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*THE BOOK OF PROVERBS IN THE REVISED  
VERSION.*

THE changes introduced by the Revision into the book of Proverbs are probably fewer in proportion than they are in any other book written in the higher style. The proverbs, for the most part occupying a single verse, are usually clear in meaning, and their spirit has been very happily caught in the A.V., and very pithily expressed. There are, no doubt, a considerable number of verses very obscure; but as this obscurity may be due in many cases to faults in the text, the Revision, working under such conditions as it did, could do little to remove it. A number of conjectural emendations of the text have been proposed by different individual scholars, but there is not yet any such general agreement in regard to them as would have justified their introduction into a public version of the Scriptures. In some respects the book of Proverbs is more difficult to render adequately into another language than any other biblical book. It abounds with terms which differ from one another only by a shade of meaning, and the precise shade is difficult to perceive, and even when perceptible is impossible to translate into another tongue. We have, for example, in English really only the one word "fool" by which we can safely render three or four words of the original. It is probable that not only in literature, but also in common life, these several words expressed folly on different sides; our own language however has no terms that correspond. The peculiarity of the "wisdom" is that all its terms, while sounding like intellectual terms only, are really also moral; and in the parts of the book which are of later origin certain words have already acquired a technical meaning, which does not belong to them in other parts of the Old Testament literature. The idea

that the same Hebrew word should always be rendered by one and the same word in English is the most foolish conceivable. The Old Testament is not a book, but a collection of books, separated from one another, in some cases, by a period of a thousand years. And the books belong to entirely different regions of thought and different kinds of literature, in which the same term may be used in senses quite distinct. The phraseology of the wisdom must be studied in the books of the wisdom, and renderings adopted suitable to this class of literature without much reference to those employed in other parts of the Bible. There is another thing also, which makes translation of the Proverbs difficult. The Hebrew proverbs, though not, like the proverbial literature of other countries, shrewd and pithy sayings originating in the mouths of the common people, but studied and lofty generalizations of an ethical kind on conduct and character, have still a considerable affinity to the ordinary popular proverb. The worn and patched form in which many of them have come down to us shows that they were much in the popular mouth, and had been transmitted from generation to generation orally before they took a written shape. The proverbial literature thus touches a lower stratum of the language than the more elevated prophetic style. The translator encounters a number of strange words, on which there is nothing to cast light except the connexion in which they stand, and occasionally also forms of diction very unfamiliar. Altogether the task of rendering the Proverbs adequately into another language is a delicate and difficult one. The contribution which the Revision has made may be accepted in the meantime as thankworthy.

A multitude of small but useful changes may be left to the reader himself to observe. The change of the vague "wisdom" into "wise dealing" (v. 3) is an improvement, though even "wise dealing" expresses only one aspect of

the thing intended, which is analysed into "righteousness, judgment, and equity." Syntax suggested the change in *v.* 5, of "a wise man will hear" into "that the wise man may hear," the imperf. being the variant of the preceding infin. In *v.* 9, "a chaplet of grace" is truer and has more colour than the general "ornament" of A.V. The phrase, "cast in thy lot among us" (*v.* 14), seems to mean in English, enter with us upon our enterprise and share its chances. The passage however is not an exhortation, but a promise of an equal share in the great spoil which is expected; hence R.V., "thou shalt cast thy lot among us," is better. Ver. 16, identical with Isaiah lix. 7, is not found in the Septuagint, and may be an interpolation of a marginal reference.

One object of the Proverbs, their editor tells us, is "to give subtilty to the simple" (*v.* 4). Nothing could be better fitted for this purpose than *v.* 17. R.V. renders:

For in vain is the net spread,  
In the eyes of any bird

With this comma, "in the eyes," etc., must mean, in the judgment or estimation of any bird; its judgment being that the net is spread in vain. This can only mean either, I am not to be caught; or, The net is harmless and without purpose, there is no danger in it. The latter sense does not do justice to the words "in vain." And upon the whole a bird's reflections are hardly to be expected here. The margin, with A.V., omits the comma. Read even in this way two senses are possible: either, It is vain to think to catch even birds, if you spread the net before their eyes: much more should you, my son, beware of a plain destruction lying before you; or, It is in vain that it is in their very sight that the net is spread, the foolish or greedy birds go into it nevertheless: and so these wicked men lay wait for their own blood, they go upon an enterprise which it may

be seen will be their own destruction. This last sense seems most suitable to the connexion.

