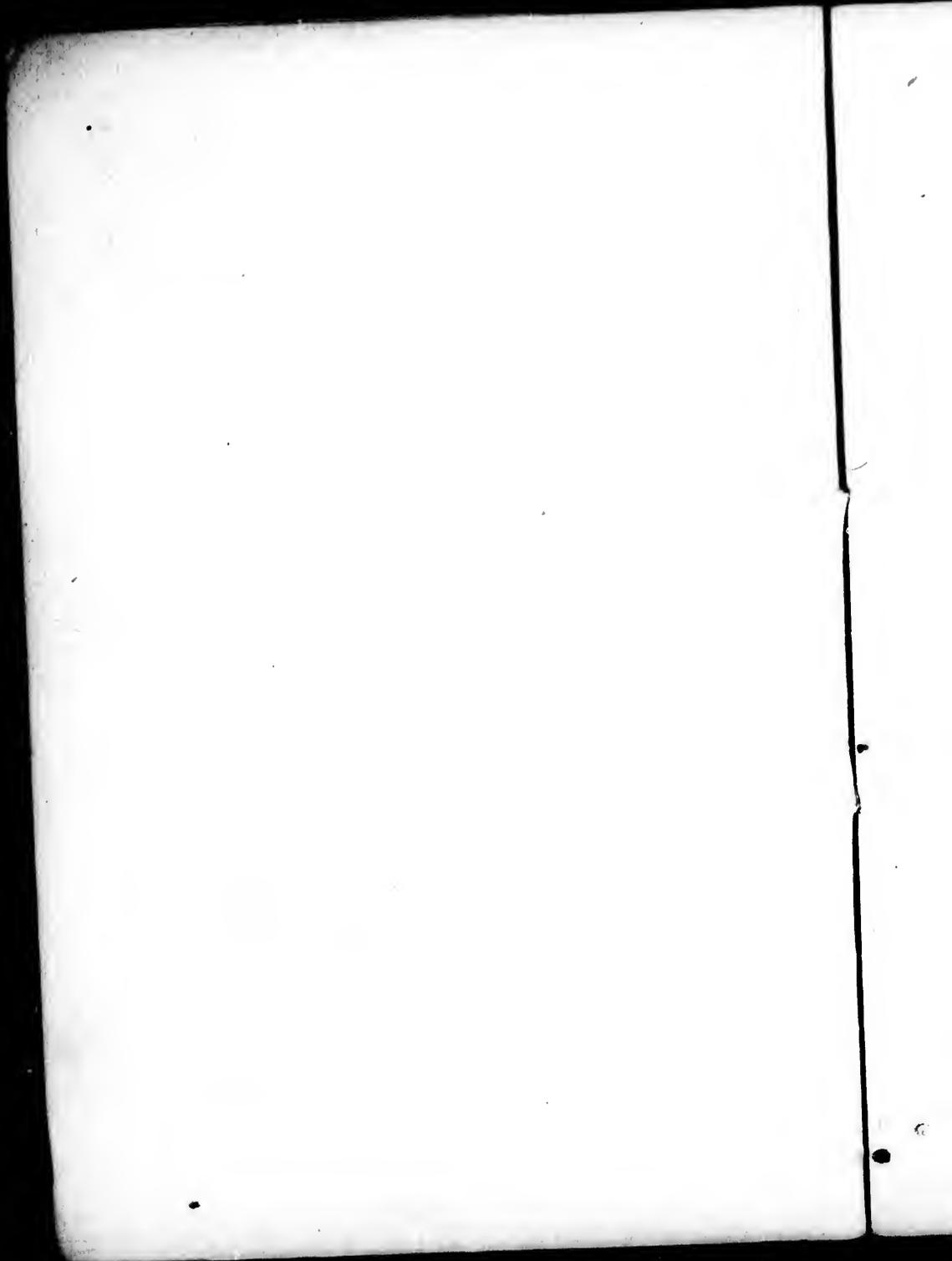
**“BEGIN WELL:”**  
**A New Year's Address**

