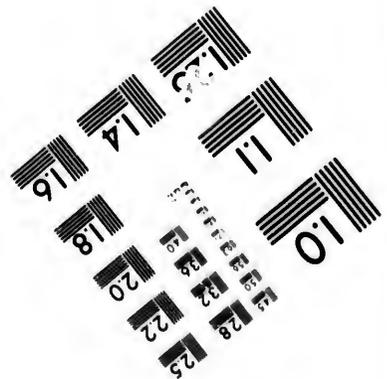
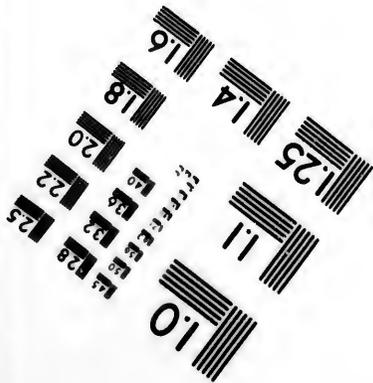
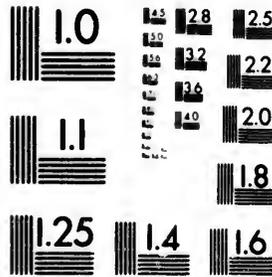


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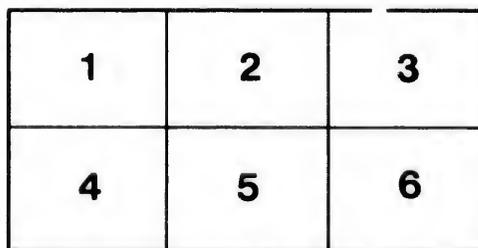
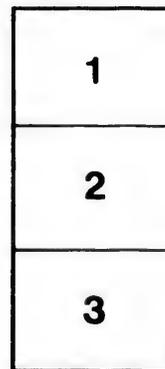
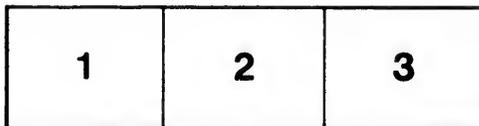
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THE  
SABBATH IN DARTMOUTH.

BY

ALBYN.

"Watchman, what of the Night?"

HALIFAX, N. S.,  
PRINTED BY JAS. BOWES & SONS, BEDFORD ROW,  
1870.

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THE  
SABBATH IN DARTMOUTH.

BY  
ALBYN. pseud.  
Andrew Shields.

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"Watchman, what of the Night?"

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HALIFAX, N. S.  
PRINTED BY JAS. BOWES & SONS, BEDFORD ROW.  
1870.

4615 June 27 '19

[THIS Poem was originally published in the last  
number of the Halifax "ATHENEUM," sometime in  
1856.]

THE  
SABBATH IN DARTMOUTH.

---

“WILL A MAN ROB GOD?”—*Malachi*, iii. 8.

---

WILL a man rob God?

Astounding question, God Himself propounds  
To sorcerers, idolaters, and them,  
The perjurd and oppressing, who forget  
Jehovah, and what He ordains; would not  
His chosen people Levi's sons, the priests—  
Jerusalem and Judah—privileged above  
All other nations—be annoyed, and ask  
With awe and trembling, what could be implied  
In the announcement by the prophet made?

Some imperfections of a venial kind  
They might admit amongst them could be found;  
But to commit a robbery on God!—oh, no!  
The veriest outcast known among the tribes  
Would hold the thought a horrid sacrilege.

Will a man rob God?

Astounding question! More astounding still  
The response God by Malachi proclaims,  
That it was done! Not in an instance, like  
The tempting garment, and the wedge of gold  
That Achan erst had privately purloin'd;  
But the whole nation,—priests and people both,  
Did not remember, or did not observe  
The tithes and offerings God of them required,  
And made themselves obnoxious to His curse.

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Will a man rob God?

What answer would the Pharisee return  
 If the demand had been address'd to him?  
 Would he not look with a contemptuous eye  
 Or point his finger to some distant spot  
 Where, whom he counted sinners were convened  
 And with a bosom full of legal pride  
 Pour out a panegyric on his sect,  
 Or haply on himself; and thank his God  
 That *he* was not like other men?—and tho'  
 The charge might to the Publicans be laid,  
 Yet unto him that tith'd, cummin and mint,  
 A Pharisee that fasted twice a week:  
 There was pollution in the bare idea.

Will a man rob God?