The second clause of *v.* 26, "when your fear cometh," shows that R.V. did well to render the parallel clause "laugh in *the day of your calamity*" instead of "at your calamity" of A.V. The change of "the turning away of the simple" into "the backsliding," etc. (*v.* 32), is due no doubt to the desire for uniformity, but may appear of dubious advantage. The "simple" is the raw, unformed man, who can hardly backslide in the ordinary sense. What is his ruin is his refusal to turn to Wisdom (*v.* 23), or his turning away from her when she offers herself. He needs positive instruction, the sure testimony of the Lord, which maketh a wise man of the simple (Ps. xix. 7). The margin, "careless ease," for "prosperity," of fools is suggestive.

In *iii.* 3, the last clause, "write them upon the table of thine heart," is wanting in the Septuagint. With this clause the verse is a tristich, the only one in the chapter (*v.* 28 should probably be read as a distich); and the clause may have been added at a later time. In *v.* 10, "presses" has become "fats," a word which, when pronounced as spelled, is hardly understood. It would perhaps be a pity to lose the expression, "shame shall be the promotion of fools." The sense of the original is that given in the margin; while the wise inherit honour, fools carry away (as their portion, or acquisition) shame. The phrase in *iv.* 7, "with all thy getting get understanding," most naturally means, whatever else thou gettest get understanding. R.V. reads, "with all that thou hast gotten get," etc., which is somewhat ambiguous. It may mean, amidst all thou hast gotten, however much thou hast gotten, get, etc.; or, at the cost or price of all thou hast gotten.

Chap. *v.* 6 has been altered from the 2nd pers. masc. to the 3rd fem. (the two are alike in Heb.), and no doubt

rightly, the "strange woman" being subject. The verse is difficult, both on account of the uncertain meaning of the verb *palles*, and of the peculiar use of the conj. *pen*. A.V. renders "ponder"; etymologically clever, but scarcely right in usage. R.V. has introduced the idea of "level" into the passages where the verb occurs (*e.g.* iv. 26, v. 21), helping out the sense of the present verse by something of a circumlocution. R.V. reads v. 16 interrogatively. The Septuagint appears to have found a negative in the text before it, though early copies differ. The negative in Aquila is supposed to have been introduced from the Septuagint. If the negative be not introduced, there seems no help but to read the verse interrogatively with R.V.; for it is scarcely possible, with Delitzsch, to take the words, "let thy fountains be dispersed abroad," in the general sense, let them be abundant.

A distinct gain is the change of "make sure thy friend" (vi. 3) into "importune." The word "humble thyself" has been left, with margin "bestir thyself." Possibly a stronger word than "bestir" might have been justified even in the text. In v. 11, "one that travelleth" becomes "robber," with advantage to the sense; and in v. 16 syntax is propitiated by the small change of "these six" into "there be six things." In v. 29, "shall not be innocent" is corrected into "shall not be unpunished."

In vii. 11, "loud and stubborn" becomes "clamorous and wilful." The latter word is better than stubborn. The margin on "clamorous" is "turbulent," though neither word is very happy. The strange woman is not a scold. She probably never had a word with "the good man" all her life, except to shoot a sarcasm at him, which he was too dull to feel. Clamour and brawling are quite foreign to her character; on the contrary, she is close or guarded of heart (v. 10). The word applied to her in this verse means rather restless or unsettled, and may describe both the

unquiet impulses of her mind as well as her outward roving about (*v.* 12). In *v.* 20, "day appointed" is rightly changed into "full moon." The text of *v.* 22 is probably, as R.V. says, corrupt. A.V. has corrected it at its own hand. The suggestion of R.V. margin that "fethers" may mean "one in fethers," the abstract being put for the concrete, as frequently in this book, though good, still leaves the verse rather unsatisfactory. In *v.* 26, "many strong men have been slain by her" is rightly altered into "all her slain are a mighty host."

