

**THE HOLY BIBLE, IN THE  
AUTHORIZED VERSION: WITH  
NOTES  
AND INTRODUCTIONS; VOL.  
IV. PART I. - THE BOOK OF JOB**

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The Holy Bible, in the Authorized Version: With Notes and Introductions; Vol. IV. Part I. - the Book of Job by Chr. Wordsworth

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**CHR. WORDSWORTH**

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COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY BIBLE.

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IN

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WITH

NOTES AND INTRODUCTIONS

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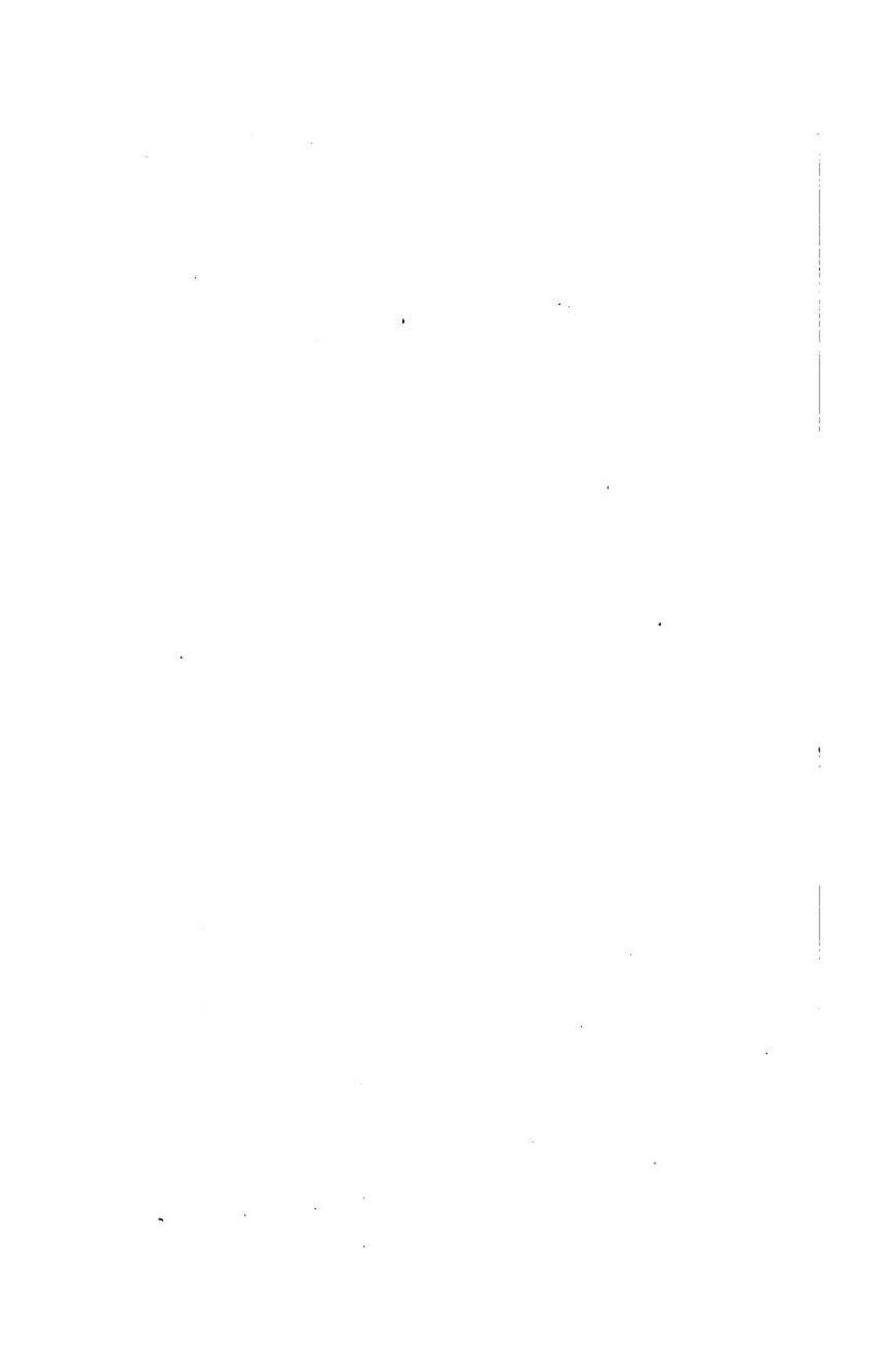
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## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB.