Can it be believed that christians read  
 This interrogatory day by day,  
 And unamazed peruse the response made  
 That God's own people are the guilty ones,  
 And in His temple where Shechinah shone,  
 (O sacrilege extreme!) before His face  
 They made themselves abhorrent unto Him?  
 Pause for a moment o'er this awful crime—  
 A finite mind can have but faint idea  
 Of its exceeding sinfulness with God  
 But call imagination to your aid,  
 And look again on that pathetic scene  
 Where the Redeemer saw Jerusalem—  
 Saw it and wept;—ah! why did Jesus weep?  
 Alas! alas! Jerusalem, for thee—  
 His sweat, His groans, His agony and death  
 Could bring salvation to a guilty world;  
 But His—the Saviour's, the Messiah's—tears  
 Could not avail to mitigate thy doom!

Will a man rob GOD?

Yes, men do rob Him ev'n in gospel times,  
 And in this age of colleges and schools—  
 This age of missions and the means of grace—  
 This age of bibles and benevolence—  
 This age of churches and of christian zeal;—  
 And in this land, as sure as Sabbath comes,  
 Not only scoffers and ungodly men,  
 But ev'n professors rob Almighty God!

'Tis Sabbath morning. On his bended knees,  
 But with a heart o'erflowing with delight,  
 The humble saint has audience of his God!  
 Not so the fool of fashion is employ'd:  
 He pants for pleasure in another form—  
 A walk, a visit, promises delight—  
 Or some affairs that might be well deferred;  
 Perhaps a party occupies his mind,  
 (If any vestige of a mind outlive  
 The bloated ruins of a human shape,  
 Made almost too disgusting for the worms.)

Day after day the system is pursued.  
 Sometimes a part, and frequently the whole  
 Of what to God belongs,—not only worship,  
 Glory, honor, praise, and adoration,  
 The homage of the heart, and love supreme,  
 But what he counts peculiarly a sin.—  
 That day he sanctified and set apart,  
 By precept and example sacred made,  
 And consecrated for the noblest ends—  
 For blessing and salvation to mankind—  
 A day emphatically called the Lord's,  
 Is, notwithstanding God's express commands,  
 In ev'ry way most publicly profan'd.

'Tis Sabbath morning. Winter reigns around:

The bell makes known that it is ten o'clock ;—  
 Who would believe it the church-going bell  
 That sits beside the writer, and looks out  
 Upon the various streets, some five in number,  
 From his sanctum seen, and just as many dens  
 Where, if grog is not sold it can be had.—  
 Beside an icy pond, a baffling scene  
 For such a pen as mine—(perhaps beyond  
 The hand that Milton's pandemonium drew)  
 Where children of all ages and all creeds—  
 Or nearly all, and some with none, or less,  
 If less can be ; in all particulars minute,  
 Action and language corresponding well :  
 A panorama of perdition shows  
 From earliest dawn unto the noon of night,  
 With none to question or to criticise  
 How they perform ; alas for them ! alas !  
 All of them seem of guardianship bereft—  
 No parent with authority is there  
 To punish, or reclaim ; no pastor's voice  
 Among them to restrain ; no pitying eye  
 Nor yearning heart,—not ev'n a mother's love—  
 Undying, to a parent, but not there—  
 Is either heard or seen.

Of these is not my verse.

Sad as it is!—a sadder one I'll show  
 To the spectator, men and women both,  
 Whom God hath spared week after week,—  
 Nor only spared, but with abundance bless'd—  
 Bless'd them with health and strength, some doubly  
     bless'd  
 With happy families, and familiar friends,  
 And what of earthly good an honest heart  
 Might well suffice ; but come behold them now !

In ev'ry street a various group appears,  
 Various in numbers and of various age ;  
 More various still the progress they attain,  
 As caste with caste co-mingle jostling on,  
 Both old and young seem equally in haste,  
 To get as far as possible from God.

There are exceptions ; but the gen'ral rule  
 Is first the tandem with the double sleigh—  
 My fingers quiver and refuse to hold  
 The pen that would the living freight describe,  
 Or draw the portrait of the charioteer,—  
 He bears the name of father to them all,  
 And should have borne the name of priest beside.  
 How beautiful upon the Sabbath day,  
 To lead that lovely flock of little souls  
 To the house where God delights to dwell,  
 And say to Him in whom we live and move  
 And have our being, " Father, here am I ;  
 And these are they whom Thou hast given to me ;  
 O keep them thro' Thy truth, that none be lost !"

But why not go alone  
 To serve the devil, if he so inclines ?  
 The sin at least less heinous would appear—  
 Though heinous even then, but how much more  
 The heinousness, the cruelty refined,  
 Of him, the God-appointed earthly guide,  
 And honor'd guardian of immortal souls,  
 Seduced from his allegiance unto heaven,  
 And now seducing on the Sabbath day  
 (As if to make the sin more heinous still)  
 His sacred charge ; and virtually scoffs  
 At the denouncement by the Saviour made  
 Against the infidels who would dare offend

The little ones. And oh! how terrible—  
 Tho' for a season it may be delay'd—  
 The doom at last,—the dreadful doom will fall  
 Upon the *christian infidel* who bears  
 The name of parent, and is guilty found  
 Of wilfully perverting God's command!

