

The Banner

WORLD WIDE REFORMATION

"He That Winneth Souls Is Wise"



THE BANNER

Entered as second-class matter August 7, 1923, at the post office at Savannah, Georgia, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Published monthly by the Banner Publishing Association, a Corporation of Free S. D. A., 610 W. 36th St., Savannah, Ga.

Price.....10c per Copy, \$1.00 per Year

J. W. MANNS.....Editor
MRS. L. L. JOHNSON.....Associate Editor
J. B. MOSLEY.....Contributing Editor
C. A. EDWARDS.....Contributing Editor

General Assembly Directory

Office Address.....610 W. 36th Street
Telegraphic Address.....610 W. 36th Street
Cable Address.....Adventists, Savannah, Ga.

Executive Committee

(Office Address: 610 W. 36th Street)
J. W. MANNS.....President
MRS. L. L. JOHNSON.....Secretary-Treasurer
W. L. BLUNT.....D. E. WILLIAMS

Foreign Members

C. B. MEAD.....Kingston, Jamaica, B. W. I.
J. B. MOSLEY.....Port Limon, Costa Rica, C. A.
C. A. EDWARDS.....Banes, Orte, Cuba

WHY THE LAW WAS GIVEN ON SINAI

"Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments." Neh. 9:13.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Everything in the law, in one form or another, was but a means in the hands of God toward a great end, and that end or object was Christ. He was to be seen through everything; He was the central object of all plans and purposes. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."

The Real Need of Christ.

2. The question, therefore, would naturally arise, What was the cause that should lead people to need a Christ, a Messiah, a Redeemer, a Deliverer? The answer very readily comes to hand,—Sin. Adam sinned; through him the whole world was involved in ruin. Rom. 10:4. Col. 1:19.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Margin, in whom all have sinned.)

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"For all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God."

The whole world being involved in sin, the whole world needed deliverance from sin and its terrible consequences. Hence we read:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

God's Definition of Sin.

3. It might be well, however, to inquire, What is sin? What is the Biblical definition of it? We find the answer in the following language:

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law."

"Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

"Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."

"For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law."

"Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law."

It is evident, therefore, that God's definition of sin is the transgression of the law, and without transgressing the law there can be no sin.

The Law Defines Sin.

4. The thought which naturally comes to the mind next is, Which law is it that defines sin? and which was it that man had transgressed? The Apostles Paul and James answer the question:

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet'."

"Rom. 5:12. Rom. 6:23. Rom. 3:23. John 3:16. 1 John 3:4. Rom. 3:20. Rom. 4:15. Rom. 5:13.

"But if ye have respect to persons; ye commit sin and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He (margin, that law) which said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou

art become a transgressor of the law."

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

From these texts we learn that the law which points out sin, and the violation of which was the cause of the downfall of Adam, and through him the entire human race, is what is generally known as the decalogue, the ten commandments, the law of God, the moral law.

Who First Knew the Moral Law.

5. It may be said, however, that Adam did not know this law, neither had he ever received it. In specific detail we have no record of the fact; but it is evident from the scriptures already quoted that he must have been acquainted with it. In addition to the evidence given, we quote the following from the Prophet Isaiah:

"Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against Me."

From the inspired definitions already cited, we must conclude that, though not all of the details of the commands which were given to Adam were recorded, he knew them nevertheless. (a) Even the Talmud specifies certain commands that Adam had received, which certainly shows that there was a general belief among the Israelites that Adam had a knowledge of God's law.

"Concerning six things the first Adam was commanded—against idolatry, against blasphemy, against murder, against adultery, against robbery, and concerning the administration of judgment. Although we have these things given to us only through Moses our Master orally, and reason naturally leans that way, yet from the direct words of the law, it doth not appear that they were commanded."—Laws of Kings, chapter 9, section 1.

Rom. 7:7. James 2:9-11.
Rom. 3:19. Isa. 43:37.

No Law, No Sin.

6. Since sin is the transgression of the law, and where there is no sin there is no trans-

gression, and only by the law is the knowledge of sin, it is evident that before the Israelites could appreciate the work of salvation as revealed in the sanctuary and in its ministrations, they must know and understand the nature and consequences of sin. Therefore it was necessary upon the part of God to proclaim amid the awful thunders of Sinai His law, His great detector and informer of sin.

The People Lost the Knowledge of God.

7. During the sojourn of the Israelites in Egyptian bondage, they largely lost sight of the knowledge of God and of His law; in their constant mingling with heathenism and idolatry they lost almost all the knowledge of the true God and of His laws, which had been entrusted to them. In fact, God said that this was one of the reasons why He brought them forth from Egypt:

"He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them. . . . And He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness. . . . That they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws. Praise ye the Lord."

Egypt a Type of Sin; the Exode, of Its Deliverance.

8. The Israelites after their exode had a degree of appreciation of their deliverance from the physical servitude from which God had delivered them. But with God this mere physical deliverance was a minor matter; there was a deliverance which the people needed infinitely greater than the freedom from servitude. This was the deliverance from sin, or from spiritual Egypt. The Lord plainly says there is a spiritual Egypt as well as a literal one.

Ps. 105:37-45.

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt."

Had the Israelites realized their need of a Savior from sin, there never would have been that continuous murmuring

among them that always existed. For they would have appreciated the Lord and His salvation, because of His constant power manifested in their behalf. But simply regarding their help from God as mere temporal benefits, when everything did not come just as they wished, and instantly at that, they were all ready to murmur. Therefore the necessity on the part of God to give them His law in order that they might see the sinfulness of their sins, and thus learn to appreciate the Lord as their Deliverer from sin, as well as their Friend in the time of physical necessities.

