

**ESSAYS ON THE ANTEDILUVIAN
AGE: IN WHICH ARE POINTED OUT
ITS RELATIVE POSITION AND CLOSE
CONNEXION WITH THE GENERAL
SCHEME OF PROVIDENCE**

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ANTEDILUVIAN AGE,
IN WHICH ARE POINTED OUT ITS
RELATIVE POSITION AND CLOSE CONNEXION
WITH THE
GENERAL SCHEME OF PROVIDENCE.

BY THE
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VICAR OF KEYSOE, BEDFORDSHIRE.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.—REV. II. 7.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS attempt to illustrate the very brief notices which the Bible affords concerning the period from the Fall to the Deluge, is founded on the following principles: that mankind, from the beginning, have been actuated by the same motives; and that the Almighty has followed out one uniform plan of moral government.

The inspired narrative of Moses presents to our view the institution of the primeval Church; the entrance of infidelity which gradually increased until it became an overwhelming apostasy; and the judgment of God upon a totally corrupt Church in the destruction of a world. This is our direct evidence towards a history of the Antediluvian Church. Some indirect evidence comes reflected to us from our more intimate acquaint-

ance with the Jewish Church. In the Old Testament, we have a full account of its institution, its wayward course, and continual declining from the truth ; and in the New, we see the judgment of God denounced upon this licentious and apostate Church in the utter subversion of its polity and the dispersion of its members. But we not only have a more particular history of the Jewish Church ; we have the farther advantage of inspired commentators to explain the Mosaic dispensation ; the Apostles continually speak of God's covenant with Abraham in the language and with the enlarged views of Christianity. Their object, indeed, was to unfold to their Jewish brethren the nature and object of the Gospel scheme by means of analogies taken from their own economy ; but in so doing, they have enabled us to see more clearly the nature and object of Judaism ; and we are hereby authorised in applying analogies taken from the Christian and Jewish dispensations to the illustration of the antediluvian period. The apostles, following the example of our Saviour, have done so in part themselves ; but they have only pointed out, in a general way,

the path which we must ourselves explore to come to a knowledge of particulars.

In this investigation, we may also derive great assistance from the nature of prophecy (vid. Essay III.), which having different fulfilments of the same prediction (each fulfilment being more clear than the preceding) we are enabled not only to look forward with more distinct views to the final completion, but also backward with a better understanding of the circumstances which first gave rise to it. The most important instance of this method is to be found in the prophecy of Enoch. There can be no doubt that it was addressed to the Antediluvians to warn them of God's intended judgment at the flood; but it is also applied by St. Jude to that judgment on the Jews which is foretold by our Saviour in his prophecy concerning the subversion of the Jewish polity (Matt. xxiv.) If, then, from the nature of prophecy, the prediction of Enoch may be applied to the subversion of the Jewish polity; conversely, the prophecy of our Lord may be applied to the destruction of mankind at the flood: "As the days of Noah were (at the coming of the Lord

foretold by Enoch), so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be (at the end of the Jewish age.)" Vid. Essays VI. and VII. Various analogies and applications of prophecy will be found throughout this work, but it is the retrospective application of our Lord's prophecy which has thrown most light upon the early history; and it was Jude's application of Enoch's prophecy to the last days of the Jewish age, that suggested this mode of treating the subject.

As Enoch's prophecy is the only prediction of that kind remaining to us from those early ages, we must consider it merely as the representative of the antediluvian prophecies; for, doubtless, there were many others of a kindred nature. Thus John the Baptist's prophecy (Matt. iii. 12.) may be looked on as the representative of the numerous and varied prophecies that ushered in the end of the Jewish dispensation: "He that cometh after me is mightier than I; his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." If this prediction of the Baptist's were the only

one preserved from the Christian Scriptures to the subjects of a more glorious dispensation, they would form a very erroneous judgment if they supposed this prediction to have been the only warning to the contemporaries of John. For my own part, I suppose that Jude has quoted only the concluding sentence of some one of Enoch's prophecies, as the above text is the conclusion of one of the many exhortations of John which he delivered during his "preaching in the wilderness of Judea." I therefore infer that the later generations of the antediluvians had advantages of a similar kind to those which the Jews possessed afterwards ; and, I suppose, as the result was the same in both cases, that the winding up of the early religious history would disclose events very similar to those which occurred before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Of the importance of my subject I need to speak but very briefly. The scheme of man's redemption has come down to us unfolded in three distinct, but closely connected dispensations. The foundation of the Church was laid at the commencement of the first period ; so that, be-