

THE GOSPEL SICKLE

"THRUST IN THY SICKLE AND REAP, - - - FOR THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH IS RIPE." Rev. 14:15.

VOL. I.

BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN, FEBRUARY 1, 1886.

No. 1.

THE GOSPEL SICKLE.
IS PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.
By the Review and Herald Publishing Association,
Battle Creek, Michigan.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:
URIAH SMITH, GEO. I. BUTLER, W. H. LITTLEJOHN,
D. M. CANRIGHT, AND R. F. COTTRILL.
For Terms, - - - See Last Page.

THE SONG OF THE GOSPEL SICKLE.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Matt. 9:38.

"Come away to the fields, for the harvest is waiting;
The songs of the reapers are calling away.
Bright and fair in its beauty the ripe grain is bending;
Wait not for to-morrow, but haste ye to-day.

"The field is the world, and the grain is the millions
Who tread the broad pathway to death and the grave.
To aid in the work of redemption thy mission,
These perishing souls from destruction to save.

"The rich folds are white in the sunlight of heaven;
Then say not, 'There's naught that our hands find to do.'
Hear the voice of the Saviour, in accents of sorrow,
'The harvest is great, but the laborers are few.'

"Spend not the best moments in idle inaction.
Golden grains are now wasting—oh! gather them in;
Bear with anthems of joy to the feet of the Master
Precious sheaves thou hast saved from the garner of sin.

"Then away to the fields, for the harvest is waiting;
The daylight is fading, 'twill quickly be gone.
Man must work till God's angel shall thrust in his sickle,
And the 'Lord of the harvest' shall gather us home."
—Mattie A. Boyce.

RELIGION AND ACTIVITY.—A man can be religious without secluding himself from the world like the hermits of old, or shutting himself up in a monastery like the monks in the Dark Ages. There is no particular holiness in sloth and inactivity. Carry your religion into your business. Let it make you better in all the relations of life, and shed its hallowed light over all the paths you tread. That religion which has to be carefully guarded from contact with the outside world, and tenderly nursed in secrecy and seclusion, lacks the stamp of the genuine article. This is well illustrated by the following—

ANCIENT LEGEND.

St. Anthony "lived a hermit in a wood, devoted to prayer and meditation; of which being proud, an angel appeared, bids him to go to such a town, and he should find a cobbler, a far more holy man than he. Which he did, came and found the cobbler hard at his work, working and speaking sweetly of Christ, working and breathing out heaven, such a stature of glory upon his heart, so excellent in prayer and conference, that he returned ashamed of himself, and ever after more low in his own eyes. He exercised more grace at his awl than St. Anthony at his altar, and shamed his solitary pride with his poor, honest trade."—*Morality of Fourth Commandment*, pp. 87, 88.

INCREASED activity is reported from Jerusalem in the matter of erecting new buildings and repairing old ones. One capitalist is reported to have twenty new tenant houses in process of erection. New railroad facilities for reaching the city from the north are also being projected for the coming season. Many see in these developments increased evidence that the Jews are about to be gathered to Jerusalem, but we are inclined to look at the matter very differ-

of the field is broader and more grand than any preceding one. So it is with the student of the world's work and necessities. Each step taken to supply these needs, each new height attained in learning the extent of the work, gives a broader view than was had before. And thus we see that never in the history of the world were there so many avenues in which to do good, or so many demands for gospel work as now. Workers are wanted in great numbers.

MAN was not launched upon the Sea of Time without chart or compass to guide him across its trackless waste. The word of God supplies both, but it needs the Holy Spirit to give instruction how to use them. On that chart is shown the voyage of time that earth is making, and the several stations to be passed. There is also shown the port in prospect, and waymarks are set up by means of which we may know when the port is approached. Can one conceive of a more intensely thrilling and interesting study than this wonderful chart? Then let us study it with an earnest desire to be able to comprehend it, and to ascertain our whereabouts in the voyage.

D. B. BONAR well said that "The essence of all sin is the forsaking of God. The essence of all misery is being forsaken of God. The essence of conversion is turning to God to forsake him never. The essence of grace and glory is being never forsaken of God."

