

presented in the most scientific manner—as most Hebrew students are ever likely to require. A smaller book, at half the price, which many have used with success in self-preparation for an examination in the elements, is that by Duncan Stewart, published by Blackwood, Edinburgh. It has appropriated some of the best features of Davidson, and has the advantage (considerable to a beginner) of adding the pronunciation of the Hebrew forms in English characters. It is confined to the elements, but is accurate so far as it goes.—JAS. ROBERTSON.

Is there any ground for identifying the woman that was a sinner of Luke vii. 37 with Mary Magdalene?—W. G.

There is not. Nothing is known. The Fathers of the Western Church who first, hesitatingly, favoured the identification (Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine) knew nothing more than we know. The universal currency of the opinion that the two women were one and the same person, during the Middle Ages, was due to the authority of Gregory the Great. The adoption of the view by the translators of the Authorized Version, as shown in the heading of Luke vii., "Mary Magdalene anointeth Christ's feet," only exemplifies the tenacity with which opinion holds its place in the human mind after it has been fairly rooted. The great majority of modern commentators entirely discard it.

The chief source of the long prevalent idea is

the same as that which has given rise to many other legends, the desire to know as much as possible concerning persons whose names are surrounded with a halo of religious interest. Who was the woman that was a sinner? Who was Mary called Magdalene? Can the two have been one? There is just one fact in the gospel narrative that suggests and gives a slight plausibility to the conjecture. Immediately after relating the story of the anointing in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Luke goes on to tell of certain women who followed Jesus on His itinerant ministry, and ministered unto Him of their substance (Luke viii. 1-3). The first named is "Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Evidently there was some link of connection between the two narratives in the Evangelist's mind. What was it? Did he know that the woman that was a sinner was one of the women who followed Jesus—say, the Magdalene? Or was the link of connection simply the general thought: following Jesus and ministering to His wants was the frequent result of benefit received from Him; penitents forgiven, demoniacs healed thus went into peace and found deep rest for their souls? The latter hypothesis sufficiently explains the order of the narrative, but the former attracts by its greater definiteness. It has been regarded as a point in its favour that Mary of Magdala had been possessed of seven devils. The seven devils are interpreted to mean a very sinful life. But the notion that the demoniacs were specially great sinners has no foundation in the gospel history.—A. B. BRUCE.

## The Sunday School.

### The International Lessons for September.

I.

September 7.—Luke xix. 1-10.

*Jesus and Zacchæus the Publican.*

1. "The chief among the publicans." There were many publicans or tax-gatherers in Jericho, and Zacchæus may have been the chief of them all; but there is no more asserted here than that he was "a chief tax-gatherer."

2. "A sycamore tree." It is the Egyptian fig-tree, easy to climb from its low-spreading branches.

3. "The half of my goods I give to the poor." This may be taken to indicate a habit already formed; but more likely it is the expression only of a purpose for the future.

The tax-gatherers of Palestine were hateful to the Pharisees, for the simple reason that they were tax-gatherers.

They were thus in league with the Romans, the oppressors of the nation. From this fact alone they were classed as "sinners," and kept mercilessly outside the circle of the "religious," the true sons of Abraham. The result of this exclusion was to make the tax-gatherers, in many cases, careless and immoral. Their besetting sin is indicated by Zacchæus in the eighth verse. They demanded more money from their countrymen in the shape of taxes than they were authorized to collect; and if refused by any one they "informed" against them to the Roman governors as dangerous persons. This "false accusation" was a regular trade in the Roman Empire, whereby many a wretch enriched himself, and the publicans in Palestine found it exceedingly easy to work and very profitable in its results.

Thus they were doubly accursed in the eyes of the Pharisees. They were apostates from the true religion, since, though Jews, they had taken service under Rome; and they actually were guilty of frequent acts of extortion

and cruelty. That many of them became rich and great did not make them more acceptable to the Pharisees or the people; and it is evident that Zacchæus felt himself practically an outcast. He climbed the tree probably because he did not dare to push his way through the crowd.

Many publicans came to Jesus; and one need not wonder at this one. Remember that He was considered a Rabbi—a chief Pharisee; yet He was willing to eat and to drink with publicans and sinners! No wonder the Pharisees fumed; no wonder the publicans melted and came to Him.

