

Programme for the August Campaigner.

Hymn.—"Pray, Study, Give;" tune, National Anthem.

I. Slavery.

- (a) Slavery utterly incompatible with the Spirit of Christ.
- (b) What has been done in different countries by the Anti-Slavery Movement?
- (c) The widespread slavery which exists in Africa.
 1. Its unspeakable cruelties.
 2. The efforts of European and American powers and Christian societies to secure its abolition.
 3. The slow progress made toward this end, and the causes of it.

II. The Jews.

- (a) Brief history of the Children of Israel till the captivities, noting especially their frequent lapses into idolatry.
- (b) History of the Jews from the captivity to the time of Christ.
 1. Warnings of the prophets.
 2. The precepts and commandments of man added to the Word of God.
 3. Spiritual blindness to the people resulting.
- (c) The rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and the long period of darkness following.
- (d) The present condition of the Jews.
 1. Decline of Talmudic Judaism.
 2. Efforts being put forth to bring the "chosen people" to their Saviour.
 3. Our duty toward the Jews, because we are indebted to them as a race for our Saviour, and because that Saviour has commanded us to "preach the Gospel to every creature."

Shepherdless Sheep.

Readings to be used in connection with the Woman's Missionary Society's suggested programme for August.

IN the Word of God, the people of Israel are frequently compared to *sheep* and their leaders to *shepherds*. Sheep are helpless, foolish animals, ever prone to wander when without a shepherd, or blindly to follow some blind leader of the flock. And this sheep-like characteristic is very marked in Israel's history.

Led out of Egypt "like a flock," they encamped at the foot of Sinai, but scarcely had Moses, their shepherd, disappeared from view, when they turned quickly aside and worshipped the golden calf. Under Joshua's leadership they entered the promised land, but no sooner had he and the elders who outlived him passed away, than Israel went a-whoring after other gods. In the time of trouble which followed, the Lord raised up judges to deliver them, but "when the judge was dead they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers." Under Samuel's magistracy, and during the reign of David and Solomon, the nation feared the Lord, but immediately after Solomon's death the worship of Baal became the established religion of the ten tribes. The same sad story is repeated during the subsequent reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah, in spite of the warnings and entreaties of God's messengers, who strove in vain to lead the nation back to the "old paths." And so at length "the wrath of the Lord arose till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16).

Even after the return from Babylon, it needed all the faith and courage of Ezra and Nehemiah, aided by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, to save the wayward flock from destruction. These faithful shepherds gathered the scattered sheep into folds by establishing synagogues throughout the land, where they were instructed in the law of Moses; for these noble reformers well knew, what modern rulers will do well to remember, that a true knowledge of the Word of God is the only safeguard against national ruin and apostasy. And it is very significant that the closing words of the last of the prophets of the Old Testament (B.C. 400) solemnly warned both priests and people to "*remember the law of Moses my servant*" (Malachi iv. 4).

But it was all in vain. For although for a season the Jewish people, under the leadership of the Maccabees, made a noble stand for God and His truth, there arose in Israel a body of religious teachers who, while professing the deepest veneration for Moses, acted directly contrary to his teaching, by "adding" to the Word of God the precepts and commandments of men, and by "diminishing" from it through their tradition (Deut. iv. 2). And—let it never be forgotten—this virtual rejection of Moses led to the rejection of Christ (Jer. viii. 8, 9). For when at length the Good Shepherd Himself appeared, "of Whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write," there had already fallen upon the Jews and their rulers that judicial blindness so long predicted, which prevented them from recognizing Him as their promised Messiah (see Isaiah vi. 9, 10; and xxix. 10-14).

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It was of these "hirelings" that our Lord spoke those solemn words: "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

And his words have received an awful fulfilment. For what the Scribes and Pharisees with their oral tradition began, the Rabbins with their Talmud completed, so that wherever the Jews have been trained under Rabbinical influence they have remained to this day as bitterly opposed to the Gospel of Christ as when it was first preached nearly nineteen (19) centuries ago.

A French writer, in a remarkable book entitled "Israel and the Nations," says:

"The Talmud is gradually losing its sway. The hour is near when the Gemara will to most Israelites have become nothing but an archaeological movement. The number of Jews who have shaken off its yoke is increasing with each generation." One effect of this decline of Talmudic Judaism is that multitudes of Jews who were hitherto inaccessible to the messenger of Christ are now within reach.

Thus the Lord has to-day set before His Philadelphian Church—the church of brotherly love—"a door opened, which none can shut" of access to these lost sheep of the House of Israel (Rev. iii. 8, R.V.). Nor is it a mere coincidence, that just as the Talmud is falling from their grasp, the Hebrew New Testament is being placed in their hands; and that certain Jewish Christians are busily engaged in preparing a Yiddish version of the Old Testament, of which the Pentateuch and Psalms have already been published, and are eagerly sought after by the poor of the flock. May we not also see in certain recent and remarkable conversions of Jewish teachers of high repute, a partial fulfilment of God's promise to Israel: "*I will give you shepherds*