THE BOOK OF JOB holds a place peculiar to itself,—indeed, an unique place,—among the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Job was not an Israelite. He did not dwell in Canaan, but in Arabia. He is called in this Book "the greatest of all the men of the East."<sup>1</sup> Whatever may have been the time in which he lived, certain it is that neither he, nor any of his friends who are introduced in this Book, were subject to the requirements of the Levitical Law. They were not Hebrews, but Gentiles; and they were depositaries and witnesses of moral and religious truths, which had been revealed to man by God at the beginning<sup>2</sup>.

Especially Job himself, who is described by the Sacred Writer as "a man perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil,"<sup>3</sup> and is pointed out by God Himself as such, so that none was "like him in the earth,"<sup>4</sup> was a representative of the pure religion of the primitive ages of the World.

Job was a Patriarch, a Prophet, and a Priest, not of the Mosaic dispensation, but of the universal family of Man<sup>5</sup>. The utterances of this Book, concerning doctrines of supernatural truth, are not from Mount Sinai, or Mount Zion, but are like echoes of the oracles of God Himself conversing with Man in Paradise.

These characteristics impart a special interest to the Book of Job. The hero of it was not a Hebrew, but a Gentile; and yet, from time immemorial, it has had a place in the Hebrew Scriptures; and, as we shall see<sup>6</sup>, many of the Hebrew writers adopt its language. It is a Bible of primeval Revelation; and it bears an independent Testimony to the rest of the Old Testament, and also to the Gospel of Christ.

Let us consider these two points.

I. First, the Book of Job is in perfect harmony with the writings of Moses, and of the Prophets.

The Omnipotence<sup>7</sup>, Omnipresence<sup>8</sup>, and Eternity of God<sup>9</sup>, His Holiness<sup>10</sup>, Wisdom, and Justice, the Creation<sup>11</sup> of all things by Him, their preservation and government by His power and love<sup>12</sup>, are asserted in the Book of Job, in terms similar to those which are employed by Moses and the Prophets. It also affirms the existence of Angels<sup>13</sup>; their creation by God before the formation of Man; the personal existence of an Evil Spirit, called Satan<sup>14</sup>, or Adversary; his restless activity in working mischief, and his insatiable desire to injure Man, and to draw him from allegiance to God<sup>15</sup>.

It also declares, that although Satan is the Author of the evil which men suffer in this world, yet Satan's power is *not co-ordinate* with that of God, but is *subordinate* to it; and is exercised by

<sup>1</sup> Job i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The incidental notice, which at first may seem barren of interest, at the close of the twenty-second chapter of Genesis, which relates the history of Abraham's sacrifice, has a special value for the Book of Job. It is there related that it was told Abraham that his brother Nahor had become the father of two sons, *Hes* (or *Us*) the firstborn, and *Bes* his brother, and Kemeel the father of Aram, and Bethuel the father of Rebekah, who became the wife of Isaac.

The land in which Job dwelt, "the land of *Us*" (Job i. 1), seems to have derived its name from the firstborn of Abraham's brother; and "Eihin" the son of Besechal the *Besite*, of the kindred of Ram," who performs so important a part in this book, appears also to have been descended from Abraham's brother (see below, xxxii. 2). Thus Job and his friend were collaterally con-

nected with Abraham. The righteous Gentile has a brotherly relationship to the faithful Hebrew. The Pentateuch was placed by the side of the Ark (see above, on Deut. xxxi. 2, 26), and the Book of Job lies, as it were, by the side of the Pentateuch.

<sup>3</sup> Job i. 1. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Job iii. 8. 16. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Job xi. 11; xxi. 22; xxiii. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Job x. 5; xxvii. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Job iv. 17; xv. 15; xxv. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Job x. 8; xxiv. 10; xxviii. 4—12.

<sup>9</sup> Job v. 10. 18; viii. 4; ix. 13—18; xxxviii. 39—41; xxxix. 1—6.

<sup>10</sup> Job i. 6; ii. 1; iv. 18; v. 1; xv. 15; xxxiii. 23; xxxviii. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Job i. 6; ii. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Job i. 9—11; ii. 4—7.

<sup>13</sup> See on i. 5; xiii. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Job v. 9; vi. 4. 14; ix. 5.

His permission<sup>1</sup>, and is controlled by His will, and is made subservient to His glory, and to the accomplishment of His wise and beneficent purposes in the moral training of His servants, in order that their affections may be weaned from earthly things, and may be fixed on heavenly<sup>2</sup>, and in order that they may achieve the victory, and gain eternal glory, not by their own strength, but by God's power working in them.

