

**THE BOOK OF JOB: A  
TRANSLATION FROM  
THE ORIGINAL HEBREW**

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The Book of Job: A Translation from the Original Hebrew by Thomas J. Conant

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**THOMAS J. CONANT**

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TRANSLATION FROM  
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THE  
BOOK OF JOB.

A TRANSLATION

FROM THE ORIGINAL HEBREW

ON THE BASIS OF

THE COMMON AND EARLIER ENGLISH VERSIONS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

FOR THE

ENGLISH READER.

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FOR THE AMERICAN BIBLE UNION

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THE BOOK OF JOB,

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR THE ENGLISH READER.

In the plan of this work, the SACRED TEXT stands by itself, apart from all human additions, that the reader of the translation may have before him in English what was given to the Jewish reader in Hebrew. Accordingly, the numbering of chapters and verses, marginal renderings, statements of contents, etc. are separated from the version of the original text.

The modern practice, of printing each verse in a paragraph by itself, was first introduced into the English Scriptures in the Genevan version of the New Testament (1657), and of the whole Bible in 1660. This practice has greatly obscured the meaning of the sacred text, by presenting it to the eye in minute fragments, thus discovering parts the most intimately connected, as though they had no manner of relation to each other. A man would be considered beside himself, who should treat in this way any human production designed to be understood. This has never been introduced into the Hebrew Scriptures, and is now abandoned in critical editions of the Greek New Testament.

Wherever there is good authority for a version of a word or phrase, differing from that which the translator regards as the true one, it is placed in the margin.

It is the primary object of the Notes to this Second Part, to give such information on points of history and geography, civil, religious and domestic antiquities, etc. as is necessary for the full understanding of an ancient book, abounding in allusions to the peculiar circumstances of the age and country to which it belongs. In the Bible, more than in any other book, this information can be supplied from its own pages. The writer has aimed, by numerous references made with careful discrimination, to render the Bible its own interpreter. —The design and plan of the book, and the course of the argument, will be fully exhibited in the Introduction and Notes. V. R. (*Various Reading*) denotes a different form of the original text.



## INTRODUCTION.

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### § 1.

#### INSPIRATION AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BOOK.

THE claim of the book of Job, to be regarded as a part of Divine Revelation, is established beyond question by the authority of Christ and his Apostles. It was a part of that collection of Sacred Writings, the Oracles of God, which were committed to the care and guardianship of the Jewish people (Rom. 3 : 2). Of these writings, collectively, the Saviour and his Apostles often speak as the Word of God; recognizing, and directly asserting, their divine authority and inspiration. See such passages, for example, as Matt. 5 : 17-19; John 5 : 39; Rom. 3 : 2; Matt. 22 : 43, and Mark 12 : 36; 2 Tim. 3 : 16; 1 Pet. 1 : 10-12; 2 Pet. 1 : 21. It was, therefore, as a part of these divine writings,\* (called in the New Testament the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, the Oracles of God) expressly recognized, by the Saviour and his Apostles, as of divine authority; and was declared to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," (2 Tim. 3 : 16).

The genuineness of the book (in other words, that it is a DIVINE BOOK; that, in this sense, it is not a *spurious* production) is thus established by the highest authority. It is a question of less importance, by whom the book was written; and this will be considered in § 8. In regard to several of the books of the Old Testament, this cannot be determined with certainty. Nor is this necessary to be known; nor would it by itself prove their inspiration and divine authority, which must rest on other grounds.†

\* The proofs of this must be reserved for the General Introduction to the books of the Old Testament. The course of argument being the same for all these books, it would otherwise be necessary to repeat the whole in connection with each. For the same reason, the subject of the inspiration of these books belongs properly to the General Introduction.

† The authority of a writing, claimed to be divine, does not in any case rest on the particular writer or human instrumentality, but on the divine attestation given to it; and this attestation can be given, as in many cases it has been, to writings which have come to us anonymously, and of which the particular writer cannot be determined with certainty.

## § 2.

## WHAT IS TAUGHT IN THIS BOOK?

A question of far greater importance and interest respects the *design* of the book, as a part of divine revelation. For what end was it given to us, as such, by its Divine Author? What instruction is it intended to convey to us? In other words: What is its place in a divine revelation; and how is the purpose of its Author effected?

The following considerations will bring this question more clearly before the mind of the reader.

We find, on a careful perusal, that very different and directly contradictory opinions are maintained by the several speakers, in the discussion which forms the principal part of the book. From them, therefore, nothing can be learned as authoritatively asserted, since they directly controvert each other's views.

Again: when the Almighty at length speaks, near the close of the book, he rebukes the leader in the discussion, as "darkening counsel by words without knowledge" (38: 2), and condemns his three friends as still more in error (42: 7). He does not declare, indeed, that all are equally in the wrong. Yet, he does not point out *wherein* one is wrong and another right; or wherein both are equally in error, so that we might know what is approved by him and what is not.

Such is the testimony of the Divine Being, respecting the things asserted and defended in this discussion. Moreover, Job himself makes the acknowledgment (42: 3):

I have therefore uttered what I understand not;  
Things too hard for me, which I know not.

Hence, we are not to regard the positions taken by Job as altogether right, and fully approved of God; much less, those of his opponents.

Again: in the discourses of the Almighty (chs. 38-41), he asserts nothing affirmatively. He gives no positive instruction in regard to the question in debate; and he lays down no principles by which the problem can be solved.

What then is the divine purpose in the gift of this book? An inspired Apostle has said of all Scripture, that it "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." Now what doctrine is taught in this portion of the divine word; and what is the instruction here imparted?

The answer to the question must be sought, where the question itself has arisen, in the contents of the book.

## § 3.

## SUBJECT OF THE BOOK, AND MODE OF TREATING IT.

The subject is:

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF MEN.

This subject is treated in two ways:

I. By an exhibition of the difficulties which it presents to the finite mind; of the conflicts and the erroneous conclusions of the human spirit, in striving to reconcile them with the eternal principles of justice and goodness.

II. By showing man's true position, in reference to the ways of the Eternal and Infinite.

The first division presents a good man, one pronounced perfect and upright by God himself, suffering under an accumulation of sudden and terrible misfortunes. From the height of worldly happiness, rich, honored, surrounded by a numerous and prosperous family, he suddenly finds himself poor, childless, the prey of a loathsome and incurable disease, an object of contempt and insult to the meanest outcasts of society. In this extremity, three of his former friends pay him a visit of condolence. These men, venerable in years and character, princes and sages of their tribes, represent the traditional wisdom of the time, the views and maxims based on the limited experience of the early patriarchs respecting the government of God. According to these, the Omniscient who cannot be deceived, the Almighty who cannot be resisted, and the infinitely Just who can do no wrong, must, by the laws of his own nature, deal with every man according to his deserts; and his treatment is therefore the true index of the man's moral character. Accordingly, their addresses to Job assume his guilt as the cause of his sufferings. And since the degree of guilt is the exact measure of punishment, these extraordinary judgments mark him out as an eminent transgressor. Though his crimes have escaped detection by man, they cannot elude the searching eye of God, who has thus stripped off his disguises, and exposed him to deserved shame. Hence, their reproofs and exhortations all have it for their object, to induce him to acknowledge and repent of his wickedness, and to justify his righteous Judge.

Job, on the other hand, conscious of his rectitude, denies their inferences in regard to himself, and condemns the stand-point from which they judge of men as false and untenable. Their traditional wisdom he confronts with the actual observation of life, showing by examples familiar to all, that the wicked are not thus dealt with according to their deserts. The strong-handed preys on the weak; he wrongs the widow and fatherless; grows rich on the unrequited toil of the