Zacchæus repented, and brought forth fruits worthy of repentance, and Jesus pronounced him saved. "Why not?" He seemed to say, "He also is a son of Abraham." In the *literal* sense they all admitted it, for he was a Hebrew like the rest of them; but in the *legal* sense they denied it, for he had gone over to the enemies of the kingdom of Israel; but in the *gracious* sense Christ now affirmed it. He is a son of Abraham—literally, but more especially by grace, being saved.

## II.

September 14.—Luke xix. 12-27.

*The Parable of the Pounds.*

1. "Ten pounds." The word used here by our Lord (mina) is more than a pound, nearly £3, 10s.

2. "Occupy," in modern English, "trade."

3. "This man." As the original has no word for "man," there is contempt mingled with hatred in the expression, "We will not have *this* to reign over us." How literally did the Jews fulfil the prophecy, "Away with *this*, and release unto us Barabbas" (Luke xxiii. 18).

4. "I might have required mine own with usury." "Required" is scarcely strong enough; the same word is translated "exact" in Luke iii. 13. Both principal and interest belong to God by right, both our talents and what they effect; therefore He exacts His own with interest.

In this parable Christ is believed to have made use of a historical incident. Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, had made a journey to Rome—a far country from Judea—to seek to be made king of the Jews. The Jews, however, hated him, and sent fifty of their chief men to endeavour to persuade Augustus, the emperor, to refuse him the kingdom. They were unsuccessful; for, though Archelaus was refused the title of "king," he was allowed to remain governor of Judea. On his return he appointed such of his chief adherents as had been faithful to him rulers over cities, and put to death those who had opposed him.

Why does our Lord recall this incident in the history of the Herodian family? The eleventh verse tells us. He was nearing Jerusalem; His followers were full of the wildest hopes, hopes of a Messianic kingdom of this world just about to be established, and of their own splendid prospects, simply on the ground that they were His followers. So He says: The Kingdom is not yet. He must first go away to that far country,—far, yet very near,—His Father's house; when He comes again the kingdom will be established. Then will He appoint His followers to places of honour in that kingdom.

But first they must be tried. Outward respect for a present Master, whose every step they think brings him nearer the throne, is no test of character, no evidence that they are fit for the positions to which they aspire. But faithfulness to a long absent Lord—faithfulness to past memories, faithfulness to present duties and responsibilities, faithfulness to an undying hope that He that shall come will come even though He seem to tarry long—that will test, and that will be rewarded with honour undreamt of.

There are seeming followers who are no true followers. They love not; they only follow through fear. Therefore they cannot abide faithful in absence, though they are not *sure* enough openly to throw off their allegiance. Theirs will be bitter disappointment and loss.

There are open enemies also. There are those whose pride of heart and badness of life make them prefer the rule of a Barabbas to that of the holy Lord. They do not even pretend to be disciples. There is no degradation, therefore, for them when He appears; there is simply swift destruction. They are not surprised at the sentence passed upon them. They have openly cast in their lot with His enemies; if He comes in power, they know what their end will be.

## III.

September 21.—Luke xix. 37-48.

*Jesus entering Jerusalem.*

1. "At the descent of the Mount of Olives." The last halting-place was Bethany. From that village the road to Jerusalem rounds the hill Olivet, and at a certain point of it the city bursts into view. At this point Farrar thinks the people from Jerusalem "met the rejoicing crowd of Galilean pilgrims who came with Jesus."

2. "He beheld the city, and wept over it." It was a steady gaze, followed by a great wailing cry; for the word means *wept aloud* or *wailed*. At the grave of Lazarus, "Jesus wept;" but there the word means simply that he shed silent tears. "Few scenes are more striking than this burst of anguish in the very midst of the exulting procession."

3. "The things which belong unto thy peace." Long ago Isaiah had cried in the name of the Lord: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river" (Isa. xlvi. 18). Now there had dawned a yet more gracious "day" to this favoured city, in the very name of which is the Hebrew word "peace" (Salem): for the Prince of Peace had come to her gates; but she would not.

4. "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee." Forty years later this was literally fulfilled. Titus surrounded the city with a trench and a mound, and "kept her in on every side;" for so close was the blockade, that "myriads of the Jews perished of starvation." It is a terrible story, the story of the siege of Jerusalem. Milman, in his *History of the Jews*, tells it vividly. To the minutest detail, Christ's prediction was fulfilled. Titus found that there was nothing for it, when he had taken the city, but to level it with the ground. To leave one stone upon another was but to leave a rallying point for the Jews to gather round.

