

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

*SOME RECENT OLD TESTAMENT AND OTHER
LITERATURE.*

DR. STREANE'S *Age of the Maccabees*¹ is practically an Introduction to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, with a somewhat full treatment of the political, literary, and religious circumstances of the period to which most of them belong. The period dealt with is defined, Preface v., as that "from the Return of the Jews [536] . . . till the accession of Herod the Great," or, p. 89, as from B.C. 323-37. Even Second (Fourth) Esdras, which lies quite outside of this period, is included in order to complete the treatment of the Apocrypha. The book is written "in the main for the non-expert," Preface vii., who will find in it a clear and concise collection of useful information—in fact an adequate and scholarly "Bible Student's" Introduction to the Apocrypha, etc. The critical attitude is moderately and courteously conservative; the existence of Maccabean Psalms and the date of Daniel are treated as open questions. Appendix C gives, in tabular form, the arguments for the traditional date of the latter, the objections to them, and arguments for the Maccabean date. As far as it goes, it is, from the author's standpoint, a very fair and convenient conspectus. Naturally there is a very imperfect statement of the most convincing evidence for the Maccabean date, viz., that four times the Maccabean struggle is the point of transition from detailed history to vague prediction; and that, according to the general analogy of Apocalyptic literature, this transition fixes the date of the book. To any one who appreciates this evidence the time of composition of Daniel can scarcely be an open question. The traditional view as now held is stated thus (p. 257): "The book in its present shape has suffered more or less

¹ *The Age of the Maccabees, with special reference to the Religious Literature of the Period.* By A. W. Streane, D.D. (Eyre & Spottiswoode, pp. xii. 278.)

from interpolations (*e.g.* chap. xi.) and other alterations. These apart, the date to be assigned to its original form may well be the traditional one, viz., soon after the Persian Empire had established itself."

While, however, in the sections devoted to Maccabean Psalms and Daniel, the author regards them as open questions, in his general treatment of the history, religion and literature of the period he assumes the traditional views and ignores these works, together with the sections of Isaiah, etc., which some critics have dated in the Greek period.

Those who wish to see how the questions as to *Daniel* are handled by an uncompromising advocate of the authorship of that book by the prophet whose name it bears will be interested in reading Dr. Kennedy's work on the subject.¹

Prof. Orr² has published, at the request of the Auburn Seminary, New York State, a course of lectures prepared for the Mansfield Summer School of 1894, and delivered as the Morgan Lecture in 1897. They are an admirable example of a short course of lectures for a Summer School. The subject chosen is sufficiently limited for the time available and the audience; and the lecturer attacks current misconceptions on matters of general interest. Secretaries of Summer Schools would do well to send copies to their speakers. Prof. Orr's contention is that the Church of the first three centuries was more numerous, respectable, and influential than has been commonly supposed. The most important of the "Neglected Factors" is the Catacombs. Exploration has shown that at least a million Christians were buried there in the second and third centuries, which

¹ *The Book of Daniel*. By John Kennedy, M.A., D.D. (Eyre & Spottiswoode, pp. xii. 219.)

² *Neglected Factors in the Early Progress of Christianity*. By the Rev. James Orr, M.A., D.D., Professor of Church History, U.P. Coll., Edinburgh. (Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 235. 3s. 6d.)

proves that Gibbon's estimate of fifty thousand Christians at Rome, c. A.D. 300, is much too small. We can only note one or two points. There are some interesting paragraphs on recent developments in Church History, in the course of which we read: "If Baur's own criticism has gradually had to retract itself within comparatively narrow limits, it may claim, like the Nile waters, to have fertilised in the height of its overflow even the plains from which subsequently it had to retreat" (p. 16).

In considering social status, two quotations are given in which Milman speaks of the Church as mainly middle-class. We are not sure whether Prof. Orr intends to endorse this view, but it seems to be involved in the following: "I do not think it is an unreasonable conclusion to draw from these data that, while there were doubtless poor churches, and many poor people in all the churches, the general membership of the congregations was, contrary to the usual view, composed of fairly well-to-do and intelligent people, and commonly had among them also persons of highly respectable and sometimes quite conspicuous positions" (p. 112). We are not clear that the evidence cited proves more than that the proportion of well-to-do and cultured people in the churches was as large as in the general population.

We have also received *The Tabernacle and Its Priests and Services, Described and Considered in relation to Christ and the Church*, by William Brown;¹ *The Voice of the Spirit*, Book III., *Ezekiel and Song of Solomon*, by Howard Swan;² and the selection of *Bible Stories* from the Revised Version of the Old Testament, in Prof. R. G. Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible*.³

W. H. BENNETT.

¹ Sixth Edition, Revised and Enlarged, with numerous Illustrations. (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, pp. 315. 3s. 6d.)

² *Literary Passages from the Bible*, Re-written, Idea for Idea, in Modern Style. (London: Sampson Low, pp. xxvii. 169.)

³ Macmillan, pp. xii. 310. 2s. 6d.