TO  
**SABBATH SCHOOL CHILDREN.**

BY  
**A TEACHER.**



**Montreal :**  
**JOHN LOVELL, PRINTER, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.**  
**1865.**



## BEGIN WELL.

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EAR CHILDREN,

THERE are very few thoughtful people who can look at a Sabbath-school, or indeed a school of any kind, and not feel deeply interested in it; and the reason is just this, the powers of mind and body there are very great, even although for the present, they may be asleep. And these, like the twigs of a young tree, may be bent in any direction, either for good or evil, or are like melted iron, which may be moulded into the weapons of war or the implements of peace.

I have no doubt every one, or nearly every one whom I address by this little book, has seen a steam-engine. When motionless, you must have noticed there is little appearance of power there. Every joint is stiff and still, and the beam and pistons are so large you would almost fancy it impossible to move them. But just turn

the crank and allow the steam to rush into the cylinder, and then see how powerful it is; then see how every joint comes into play and assists in the action of the whole machine. This is a fit emblem of you. At present you have very little power, little to prompt you to do anything *very* good or *very* bad—you are like the engine without steam—but soon you will find that the desires of your mind and the feelings of your heart are powers within you which, unless regulated, will lead you into sins, which I am sure you could not believe you would ever commit. You will not wonder then if on the first day and the first Sabbath day of a new year, I give you the advice, BEGIN WELL. And this advice is so short, there is no difficulty in remembering it—only two words, and these very simple ones—“*begin well.*”

You are all beginning life, you are beginning to share in its cares,—small they may be, yet cares they are; some of you are commencing your schooling, while others have entered upon some trade. Be careful then to have a fair start. Take an example from the builder, as you see how cautious he is with the foundation of his house. Remember the parable of the two builders. He who founded his house on the sand, saw

it swept away by the storm which assailed it, while the other discovered that it was in vain the wind blew, and the storm beat upon his house ; it fell not, because it was founded on a rock. I have heard the story of two millers, whose mills were situated on the banks of a river, where they were accustomed to freshets every Spring. The one was wise, and built his mill to withstand the coming storm, digging his foundation deep down, and building it high up, so that the water could neither undermine nor surmount it. The other did not: speedily the water began to rise, and the two owners watched the result from an elevated ground on the other side of the river. The floods came pouring down, and the river continued rising higher and higher until he who had failed to look to the foundations of his mill, saw that it must go. And he was not disappointed, for soon the water rose up to the building itself, and, carried it off with a tremendous crash, scattering pieces of the frame and machinery on the surface of the water, and levelling the hopes of the owner in the ruins of his mill. All this, while the other building stood perfectly secure, the owner having been careful about its foundation or beginning. Learn, then, the lesson which this story brings to

you ; look well to the foundation of your character—" *begin well.*"

And now if you have been thinking about what I have said to you here, you may be ready to ask me these two questions, "How can I," and "Why should I begin well?" and as they are most natural queries, I will try and answer them very simply. And to the first question, "How can I begin well?" I answer—

I. Begin by giving God your heart.

There is one thing we are all seeking after, and that is happiness. Perhaps you think I am mistaken, because you feel you are only anxious that it may be a fine day to-morrow ; or about your lessons when you return to school ; or an increase of wages ; or becoming good housewives ; but all these are just the different ways in which you seek what every one is hunting after. Happiness is the end ; but what are the means to attain it ? There are plenty of finger-posts erected bearing the inscription, "This way to happiness ;" but follow their directions, and misery, disappointment, and despair await you. It is in vain, too, or almost in vain, you seek to turn back, for Satan, who "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," will have taken captive your heart, and firmly

will he hold it. You will see now how important it is that you give God your heart if you would secure happiness; and this is just what He asks. He says, "My son, give me thine heart." And well God knows that if you give Him your heart, you will give your head and your hands and your feet; your eyes, and your ears, and your mouth: for all these will be quick to serve the object of the heart. You know how much you would do for your father and mother, or any one whom you loved on this earth; and that just because your heart is bound up in them. So it will be if you give it to God.

