

**ON CERTAIN PHENOMENA
BELONGING TO THE CLOSE OF
THE LAST GEOLOGICAL PERIOD
AND ON THEIR BEARING UPON
THE TRADITION OF THE FLOOD**

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On Certain Phenomena Belonging to the Close of the Last Geological Period and on Their
Bearing upon the Tradition of the Flood by Joseph Prestwich

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BY

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CORR. INST. FRANCE (ACAD. SC.); ACAD. E. LYCEEI, ROME; ROY. ACAD., BRUSSELS; IMP. GEOL. INST.,
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PREFACE

THE geological phenomena which suggested to me the hypothesis of a comparatively recent Submergence of Western Europe and of the Mediterranean coasts are described in papers read before the Geological Society in 1892,¹ and before the Royal Society early in 1893.² In those papers I confined myself to the purely geological questions; but as the hypothesis seemed to have a bearing upon questions relating to the Tradition of the Flood, I brought the subject to the notice of the Victoria Institute, in a paper which that Society has done me the honour to publish in their *Journal of Transactions* for 1894. It was not, however, possible to include within the compass of one evening's communication the many considerations connected with so wide a subject, which are

¹ "On the Raised Beaches and 'Head' or Rubble-drift of the South of England, etc.," *Quart. Journ. Geol. Society*, vol. 48, p. 263.

² "On the Evidences of a Submergence of Western Europe and of the Mediterranean Coasts at the close of the Glacial Period," etc., *Phil. Trans.*, for 1893.

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therefore given at greater length in the following pages.

7 It may be thought by many of my geological
friends that the hypothesis put forward involves too
8 much catastrophic action. There is however, I
consider, sufficient evidence to warrant the in-
ferences I have drawn from the facts described, as
9 well as reason to believe that the Tradition could not
have had its origin otherwise than in an event of
10 a very exceptional and extraordinary character—
far more so than any that could have resulted
from ordinary river floods. It seemed also to me
11 impossible to account for the special geological
phenomena on which the hypothesis is based by any
12 agency of which our time has afforded us experience,
so that we must judge of the cause of their origin
13 by the results as they are now to be observed
and interpreted, and not by any assumed postu-
lates. Many explanations have been suggested
14 for parts, but none have embraced the whole of
the geological phenomena. Led to suspect the
15 possibility of an unusual form of water agency,
I put the case of a Submergence and subsequent
Emergence hypothetically, and found that the con-
16 sequences which resulted agreed in a remarkable
manner with the observed facts. In any hypothesis
17 framed to meet the incidents recorded in the Nar-
rative of the Flood, care must be taken to separate
those statements which conform to natural causes

and laws from those that are due to the human colouring in which the extraordinary event has become enveloped. The inclusion of the impossible has only served to throw doubt on those portions of the narrative which are possible. Even with the omission of the former, there is much that is difficult to explain and which requires further research. I am however encouraged, as the hypothesis satisfies so many of the conditions of the problem, to hope for a solution favourable to the interpretation herein suggested. Much more time and many more workers are however required for the investigation of the many questions involved in the inquiry.

In any case, if the connection of the Tradition with the phenomena described in these pages fails to find confirmation, their study from a geological point of view may, I trust, be advanced by the collocation of the facts which I have grouped together under the designation of the "Rubble-drift."

As the subject is necessarily technical, I have given only such few geological details as are needed for the argument, in a manner I trust to be understood by those who have but a slight acquaintance with that science. Geologists will find the fuller details and discussion of the facts in the several papers referred to in the text.

JOSEPH PRESTWICH.