The next in order is the dashing sleigh,  
 Exactly fitted to some promis'd pair,  
 All else on earth excluded but themselves.  
 It seems a plaything to the sprightly horse,  
 With bells and ribbons gaudily attired,  
 And rushing onward at its utmost speed—  
 However willing, urg'd on faster still,  
 That they may boast how swiftly space is passed  
 Between the steamboat and the nearest inn  
 O! would to God it were their farthest stage  
 Upon a journey where a single step  
 Is one too many. Who can prophesy,  
 When they return—if ever they return—  
 What will be their latitude from heaven?  
 Or how much happier at the evening's close  
 If both had sought the blessedness that's found  
 Where saints assemble on the Sabbath day,  
 To worship God in spirit and in truth.

The inn is reached.

Well, what is there they could not find at home?  
 Inn-keepers are a class I censure not;  
 Oft in society an useful branch;  
 Their avocation is an irksome one,  
 And many of them both deserve and share  
 The public countenance. There ought to be,  
 And is a law, that does prescribe the sphere  
 Wherein they are to move;—the law is plain

That makes their duty known ; it does not read,  
 Nor can it be construed, to mean that they  
 Or their domestics should be kept at home  
 And desecrate the Sabbath, to attend  
 On such as glory in what is their shame—  
 On idlers, and presumptuous sinners, who  
 Contemn the merciful provision made,  
 In God's unbounded mercy to mankind.

In ancient times the prophet HOSEA said  
 (The Holy Spirit taught him what to say)  
 That God a thing most horrible had seen  
 In Israel. Oh, could the thing he saw  
 Be equal this that ev'ry Sabbath day,  
 Is seen,—and counted in this christian land—  
 In Nova Scotia, as a famous deed,  
 To break a table of His holy law,  
 And trample on the ordinance He made.

I loathe my theme ;  
 But yet there is a class that I must note—  
 What I have written is to wash my hands,  
 (The egotist forgive) in my own verse,  
 Of the contumely on the Sabbath cast  
 By those who would aristocrats be held—  
 And what is call'd the fashionable world.  
 Who would imagine such a damning clause  
 Even into fashion would admittance find,  
 Or when it did that it should comprehend  
 All classes of society? The rich alone  
 To be a sacrifice is not enough :  
 But even the poorest of the very poor—  
 The more immediate wards of heaven's great care,  
 Must join in the rebellion against Him  
 That ev'ry day their daily bread bestows,

And every day their daily grace besides,—  
 How oft unasked it is not mine to tell,  
 Nor yet how little it may be deserv'd,  
 Nor yet how little it does them restrain,  
 Nor yet how very little it is priz'd.

How my heart sickens with the very thought  
 That truth demands the poor should not escape  
 The censure that I breathe ; O, could I write  
 To *burn* instead of *breathe*—burn into them  
 That read my verse, or overhear by chance,  
 The notoriety they have obtain'd,

What can the poor man promise to himself  
 For his defections? Has he aught to gain  
 Here or hereafter for his gross neglect?  
 Neglect?—nay, but his insult to the Lord,  
 The Bountiful—Benevolent—Supreme ;  
 The Giver of all good ; and given free—  
 Free as the water from the fountain flows,  
 And as the air he ev'ry moment breathes ;  
 None to demand equivalent from him,  
 Or semblance of a sacrifice require  
 For all the blessings heaven upon him sheds ;  
 Yet he against his Maker lifts his heel,  
 And seeks to find an idol of his own.

The rich may show  
 Some color for the course that they pursue,  
 And may impose upon themselves awhile,  
 However thin the vail that wraps them round.  
 They plead the fashion, and they have their wealth  
 Though surely not bestow'd to make them sin ;  
 They have their horses, and the horses must  
 Have exercise ;—still more, there is the sleigh,  
 Perhaps new painted, and new clad in fur :

It should be used now, while the winter lasts ;  
 The counter or the office, week by week,  
 Keeps them employ'd ; or some of them have friends  
 That of sleigh-riding are exceeding fond ;  
 Some more have families shut up at home  
 Not voluntary captives, hence they should  
 Have some indulgence. Arguments likes these  
 Repeated o'er and o'er become at last  
 Specious enough to justify themselves,  
 And their excursions worthy of such place  
 As meritorious pilgrimages hold  
 Among the legends of departed saints,  
 And yield a most unanswerable plea  
 Unto the would-be and to the almost  
 A-christian, that it is no sin at all  
 To break the barriers round the Sabbath set,  
 But rather to be justified ; whilst they  
 Waste, often prodigally, waste their time,  
 And then a false necessity pretend,  
 To rob Jehovah of his hallow'd day.