Now here is something I want you to remember. As there is one thing we are all seeking after, namely, happiness, there is but one way to it, that is, holiness, and but one place where we may expect to find it pure, namely, Heaven. Holiness, happiness, and Heaven are all inseparably linked together; and you must possess the first if you would enjoy the others. Give, then, your heart to God, that so you may run in the paths of holiness, and become heirs of happiness, travellers on the road to Heaven.

A very godless mother had several children, of whom she was very fond. She seemed fairly to have set her heart on

them, but the fear of God was not before her eyes. One after another it pleased Him to remove them from this earth, and thus did He draw out her love towards Himself, until she looked on her little ones as links in the chain which bound her to Heaven. Have you such a chain linking you to that blessed place? If not, see that your heart is there; and should you have no other link, this one will be long enough, and strong enough to secure for you a mansion in the skies.

## II. Begin by being prayerful.

If God has got your heart, you will often want to speak to Him. You know prayer is said to be the air the Christian breathes, and it would just be as impossible for him to exist without it, as to live without the atmosphere around him. David, the man according to God's own heart, lifted his eyes up to the place whence came his aid; and if you would live aright, you must be constantly looking upwards in prayer. A little boy went to sea with his father, to learn to be a sailor. One day the Captain said to him, "Come, my boy, let me see you mount the mast;" and being a smart little fellow, up he soon went. When he reached the top, however, he began to look down, and a dizziness coming over him, he

cried, "O, father, father, I will fall."  
"Look up, look up," shouted the captain;  
"keep your eye on the flag at the mast-head, and you will come down all right."  
And so he did.

Now this advice is as suitable for you and me as it was for the young sailor; for if we would descend safely from the cradle to the grave, we must be continually keeping our eyes upward. And surely it is most natural we should look to God. He made us, He supports us, He saves us. We cannot exist without Him; without Him, we can do nothing.

And now to answer the second question, "Why should I begin well?" I reply:

I. Because you will look back to your "beginning."

It is said that every word that has ever been spoken, still lingers in the air; and if our ears were only acute enough, we would hear them. Be this as it may, it is certain that memory rarely forgets the words and actions of our early years. On the eve of a great battle, Napoleon Buonaparte wandered away from the encampment, as the shades of evening were closing in. The vesper bells from a neighbouring village fell softly on his ear, and then and there he was seen to weep. His aides-de-camp

were astonished, and asked why he wept. He replied, "These bells bring back to my mind the days of my childhood." Be careful then how you conduct yourselves now, remembering how simply our minds are led backwards; and so will your memories in after years be pleasant to dwell upon.

## II. The beginning affects the ending.

A little boy sentenced to the Penitentiary commenced his downward course by being half an hour late for Sabbath School.

Have you never seen two roads which at the beginning were only separated by a point, but which led to places very widely apart? These fitly represent truth and error. Often it is almost impossible to distinguish them at the beginning, but ah! there is no mistaking the different places to which they lead. Do not wonder then that your teachers should be so anxious lest error should fix its poison in your minds.



Some American gentlemen were wandering along the banks of the Hudson River

on a pleasure tour, when they came to a romantic spot almost entirely enclosed by high mountains. They were gazing in rapture at the lovely scene, when an Indian came along, his wild eye intently following an eagle that soared at a great height from the earth, and his arrow half drawn in the bow. The gentlemen got into conversation with him, and asked him how he expected his small arrow was to kill the large eagle. He said, "In the point of this arrow there is a quantity of poison which, if it does not kill the eagle at once, will assuredly bring it down in the long run." And he was quite correct. Shortly after the arrow struck the eagle, its flight became more feeble, its wings began to flutter, and it gradually sunk until it reached the earth.

Thus little sins (which are usually the beginning of greater ones) work destruction. They may appear very harmless, but in them as in the Indian's arrow there lies a poison which, if no antidote be found, will in the end work death. The beginning of sin is like the letting out of water. Allow but a small stream to force itself through the embankment which bounds the reservoir, and the opening will become larger and larger, until the power of the stream is irresistible, and everything is carried before it.