What a lesson this whole scene brings before us if we could

learn it! The exultant crowds hailing Jesus as the Messiah, and leading Him in triumph into the holy city; Jesus Himself weeping aloud in the midst of the joy; the Pharisees and Scribes standing aloof, scowling and envious; the most sacred place of the holy city found no better than a cave of

robbers; what does it all mean? That in obedience to God's commandments there is peace, and prosperity, and triumph, and not in any outward splendour. They cried, "Hosanna!" but their hearts were far from Him. Very soon they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

### \*\* Behind Him—Before Him.\*\*

In your May number a passage was cited from a popular author in reference to our Lord's healing the woman who had an issue of blood. May I correct an oversight in the writer's remark that the Saviour "could not rest Himself—could not let her rest, until He brought her round *before Him?*" This representation of the Lord Jesus bringing the poor woman "round *before Him*" sadly mars the profoundly interesting tableau which the Scripture narrative exhibits. Our Lord did not cause the invalid to come before Him, but He turned back towards where she was (Matt. ix. 22; Mark v. 30), and "looked round to see her who had done this" (Mark v. 32). The woman "perceiving that she had not escaped notice" (Luke viii. 47), "alarmed and trembling" (Mark v. 33), came no doubt with faltering steps, and "threw herself at His feet, and told Him all the truth" (*Ibid.*), "before all the people" (Luke viii. 47), her tale of woe and tedious suffering, and how 'twas quickly ended (Luke viii. 47). Then came the closing words of grace.

F. H. RINGWOOD.

### The Jews under Roman Rule.

BY W. D. MORRISON.

London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1890. 5s.

MR. MORRISON has written a capital book, and one which forms a really valuable addition to the "Story of the Nations" series. He is, however, more successful in dealing with the external fortunes of the Jews—the relations which existed between them and the Romans during the period in question—than in his treatment of the internal structure and conditions of Jewish society. The chapters devoted to the Maccabæan insurrection, the Roman conquest of Palestine, the rule of the Herodian family, the administration of the imperial procurators, and the destruction of Jerusalem, are all clearly and carefully written. Mr. Morrison has consulted the best authorities, and has made good use of the material thus placed at his command. He has not been content merely to reproduce the facts and the conclusions of others, but has grasped the historical details with a fresh, firm hand, and has presented them in a way that is all his own.

The book may, therefore, fairly claim the kind of originality that consists in reissuing current coin stamped with the author's own image and individuality. No more concise sketch of the career of Herod, for instance, or of the policy of the Roman tetrarchs, could be desired: and if the story is not told with the exhaustive fulness of Schürer, or with the picturesque charm that lends so much grace to the pages of Hausrath, it is at least much more interesting and satisfactory than the narrative of Stapfer. For a popular and, at the same time, an accurate and well-condensed account of Jewish history during the period extending from the rise of the Maccabees to the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, we can heartily recommend Mr. Morrison's book. The chapters that follow, however, are scarcely of the same high order of excellence, and are of unequal merit. It is no doubt true that with reference to some of the topics dealt with, the information we possess is not only scanty but untrustworthy. It is, therefore, difficult for any writer to avoid statements and conclusions, which to other scholars seem open to question; nor in a volume of this sort would Mr. Morrison be expected to combat the opinions of those from whom he differs. Still he does not seem in every case to have thoroughly assimilated all the facts and material before him. For example, while the constitution and jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim are clearly described, nothing is said about its judicial procedure,—a point of great importance as illustrating the nature of the powers which the Supreme Court claimed the right to exercise. Again, we are told that "the site for a synagogue was, as a rule, selected because of its proximity to the seashore, or to a running stream;" and this statement is supported by a reference to Acts (xvi. 13) and to Josephus (*Ant.* xiv. 10, 23). But Mr. Morrison should have known that in both these passages, not synagogues, but *proseuchai* or places of prayer are intended, and that such oratories were simply open spaces—more rarely buildings—to be met with in cities where synagogues did not exist, or were not permitted. On the other hand, the chapters dealing with the origin and distinctive tenets of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes are much more satisfactory in point of arrangement and in fulness of detail. A word should also be said in praise of the illustrations, which are well-chosen and finely executed.

JOHN I. W. POLLOCK.