

*The S. J. Files
from the author*

*4474. ~~12~~ 16. 129
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A
DISCOURSE
ON
SACRIFICES.

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SACRIFICES,

WRITTEN BY

SOLOMON BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF "THE CONSTANCY OF ISRAEL."

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MORRIS SOLOMON!

*It is to you, friend, as a zealous adherent
of our antient and sacred Judaism, an ad-
mirer of literature, and liberal towards man-
kind at large, that this small Discourse is
cordially*

DEDICATED

by your sincere friend the author,

S. BENNETT.

TO THE READER.

THE Discourse I am now laying before you may appear at the first sight paradoxical, or as a sophistry designed to disparage a system generally and universally adopted and promulgated. Yet, as I do not advance in it any thing but that which is sanctioned by Scripture; and in addition by the authority of those Rabbies of the Mishnah who existed during the period of the second Temple, anterior to the Christian æra, and who accordingly cannot be charged with religious prejudices; so I hope that you will not be too hasty in your judgement and conclusion, until you shall have thoroughly perused the same, and well digested it. And if then you have any objections to advance against it, I shall listen to them with candour, and shall be thankful for better information.

ישמע חכם ויִוְסִיף לַקַּח

“Let the wise hear, and he will increase his learning.” (Prov. i. 5.)

DISCOURSE ON SACRIFICES.



IT never entered my mind to discuss a theological subject from mere motives of curiosity or worldly interest, and my daily occupations engross too much of that time which by others is dedicated to study. The solicitations of some literary friends have, however, prevailed on me to undertake a task of considerable importance; and to my desire of gratifying their request is owing the appearance in public of this short essay on *Sacrifices*.

This is a point of such general importance in Theology, that volumes are filled with queries, criticisms, and controversies, started and handled by different sects, according to the views they each entertain of religion. Numberless volumes are written by the doctors of the Christian church, to prove that the order of sacrifices were *absolute* commandments, and that no remission of sins can be obtained by the Divine mercy *alone*, unless by

the additional gift, viz. the shedding of animal blood, and the whole process of the sacrifice as described in the Bible. The church carried this point still further; (and quite as if mathematically concluded) viz. that to obtain a general and an universal salvation, either for the past, or future generations, and forgiveness of their general (like those of Adam and Eve) or individual transgressions, the Divine wisdom thought proper to send into this mortal world, in a space of about 3700 years after the Creation, a Son of his own, and in a peculiar mode, which was Jesus the Messiah, to shed his innocent blood, so as to make an universal atonement for all his adherents. I have no need to expatiate on that doctrine, as every good Christian is nursed with this creed from his cradle.

That miraculous divine the Rev. Dr. A. Clarke in his bombastic comment on the Pentateuch has not been sparing in asserting this doctrine. Thus I observe this master of types, in his comment on Genesis, typifying all the Angels, the Patriarchs, the Matrons, showing all to have been types of Jesus the Messiah; and in Leviticus I saw him with the same eagerness and facility of argument, make the Tabernacle with all its utensils, but in particular all the Sacrifices, either of the animal species, or cookerries, pan-cakes, and

libations, all to have been equally types of the great sacrifice, viz. the Messiah. In short, this divine deprived the Israelites of every thing peculiar to their own history and national establishment, so as to make the whole of it but as a mere *cypher*, an allusion to something else, beyond it.

As I am not qualified for mysteries, I shall therefore not animadvert upon its probability; but shall proceed to the essential point in question, which he (in his usual mode of argument) expresses thus. "That all the laws regarding Sacrifices, were *absolute* laws; that no remission of sins can be expected *but* by the shedding of animal blood &c." and then concluding (with this logic) "To cleanse the spiritual leper, the Lamb of God *must* be slain, and the sprinkling of his blood be applied; without the shedding of *his* blood, there can be no remission." (See his notes Lev. xiv. 53 at large, and in other places of his Commentary on the Bible.)