They Might Have Known the Laws Before Sinai.

9. That they might have known God's law and commandments before they were given on Mount Sinai, is evident from what we read in the first part of the Pentateuch before the decalogue was given. We will here enumerate some of them for the benefit of the reader; but before doing this, we wish to notice what the Lord said of Abraham:

"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

It is therefore evident that God must have given Abraham laws, commandments, and statutes, which were well known to the Patriarch, and which he kept.

10. Concerning the commands of God which were known and in operation before the decalogue was given on Sinai we have the following record:

The First Commandment.

"Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:" "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."

"And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in

old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods."

Rev. 11:8. Ex. 15:23, 23; 16:2, 3; 17:2, 3; Ps. 78:17, 40, 56. Gen. 26:5; 18:19.

Now if this command on Mount Sinai was its first introduction, how then does it appear that they were apprised of it at the time of the flood, and in the days of Jacob? Moreover, how could it have been wrong for them to have other gods, if there were no law, there is no transgression. It is evident, however, that Jacob regarded it a sin to have strange gods in the dwellings of his family. This then being true, it naturally follows that he must have been informed of the act and must have known the sinfulness of violating the first commandment of the decalogue, which was afterwards given to the children of Israel on Sinai.

The Second Commandment.

"And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's. . . . Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them.

We see then that Laban was a violator of this second precept by having images; for if there had been no precept against them why should his daughter have them, that her father might not worship them. It is evident from the history of Laban that he was not a follower of the true God; hence he was an idolator. He violated God's law and served and worshipped images. We can see then that the second commandment was known at this time.

The Third Commandment.

11. This commandment of the decalogue warns against profanity, the taking of the name of God in vain. Gen. 35:2-4. Josh. 24:2. Ron. 4:15. Gen. 31:19-34. We know from the experience of the antediluvians that they were a very profane people, as through their conduct the earth was literally teeming with violence. But we have the record of at least one person who violated this commandment, and who in the

Scripture is called a profane person:

"And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob."

And the Apostle Paul, in commenting on this experience of Esau says:

"Less there be any fornicator, or profane person ,as Esau."

As a result of his course of conduct, he failed to get the blessing of God, though he sought it with many tears. Surely he must have known the terrible sin of violating the third commandment; for sin is not imputed where there is no law. And since he could find no favor, because of this wicked course of his, it is evident the sin of that blasphemous conduct must have been very great.

The Fourth Commandment.

12. This commandment, as all are aware, is concerning the Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week. It is often said that this Sabbath day was given to the Jews, hence it is Jewish. But we will observe that, according to the teachings of Moses, this institution was in existence before there was a Jew.

"And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. And Moses said, Eat today: for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. Gen. 6:5. Gen. 25:31-33. Heb. 12:16. Heb. 12:17. And the Lord said unto Moses, how long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws? See, for

that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

From these texts we learn that the Sabbath at this time was not a new institution; neither could it have been new three months after when given on Mount Sinai. The Lord here repeats the statement that the people refuse to obey His commandments and laws. So it is evident the people must have had these laws, and certainly must have known them. How could the Lord charge them with violating His law, if they had never heard anything about it? But God says that He had already told them, and they were apprised of it. Is there any command previously given to this effect? We find its record in the second chapter of the Bible, and several titles in Exodus. At creation God made the Sabbath institution. He gave it to Adam, the first man, the father of the race. From him it was to be handed down to all his posterity, to be guarded sacredly as a treasure from heaven. Jesus says this same thing to the people:

"The Sabbath was made for man."

Certainly this must have included Adam, the first man. We thus see clearly that this command was known to the people before it was proclaimed amid the thunders of Sinai.

The Fifth Commandment.

13. This commandment, as every one knows, must have been in force before the giving of the law at Sinai; or how could the conduct of Jacob's sons in selling Joseph to the Midianites, be considered as sinful against their father? They abused their brother; they falsified to their father; they certainly failed to give honor to their parents. They knew it was wrong at the very time they were doing it; but because of their jealousy they sold him. If there were no law against disobedience to parents; if there were no command that parents should be respected, then certainly the sons of Ja-

cob had committed no sin against their father, even though they had wronged their brother. For where no law is, there is no transgression. But they knew it was wrong; the Bible speaks of it as sinful; the results show that their course was an evil one.

The Sixth Commandment.

14. Very little needs to be said touching the enforcement of this commandment before the days of Mount Sinai. The first family violated this command in its literal language. Cain slew his brother, the Book of Genesis tells us. John says he killed his brother. Cain was a murderer. The Lord accused him of this deed, and for it he was punished. Cain himself said that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

15. If, however, there were no law against murder till the time this precept was announced from the summit of the smoking mountain, why was Cain accused of its violation, and punished for killing? Where there is no law, there is no transgression. By the law is the knowledge of sin. It is thus clear that this commandment was known. They knew the record; it was handed down from father to son; the history of the world was traced from one family to another.

(To be Continued)

REASONS FOR LEAN CHRISTIANS

They own Bibles but feed on newspapers.

They sing about peace, but do not surrender to get it.

They pray that the kingdom of heaven may come, but block the way by worldly living.

They listen to sermons on unselfishness, but pamper themselves in food and dress.

They wear crosses, but shrink from bearing them.

They praise Christ with their lips, but declare the things He did to be wholly impractical now.—Selected.

"Promptness takes the drudgery out of an occupation. Putting off usually means leaving off, and going to do becomes going undone."