In *viii.* 22, "the Lord possessed me" should no doubt be as the margin, "the Lord formed me." Whether "in the beginning" or "as the beginning" be read is of less consequence. In *v.* 30, "one brought up with him" becomes "a master workman," though the masc. term is less happy than might be wished when applied to the Wisdom, which is fem. R.V. retains "I was daily *his* delight," offering in the margin what it can hardly be doubted is the real meaning, "I had delight continually."

In *ix.* 13, R.V. margin on "the foolish woman" is, "or, Folly." Literally this would be, Woman Folly (Delitzsch, Frau Thorheit) or Madam Folly. Delitzsch reads: "Folly is restless, (she is) simplicity and knoweth nothing." This is not a natural construction. We might read: Folly is restless; Frivolity, she knoweth nothing, Frivolity being another name for Folly. It is possible that Frivolity in the second clause is subject of the whole verse, and that we should render:

A foolish woman, and restless  
Is Frivolity, and she knoweth nothing.

The passage *xiv.* 1 appears to be of the same kind as the present one, and the usual rendering of it can hardly be accepted.

In *x.* 3, "casteth away the substance" is rightly altered into "thrusteth away the desire of the wicked." Ver: 14,

“the mouth of the foolish is near destruction,” which is liable to be misunderstood, becomes “is a present destruction,” *i.e.* an instant downfall. The parallel clause is, “wise men lay up (rather, keep back, conceal, xii. 23) knowledge”; while this is the case, the mouth of the foolish blurts out its folly instantaneously, like the downcome of a clattering ruin. Consideration before speaking (xviii. 13) and reserve in speech is frequently recommended and praised in the Proverbs, and is the mark of the wise; as it is said in xx. 5, “counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” Probably the real sense of *v.* 22 is expressed by the margin, “toil addeth nothing thereto,” where A.V. has “he addeth no sorrow with it” (His blessing, which maketh rich). In *v.* 31, “the froward tongue shall be cut out” is altered into “cut off.” Probably the real meaning is “cut down,” the figure being that of a tree, as the parallel clause indicates.

In xi. 3, “perverseness of transgressors” is altered into “of the treacherous.” The latter word is the usual rendering of *boged*, though far from a happy one. It is often extremely difficult to say which is subject and which predicate in the nominal sentences of the proverbs. R.V. renders *v.* 12, “he that despiseth his neighbour is void of wisdom,” while A.V. reads in the opposite way, “he that is void of wisdom despiseth,” etc. A similar instance occurs in xii. 1, “whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge,” which would more naturally read “whoso loveth knowledge loveth correction,” which is the road to knowledge. Unquestionably R.V. is right in rendering xi. 30 “he that is wise winneth souls” (*i.e.* to himself), in opposition to A.V. “he that winneth souls is wise.” Another good change appears in *v.* 18, the wicked “earneth deceitful wages,” for “worketh a deceitful work” of A.V., the antithesis being “he that soweth righteousness hath a sure reward.”



In xii. 9 R.V. retains, better is he that is lightly esteemed "and hath a servant," which is the most natural rendering. Septuagint and Syriac render "and is servant to himself." This is less natural; better, by a change of vowels, "and laboureth, or tilleth, for himself." Ver. 12, "the wicked desireth the net (marg., prey) of evil men," is one of those verses where error may be justly suspected in the text. The clause has little meaning, and forms neither a parallel nor an antithesis to the other clause of the verse, "the root of the righteous yieldeth *fruit*"; though the sense of this clause also is uncertain. R.V. has altered v. 26 considerably; A.V., "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," becoming "the righteous is a guide to his neighbour." The doubtful word has been assumed to be a verb, one of those jussives that perplex the grammarian. The well-known sluggard who "roasteth not that which he took in hunting," and on whom Mr. Spurgeon's brief commentary was that "he *was* a lazy fellow," has his visage marred by the margin "catcheth not his prey" (v. 27). The excuse for this disappointing margin is found in Song ii. 9, where a word from what might be the same root is rendered "lattice," that is, presumably network or grating. Hence the root is supposed to mean to ensnare, catch with a net. This sense however is merely a presumption from the word in the Song, which may have no such specific sense as "net-work." On the other hand, the sense of "singeing" or burning is well assured from Chaldee and Syriac, though it must be confessed neither of these senses is quite the same as "roast." Schultens compared an Arabic root, signifying to rouse, set in motion; but we all know that to start our hare and to catch her are different things. The sluggard is often treated humorously in the Proverbs: he turns on his bed like a door on its hinges; he hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not bring it to his mouth again; and his dread of labour is revealed by his cry, "There is a