And now, dear children, I feel loath to conclude ; I would fain linger a little longer with you. I have told you to begin well and have given you some reasons why you should do so. I have said that in after years you will look back to your earlier days ; and now I have to remind you that your life here will stamp your life for eternity.



In the early ages it was fabled that a man of strange appearance was seen in one of the Eastern cities. A crowd soon collected around him, and he was questioned by some

individuals as to his country and business ; but all in vain, as he understood nothing of their language. His air of dignity was so marked, that some of the people began to worship him, thinking he must be some deity ; this, however, he turned from with holy horror, raising his hands towards heaven.

After some time this stranger accepted the hospitalities of one of the nobles of the city, and applied himself diligently to acquire a knowledge of the language spoken. This he did quickly ; and one evening when his host enquired as to his origin, he took him out on the balcony, and fixing his eyes on the evening star, said,—“ That *was* my home, but a vain curiosity tempted me to wander. Lured by the brilliancy of this planet in the firmament, I resolved to make the journey through the mighty void, and received permission to do so from above, but with the condition, that I should never seek to return ; you will therefore pardon my anxiety to know about the destiny of man.” The nobleman explained among other things, that at the end of life all must die, but said, “ that for any further explanation, he must refer him to the priests.” “ Do the priests only die ?” said the stranger. But the nobleman, anxious

to evade such questions, took the stranger to them, and when he was informed as to the condition on which he might secure future happiness, his joy was unbounded at the simplicity of these. When tempted to violate any of them, he would bewail his own madness ; and to all invitations to do anything inconsistent with his future interests, he had but one answer. He would say, " Oh ! I am to die, I am to die ! " Is such anxiety yours ? If so give your heart to God and death will be robbed of its sting. It is to prepare you for this change that your teachers meet you Sabbath after Sabbath, and it is to aid their efforts that I write this short address. But perhaps you think it is early to begin to prepare ; let me assure you, you cannot begin too early. You have no lease of your life ; you know not what an hour may bring forth. " Now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation."

" To-morrow you may be too late  
'Tis madness to delay."

Or perhaps you may meet me with the old proverb—" all's well that ends well ; " but let me tell you, in reply, that the way to make sure of ending your life well, is to begin it well. In the whole Bible we have only one instance of any one being con-

verted immediately before death—one, as it has been said, that we need never despair, only one, that we may never presume. But supposing you do live to give God your heart when you are old, do you think He will be so well pleased with such a gift? or will it be such an easy matter to do so as you imagine? These are weighty questions, and I leave them for you to think over. If you are trying now to overcome any bad habit you have acquired, I am sure the difficulty you experience in getting over it will make you guard against bad habits for the future. And then just think what an encouragement you have to persevere in well-doing, when you remember the joy your victory over sin will cause. I have seen a nation convulsed with joy by a short message over the telegraph wires, announcing a triumph on the battle-field. The old and the young, the high and the low, the rich and the poor,—all seemed to join in one grand chorus of joy. But if you give your heart to God, not only on earth among your Christian friends, will there be gladness, but there will be joy in Heaven, in that place where I trust in a short time you will experience the truth of God's promise—"He that overcometh will inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he will be my son."

And now, before closing, I wish you all a "Happy New Year." It is quite possible that we may never meet on earth, but I confess I would like you to engage to meet me in Heaven. A friend of mine was attending a prayer-meeting in Boston, and he was wending his way homewards, when some one, unknown to him, tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "Meet me in Heaven," and disappeared. Now this is just the engagement I would like to make with you, my young reader.

Like that "certain man," spoken of in Kings, I have drawn my bow at a venture ; but oh ! I pray that the Holy Spirit may guide the flight of my arrows, that they may wing their way to the hearts of those still out of Christ, and be the means in God's hand of convincing, converting, and saving them through the atoning blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.



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