The Creation of Man from the dust of the earth<sup>3</sup> is supposed to be known to the readers of the Book of Job. The original promulgation of the Law of God declaring to Man in Paradise that obedience to God is the essence of Wisdom, is here set forth in the sublimest language<sup>4</sup>. The Fall of Man through disobedience to that Law<sup>5</sup>, and the consequent taint of impurity cleaving to all his descendants<sup>6</sup>, are also recognized in it.

There is reason also to think that this Book refers to the two great Judgments executed by God for sin,—the one by Water, at the Flood<sup>7</sup>; the other by Fire, on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah<sup>8</sup>; and also to the vengeance of God, punishing the haughtiness and obstinacy of Pharaoh, and overwhelming the host of Egypt in the Red Sea<sup>9</sup>.

The God who is represented as performing these mighty works, and who is worshipped by Job, is called JEHOVAH<sup>10</sup>,—the Name which the God of Israel<sup>11</sup> claimed as exclusively His own.

Thus, then, the Book of Job, which describes a state of society external to the Mosaic economy is seen to harmonize with the Pentateuch, and bears testimony to its truth.

Besides, the Book of Job not only confirms the Pentateuch, but it is *supplementary* to it.

The Mosaic Law came from a *perfect God*, but it was given to an *imperfect people*. And it effected *perfectly* what it was designed to accomplish. It did this by condescending to the *imperfections* of those to whom it was given, and by endeavouring to elevate them to a more perfect condition.

It gave *temporal* promises to the Hebrew Nation, because they were not as yet fitted for a more spiritual system, and in order that they might be qualified and prepared for the Gospel of Christ, which was foreshadowed by the Mosaic dispensation.

The Israelites at the Exodus from Egypt were like children who needed visible excitements. They had long been enslaved by the bondage of Egypt, their eyes had been familiarized with its superstitions, and their appetites had been surfeited with its indulgences. They could not be weaned from these things but by slow degrees. The system, therefore, by which they were trained under Moses in the wilderness, was one of *immediate* rewards and punishments. It did indeed suggest to the mind of every thoughtful and devout worshipper, glorious visions of what is spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. The doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and of the Resurrection of the body<sup>12</sup>, are interwoven into the language of the Pentateuch<sup>13</sup>. A heavenly inheritance was prefigured by the earthly Canaan, and lay in the distant horizon before their eyes. The Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews assures us, that the old Fathers "died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and desired a better country, that is, a heavenly; and therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, for He had prepared for them a city"<sup>14</sup>.

But the Pentateuch needed a spiritual commentary, which would expound the true character of the Hebrew Theocracy, and would interpret the meaning of the promises contained in the Mosaic Dispensation.

This commentary is supplied by the Book of Job.

The Book of Job does not contradict the Pentateuch, as some have alleged<sup>15</sup>. If this had been the case, it never would have been received by the Hebrew Church into the Canon of the Old Testament, and have been placed on a par with the writings of Moses as divinely inspired Scripture. The Book of Job does not contravene the Pentateuch, but explains it.

<sup>1</sup> Job i. 12; ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Patimur adversitates," (says *S. Augustinus*) "ne victor, tandem ad patriam, stabulum pro domo diligit."

<sup>3</sup> See Job i. 21. Cp. x. 9; xxx. 23.

<sup>4</sup> See Job xxviii. 1—28, and especially c. 28, and the note.

<sup>5</sup> Job xiii. 20—23.

<sup>6</sup> Job iv. 17; v. 6, 7; vii. 20; ix. 20; xiv. 1; xv. 11; xxi. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Job xxii. 15—18; xxxiv. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Job v. 14, 15; xxii. 10; xxxvi. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Job ix. 13; xv. 20.

<sup>10</sup> See Job i. 21; xii. 9.

<sup>11</sup> See above, on Exod. vi. 8.

<sup>12</sup> See above, on Gen. xxii. 9; xlvii. 29: l. 24, 25. Exod. iii. 6, and below, Luke xx. 37.

<sup>13</sup> See above, on Gen. xxv. 8; xxxvii. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Heb. xi. 13—15; 22—40.

<sup>15</sup> e.g., by *De Wette*, *Umbreit*, *Horsel*, and others, who characterize the Book of Job as composed in a spirit of antagonistic counteraction to what they call Mosaicism.