lion in the way, there is a lion in the streets!" Most of the proverbs in the earlier chapters of the great collection, chaps. x.-xxii., are antithetical, and it has been suspected that an antithesis originally lay in v. 28, the final words of second clause being "unto death" instead of "no death" (reading *el* for *al*). No satisfactory reconstruction of the verse however has been proposed, though it may be admitted that it has a somewhat anomalous appearance. And to the argument that the great word No-death, or as we might say, Immortality, is not to be expected in a writing so early as the Proverbs, the answer is twofold: first, that the second clause does not appear to say more than the first; and, secondly, supposing it did say more, and said something not to be expected in an early writing, the solution of the difficulty is to be found not in evading its natural meaning, but rather in raising the question whether the codification of this division of the Proverbs be not comparatively late.

A decided gain is got from the change in R.V. xiii. 8, "the poor heareth no threatening," A.V. "rebuke." The sentiment is the Hebrew equivalent of the *cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*. It is possible that the phrase "by labour," margin "with the hand" (v. 11), may have the post-biblical sense of "little by little." It is just expressions of the popular language during the classical period that we see survive and take a place in the literary language of a subsequent time. That xiv. 7 should be rendered "go into the presence" and "go from the presence of a foolish man," in text and margin respectively, might seem to indicate rare capabilities on the part of the Hebrew language, meriting the warm compliments paid to it by Professor Huxley. The Hebrew prep., like the Latin *a*, *ab*, expresses either position or motion,—go, so as to be in the presence, of, or, go from that position. The margin is more expressive, and is probably right for other reasons. The imperat. has a

hypothetical sense: Go (=if thou goest) from the presence of a foolish man, thou shalt not have perceived in him the lips of knowledge. This is one's experience of intercourse with a fool. The margin, to "make a mock at guilt," or, "the guilt offering" (v. 9) has no probability in its favour. The technicalities of the ritual are not to be expected in the Proverbs. It may be made a question indeed, whether the change of trespass-offering into guilt-offering will turn out advantageously. It is very difficult too to accept "shall be satisfied from himself" (v. 14). A slight change in the text, *me'alav* into *ma'alalav*, the prep. being understood from the first clause, gives the needed sense: "and a good man (shall be satisfied) from his own doings" (xx. 11; so also in a good sense, Ps. lxxvii. 12, lxxviii. 7). A different text of v. 32 seems to have been before the Septuagint, which renders "in his holiness" for "in his death" (reading probably *tummo* for *motho*). The absolute use of the verb "hath hope" is unfamiliar, a thing which struck the Targumist, who renders, "he who hopeth that he shall die."

Chap. xv. 2 is one of a number of proverbs which extol apt or fine and beautiful speech. R.V. alters "useth" into "uttereth," which is more exact. The tongue of the wise not only utters knowledge, but does so beautifully, with refinement of language and manner; the mouth of fools poureth out folly. In such proverbs there is an antithesis in every word (see v. 23; xxv. 11: like apples of gold in pictures of silver is a word fitly spoken). Chap. xvi. 12 is rather ambiguous: "it is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness." In conformity with the meaning of "abomination of kings" the sense can only be that the commission of wickedness (by any one) under their rule is an abomination unto kings (xxv. 5). A good change has been introduced into xvi. 20, "he that giveth heed unto the word shall find good." The "word" or "commandment"

refers to the revelation of God, and is frequently alluded to in the Proverbs; *e.g.* vi. 23, xiii. 13, xix. 16. The A.V., "he that handleth a matter wisely," has found a place in the margin, with other lumber. Equally good is the change on *v.* 31, "the hoary head is a crown of glory; it shall be found (A.V., *if* it be found) in the way of righteousness." The teaching of the Proverbs is that the hoary head *is* found in the way of righteousness—the fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened (*x.* 28).