NEVER in the history of the world, were the facilities for the diffusion of intelligence so numerous and complete as at the present time. These facilities

Gospel Sickle (1886–1888)

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

Michael W. Campbell, Ph.D., is North American Division Archives, Statistics, and Research director. Previously, he was professor of church history and systematic theology at Southwestern Adventist University. An ordained minister, he pastored in Colorado and Kansas. He is assistant editor of *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Review and Herald, 2013) and currently is co-editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Seventh-day Adventism*. He also taught at the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies (2013-18) and recently wrote the *Pocket Dictionary for Understanding Adventism* (Pacific Press, 2020).

Gospel Sickle was a periodical published semi-monthly between February 1, 1886, and December 15, 1888, by the Seventh-day Adventist Central Publishing House at Battle Creek, Michigan. A total of 72 issues were printed during its three-volume run.

The Periodical

During the 1885 General Conference Session, it was decided to print a missionary paper that was smaller than the *Signs of the Times* so that it would be cheaper to produce and could be distributed for free.¹ In the first issue, [George I. Butler](#), wrote:

The Gospel Sickle is designed for sharp work. We intended it shall bristle all over with the pointed truths of the last message. . . . We want this journal to be *blazing hot* with truth.²

The church leaders envisioned a paper that would be “filled with short, pointed articles on the live issues of the day, and is tastefully made up.”³ It was designed “to be used in ship and city missions.”⁴

The editorial committee initially included Uriah Smith, George I. Butler, Roy F. Cottrell, [W. H. Littlejohn](#), and D. M. Canright. The latter two defected from the church during the periodical’s short print run and were replaced by [G. W. Amadon](#) and [G. W. Morse](#). Editorial departments included “Notes and Comments, Doctrinal, Editorial, The Field, The Theological World, and The Christian Life.”⁵

The periodical’s publication coincided with a major denominational debate over the meaning of the law in Galatians, and the periodical, rather than serving its original purpose as an evangelistic pamphlet, became the loci of the debate. Although well-intended, Ellen White expressed concern over whether this publication was needed.⁶ White wrote to [A. T. Jones](#) and [E. J. Waggoner](#):

A pain comes to my heart every time I see the *Sickle*. . . . If there is a difference upon any parts of the understanding of some particular passage of Scripture, then do not be with pen or voice making your differences apparent and making a breach when there is no need of this.⁷

After the pivotal [1888 General Conference Session](#), especially as the editorial team consisted of those opposed to Jones and Waggoner’s Christ-centered view of redemption, the periodical was discontinued. In the final issue, the publisher offered that anyone who had an unexpired subscription to *Gospel Sickle* could get a refund or use the balance to purchase other denominational books, pamphlets or subscriptions.⁸

The three volumes of *Gospel Sickle* are scanned and accessible online.⁹

SOURCES

“Discontinuance of the Sickle,” *The Gospel Sickle*, December 15, 1888, 192.

“The Gospel Sickle,” *The Present Truth*, March 4, 1886, 40.

“Kansas Tract Society Proceedings,” *ARH*, June 15, 1886, 374.

“New York Tract Society,” *ARH*, July 20, 1886, 453.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second revised edition. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Gospel Sickle, The."

White, Ellen G. to Alonzo T. Jones, February 17, 1887, Letter 37, 1887.

<https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/4503.1#2>

NOTES

1. "Kansas Tract Society Proceedings," *ARH*, June 15, 1886, 374; e.g. "New York Tract Society," *ARH*, July 20, 1886, 453.
2. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Gospel Sickle, The," 10:622.
3. See report of the first issue in *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, May 1886, 80.
4. Minutes of the International Tract Society, December 6, 1885, and quoted in *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* [1996], s.v. "Gospel Sickle, The," 10:621.
5. "The Gospel Sickle," *The Present Truth*, March 4, 1886, 40.
6. Ellen G. White, Letter 37, 1887, paragraph 14.
7. Ibid.
8. "Discontinuance of the Sickle," *The Gospel Sickle*, December 15, 1888, 192.
9. <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fPeriodicals%2fGS&FolderCTID=0x012000DDAC5B94CFBD234AB14>

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000