This is the language gentlemen employ ;  
 Nor such the sons of poverty can plead ;  
 It might be thought they would with rapture hail  
 A day of rest, as unto them at least  
 A special kindness ;—they cannot complain  
 That riches make them wretched, naught that may  
 Blot from their mem'r that emphatic word  
 “ Remember,”—not in vain prefix'd for man—  
 For ev'ry man, and ev'rywhere prefixed—  
 Most solemnly prefix'd, to God's commaud,  
 And never can admit of an excuse  
 Or palliation, when it is preferr'd  
 In their behalf,—can truthfully be said.

They surely will not urge  
 That Sabbath days are useless unto them—  
 Even should they argue the command is void  
 (Some do contend that it is obsolete,  
 Forgetting that when the Messiah came  
 It was not to destroy, but to fulfil  
 The law—the moral, universal law ;)  
 Not one will say he has no need of rest,  
 Nor that his soul, in walking up and down,  
 Or loit'ring idly at some neighbor's door,  
 Or list'ning to some noisy tavern's brawl,  
 (We take for granted that he does abstain,  
 Although the doubts against him may be strong)  
 Is better nourish'd than it would have been  
 Waiting on God, within His house of pray'r,  
 And welcoming glad tidings of great joy.

Unto the over-curious who enquire,  
 What have they done? or whither are they bound?  
 That give occasion unto this tirade—  
 I answer briefly, that it is not mine  
 To hunt up evidence that might increase  
 What unto me already is too large ;  
 Hand join'd in hand will not the guilty save,  
 Nor better qualify the pen I hold  
 In writing evil open to the world.

I have not follow'd, nor do I intend  
 To follow where they lead, whether it be  
 The Eastern Passage, or Cole Harbor road,  
 Or that along the sea to Lawrencetown,  
 Or thro' the lovely landscape Preston boasts—  
 Including the serenity that lake  
 And river can supply—much less the way—  
 None of the narrowest that destruction owns—  
 To Cobequid ; euphonious tho' it sound,

And one time famous—famous even now,  
 More famous still it must be, by-and-by,  
 For an a'ortion of the Province brains,  
 When our assembled wisdom sponsors stood ;  
 (The name on it judiciously conferr'd—  
 A name that cost one hundred thousand pounds,  
 "The Slough of Despond" furnished ready made)  
 Makes known the learning in our fathers stor'd,  
 How apposite shareholders best can tell.

'Tis not canals,  
 But broken Sabbaths constitute my theme—  
 A theme to me far from poetic found,  
 And grating harshly on a tuneful ear,  
 More harshly still upon a christian heart ;  
 Less inspiration than regret is felt,  
 In the construction of this rugged lay,

Brimful of spleen, and idle too, withal,  
 Must be the critic who would my verse assail.  
 Most uninviting has the subject been ;  
 And more of conscience than of skill display'd,  
 Where honest syllables have been preferr'd  
 To those that speak in questionable tones,  
 Reck'ning not little on the halting lines,  
 And uncouth phrases that have been employ'd  
 Among the sceptics audience to obtain.

ALBYN.

*Dartmouth, 1856.*

## EVENING MELODY.

---

THE following beautiful lines were published in a late "*Guardian*." As many of our readers may not have seen them, we transfer them to our columns:—"SUN."

---

FATHER of mercies, now  
Another day is past,  
And at thy footstool I would bow  
To render thanks to thee, O Thou  
Almighty first and last!

Whilst all the angelic throng  
Unite in hymns above,  
My voice thy praises shall prolong;  
Thy glory and thy power *their* song.  
But *mine* thy grace and love.

Hosannahs to thy name  
The Cherubim address;  
Kindle in me a kindred flame,  
That I may sing a seraph's theme,  
Although my love be less.

Melodious to my soul,  
Thy praise flows from the sea—  
Systems and suns thy might extol,  
And farther than the farthest pole  
Creation worships thee.

Lost in immensity—  
 Return my thoughts—return ;  
 Shall lips unclean presume to vie  
 With stars of immortality  
 That round *JEHOVAH* burn ?

Nigher to thee, *MY GOD*,  
 O bid be nigher come !  
 Direct me in the heavenly road  
 That leadeth up to thine abode—  
 The ransom'd sinner's home.

Give me a cheerful heart  
 Though suff'ring earthly loss ;  
 And still thy grace to me impart  
 When nature faints beneath the smart  
 Inflicted by the Cross.

Sins now by me forgot,  
 But not to thee unknown,  
 And in thy book against me wrote.  
 O let the blood of Jesus blot,  
 And make me all thine own.

O leave me not the prey  
 Of fascinations vain ;  
 But in thy good and perfect way,  
 My *GOD* ! my *FATHER* ! keep me aye,  
 For Jesus' sake.—Amen.

ALBYN.

*Manor-hill*, 1846.