The difficulty of distinguishing predicate from subject in these proverbial sentences is illustrated in xvii. 11 and 27, where alternative renderings are given in text and margin. The parallelism of the two members of a verse must not be too rigidly pressed, because, apparently for the sake of variety, the subject and predicate may be crossed in one of the members. Ver. 27 has been improved by substituting "he that is of a cool spirit" for "is of an excellent spirit." The sense of the fine saying, *v.* 17, is probably that given in the margin, "a friend loveth at all times, and he is born a brother (shows himself or becomes a born brother) in adversity" (*Job* xi. 12), not "a brother is born for adversity."

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him with the rod he shall not die" (xxiii. 13), *i.e.* chastisement will save the child from death. R.V. has made the meaning of A.V. clearer in *v.* 22 by a slight insertion, "the desire of a man is *the measure of his kindness*"; that is, his kindness is to be estimated according to his goodwill, not the amount of his gift: the parallel being, "a poor man (kind, though unable to help) is better than a liar" (rich, but denying ability). So the Septuagint helps out the sense of the second clause. It is very doubtful if the word "desire" can mean "will" or "goodwill." The Septuagint appears to have read a different word, which it renders "fruit," and various emendations of the text have been proposed. Ver. 27 is altered for the better, "cease to hear instruction, *only* to err from the words of knowledge"; A.V. "instruction *that causeth* to err." But "instruction" is technical in the Proverbs for wholesome discipline; the advice given is, Cease to hear instruction, if it is not to be followed.

The rendering xx. 1, "whosoever erreth thereby (strong drink) is not wise" is better than A.V. "whosoever is deceived." The word is rendered "ravished" chap. v. 19, *i.e.* transported or enraptured, and this probably comes near the meaning here. In xxi. 8, the word *vazar*, which A.V. assumed to be *zar* with the conj., and rendered "and strange," has been taken by R.V. to be a single word, akin to the Arabic root from which comes *wazir* (vizier) and translated "laden with guilt," after Schultens and others. The occurrence of this common Arabic root, though elsewhere altogether strange to Hebrew, is scarcely surprising in the Proverbs.

In chap. xxiii. 31, R.V. has changed with advantage "when it (the wine) moveth itself aright," into "when it goeth down smoothly." And in chap. xxiv. 16, "the wicked shall fall into mischief," which says little, becomes, "the wicked are overthrown by calamity," a good anti-

thesis to "the just man falleth seven times, and riseth again." In *v.* 26, "he kisseth the lips that giveth a right answer" is better than "*every man shall kiss his lips that giveth,*" etc.

The chapters xxv.-xxix. contain many of the most beautiful proverbs in the book. There is no reason to doubt the historical truth of the statement that they were copied out, that is, brought together from a number of smaller collections, by the men of Hezekiah. We have thus a guarantee for their comparative antiquity which we do not possess in regard to any other of the parts of our present book. These chapters probably form the oldest collection of proverbs existing. There may be many very ancient proverbs in the code chaps. x.-xxii., but as a collection it is probably of more recent date than the code chaps. xxv.-xxix. The occurrence of a number of the same proverbs in both collections leads to the conclusion that they were made independently of one another. The proverbs in the latter collection are simpler and less artificial and elaborate. The literary finish of those in chaps. x.-xxii. has usually been regarded as an evidence of their comparative antiquity, but it may more naturally be regarded as proof of their comparative lateness, when proverb-making had become a literary art. There are scarcely any traces of those terms which became technical in the Wisdom in the collection chaps. xxv.-xxix. For instance, the word "discipline" (*musar*) does not occur; nor "scorner" (*letz*), of whom a definition is even given *xxi.* 24; nor "doctrine" (*lekach*); nor "steersmanship" (*tachbuloth*, A.V. wise counsels); nor "discretion" or device (*mezimmah*): and even the words "knowledge," "wisdom," "understanding," etc., are rare, and hardly technical. Very many of the proverbs in this code are of the form of a comparison, which was probably the original type of the proverb, according to its name. Some of these comparisons are very fine: *e.g.* "fervent lips and a wicked



heart are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross" (xxvi. 23); "a trampled fountain and a marred spring is the righteous man that giveth way to the wicked" (xxv. 26); "a city broken down and without walls is he whose spirit is without restraint" (xxv. 28). Most of the proverbs that have been naturalized in our own language belong to this small collection; *e.g.* "heap coals of fire upon his head" (xxv. 22), "iron sharpeneth iron" (xxiv. 17), "bray a fool in a mortar" (xxvii. 22), "the fear of man bringeth a snare" (xxix. 25), "the dog is returned to his vomit" (xxvi. 11), and many more.

