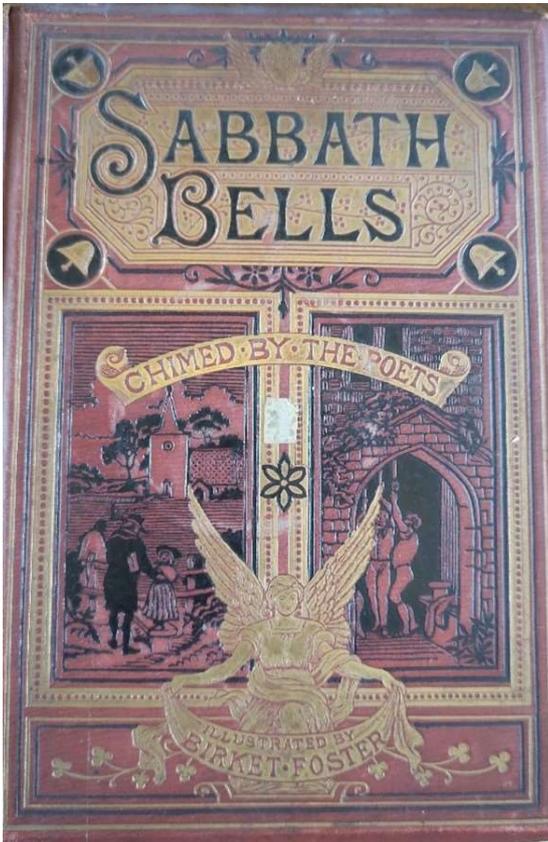




Treasures from the Library : Sabbath Bells Chimed By The Poets



The distinctive binding of *Sabbath Bells*, EL910 SAB in Westminster College Library

In this guest blog, Grace Collingwood, one of the Cambridge Theological Federation librarians, shines a spotlight on the treasures found within *Sabbath Bells Chimed By The Poets*, by Letitia Elizabeth Landon.

By little brooks that, with a lapsing sound,
Like playful children, run by copse and lea!
Each in its little plot of holy ground,
How beautiful they stand,
Those old grey churches of our native land!

(L.E. [Letitia Elizabeth] Landon, p.19)

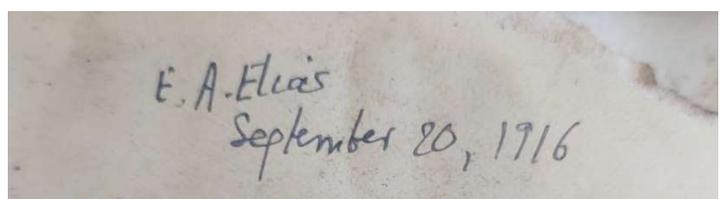
This beautiful book is *Sabbath Bells: Chimed by the Poets*, an anthology of pastoral Christian poetry, illustrated by noted English watercolourist, Myles Birket Foster, and printed by wood-engraver Edmund Evans. The volume is part of a library of works on hymnology collected by EA Elias, who bequeathed them to Westminster College in the 1940s.

The original work was published in 1856, and we believe that this copy, the 'new edition' bound in distinctive red, was published around the turn of the century. The book was, as Ruari McLean noted in his exploration of Victorian book design, both extremely pretty and distinctly successful, seeing numerous reprints throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.[1]

An earlier owner of this copy — perhaps a missionary — may have been particularly elegiac toward the English church tradition. Inside, a short pamphlet published by the Society for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lord's-Day is marked with the library stamp of the Young Men's Christian Association of Brisbane, Queensland, which has been supporting local communities in the area since 1864.[2]



Pamphlet from the Society for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lord's Day



Signature of Edward Alfred Elias, noting the date this volume was added to the Elias Collection.



Pressed leaves inside *Sabbath Bells*



In accordance with the rustic spirit of the poems, a previous owner has used the book to press flowers alongside the engravings they resemble. A clipping of a stem and leaves has been particularly well-preserved. Though the library team urge our readers *not* to leave any botanical specimens in our books, items like these can emphasise the historicity of our special collections, and remind us of the lives our books lived before coming to the library!



'Sunday Morning', by Myles Birket Foster

Inside, as above, illustrations of sentimental, rural idylls are emblematic of the Victorian attitude to nature. Myles Birket Foster was said to be inspired by the countryside of Surrey and Hertfordshire.

A machine-embroidered birthday bookmark was also found: a typical keepsake.

Grace Collingwood
CTF Librarian, Summer 2025

This blog post is based on an article in the Library Newsletter of the Cambridge Theological Federation, May 2025.

<https://www.theofed.cam.ac.uk/>



References:

- [1] McLean, Ruari, *Victorian Book Design & Colour Printing* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p.179.
- [2] The Y, 'Home', <http://ymcaqueensland.org.au/>