The proverb xxv. 9 is a fine one, whatever be its precise sense. R.V. corrects the second clause rightly, "disclose not the secret of another," A.V. "to another." The rendering of first clause, "debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*," might suggest that the "other" whose secret is not to be disclosed is this neighbour. This is doubtful. The meaning is rather, Debate thy cause with thy neighbour (if necessary and by all means), but beware of revealing, for the sake of victory, the private matters of a third person. R.V. must be right in rendering *v.* 23 "the north wind bringeth forth rain," A.V. driveth away rain.

In xxvi. 7, "the legs of the lame hang loose," improves A.V. "are not equal." As the legs dangle from a lame man, and are ineffective for any purpose, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools. Another verse says that a fool's handling of a proverb is so awkward, that he does himself a mischief with it (*v.* 9). In *v.* 8 a doubtful sense has been replaced by a sense not less doubtful, while *v.* 10 remains a veritable puzzle. A.V. followed as usual the Jewish interpreters, "the great *God* that formed all things," etc.; its rendering of the second clause, "both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors," lacks support in the usage of the language whether for the sense "reward" or for

“transgressors.” R.V. has adopted the meaning proposed by Ewald, “an archer (*rab*, plur. Jer. l. 29) wounding all, so is he that hireth the fool and he that hireth them that pass by.” Bickell amends the text thus: As an archer wounding all (the passers by), so is he that hireth the fool and the drunken (reading *shikkor* for *soker*).

Chap. xxvii. 16 gains in clearness by the change of “hideth” into “restraineth.” The second clause, “his right hand encountereth oil,” that is, something which he cannot lay hold of, is certainly more suitable than A.V. “the ointment of his right hand which bewrayeth itself.” Syntactically the words read, “and oil meeteth his right hand,”—when he puts it out in the attempt to restrain the contentious woman. Ver. 21 contains a fine proverb, though it is a little obscure. R.V. helps out the sense by a slight insertion: “The fining pot is for silver, . . . and a man is *tried* by his praise,” the margin “that which he praiseth,” being almost explanatory. This gives a good sense: that which a man esteems highest, or that in which he considers his honour or worth to lie, is the test of his character. A somewhat simpler sense is obtained by taking “his praise” objectively, that bestowed on him by others.

Chap. xxix. 8, “scornful men set a city in a flame,” is both more correct and more vigorous than A.V., “bring a city into a snare.” Ver. 18 is also improved: “where there is no vision the people cast off restraint,” A.V. “the people perish.” “Vision” is prophetic revelation, and the proverb must belong to the age of the prophets. The sense of *v.* 21 is doubtful in the second clause, as R.V. margin acknowledges, owing to the unknown word *manon*, rendered “a son.” The word is supposed to be allied to *nin*, rendered “son”; *e.g.* Gen. xxi. 23, Job xviii. 19.

The first words of chap. xxx. are very obscure. The

alternative sense supplied by the margin has very much to be said for it. There being no vowels in the MSS., and the letters being written consecutively, in former times, without division into words, it is quite possible that a wrong division may have arisen. The Hebrew text reads *leithiel* as one word, meaning, "unto Ithiel"; the margin divides into two words, *laithi el*, "I have wearied myself, O God." In like manner for *veukal*, "and Ucal," the margin points *vaekel*, "and am consumed."

In *v.* 28, the sense "lizard" for "spider" is pretty well assured. The "greyhound" in *v.* 31 is less certain. The remaining words of the verse are obscure. The text, "against whom there is no rising up," assumes that the words *al kûm* are the neg. and the infin. "to rise." Such a connexion of the neg. with the infin. is suspicious (though comp. Ps. xxxii. 9). The margin considers *alkôm* to be Arabic, "the people," *al* being the art. as in algebra, alkoran, etc. The proverbs in this chapter profess to be drawn from a foreign, unisraelitish source. Geiger discovered Alkimus, of the Maccabæan period, in this passage, rendering, "and king Alkimus, who corresponds to him" (the he goat). The work of amending the text of the Old Testament is a very perilous one; all those who engage in it sooner or later become bereft of their reason.

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