John Bellamy, author of the *Ophion*, &c., who likewise claims a great share of the knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature, and notwithstanding, in the said *Ophion*, ridicules the Doctor A. Clarke for his converting the *Serpent* into a *Monkey*; yet on the subject in question himself reasons in the mode of *that* species. He, like the before-mentioned divine, divulged to us the great

mystery couched under the litigation between the first two brothers, viz. Cain and Abel. I have not yet had the honour of seeing his laudable productions; but chance brought in my way *The New Review* (for January 1813, by A. J. Valpy). In this Review I saw (page 5) an advertisement (and so I thought proper also to discharge my duty, in recommending it,) of a work intitled "The History of all Religions &c. by John Bellamy &c." The Editor (which I suppose is J. B. himself) commenced with his usual eulogium, saying, "a great part of the matter contained in this interesting volume *is new, &c.*" It is indeed new, and strange too. He presents us further with a sample of his work, (like corn-dealers) evidently meaning to show the best part of the production; and after a long reasoning about the sentiments of Cain and Abel, *he* concludes thus: "Now, as Sacrifices as well as offerings were commanded," (though there is no authority, but the *ipse dixit*) "and as nothing was acceptable without a Sacrifice, had Cain obeyed the divine command, had he brought his sacrifice," (meaning of the animal species) "and had he believed in the promise of God to redeem men by the coming of the Messiah, who was to be *the great Sacrifice*, as all sacrifices were to terminate in him; his offering would have been ac-

cepted. And Abel also brought of the firstling of his flock, and of the fat thereof. The offering brought by Abel was accepted ; it was offered agreeably to the command of God ; therefore it *must* appear that Abel believed in the promise of God, *that Christ should come, and redeem man. &c.*" *i. e.* by shedding his blood for our sins. I shall not undertake to animadvert upon this *sublime* idea, as (alas) my soul is not qualified to penetrate into the recesses of mysteries ; I shall therefore leave it to the judgement of literary gentlemen far superior to mine, and who may judge for themselves, upon a *prepossessed, preposterous jargon* (to my understanding) like this.

Such is the general fundamental doctrine peculiar to the Trinitarian Creed. I shall for the present lay aside the query which occurs from the text "for even their sons and their daughters they do burn in fire to their God," (Deut. xii. 31,) from which we observe the great abhorrence of homicide, even in cases of devotion ; and yet (according to their delusion) the Deity himself should authorize that guilt.

Congenial to this hypothetical doctrine, we the house of Israel, in our present state of dispersion, being without animal sacrifices, without the salvation of the Great Sacrifice, *i. e.* the Lamb of God, must then (unfortunately) remain without

any Salvation whatever ; and no quarter can be given to the house of Israel ! Such is the drift of that hypothesis, and such I have read in the inspired divine Dr. A. Clarke's comments ; as this subject is not the point in question, neither shall I meddle with it in this place, but shall confine myself to the discussion regarding sacrifices themselves.

The Unitarian Christians, who in many instances, essential to the Trinitarians, deviate from them with good reason ; with regard to the point in question, viz. Sacrifices, I observe them to be *יָדָוּ וְרָפְיָא בַּיָּדָיִךְ* *i. e.* wavering. It then becomes me as an Israelite, which nation has no less share in theological criticisms than the Christian doctors, to advance also my sentiment regarding the point in question ; especially as it will remove many contradictions and queries which occur in the Bible ; and the clouds of that wretched hypothesis being dispersed, a divine grace in the existence of the present state of our dispersion will be granted.

I shall not enter with the reverend divines, the assertors of that doctrine, into prolix discussions, opposing hypothesis to hypothesis, for such will always leave the point in question undecided, as arguments have no influence on theories and hypotheses. Nor shall I proceed by way of criticisms deduced from moral philosophy,

and reason, as such are *with them* the fruits of the Devil, and the Devil himself; these sacred gentlemen being wholly divested of the Devil, are accordingly divested also of his fruits. I shall therefore meet them on their own field, viz. the Bible itself, in which we shall discover the greatest authorities in disparagement of that great hypothesis which regards sacrifices, as adopted in Christianity at large; and shall then advance the sentiments of the Rabbins of the earlier period. The authorities I am to advance, will shelter me (I hope) from public censure, and will sanction the boldness of my assertion.

I have to acquaint the reader that the following discussion is an extract of an Essay from a MS. work of mine, intitled *מסורת מקראי קודש* "The Validity of the Hebrew Text." This work contains 48 examinations, presenting the most glaring errors and pedantisms of Drs. Kennicott, de Rossi, &c. and our present eminent divine Ad. Clarke on the Pentateuch only; who, with their *usual* arrogance, and the prejudices peculiar to Christian divines, charged the long standing and sanctioned validity of the same with omissions, interpolations, transpositions, and changeabilities; I say again, errors, which an Israelite school-boy would not be guilty of. This extract is the 25th Examination, the discussion which regards

Sacrifices; and in which I am to prove, first, that the primitive institution of sacrifices was not at all invented for the remission of sins; secondly, that the shedding of animal blood was not essential (according to the Mosaic Code) for the remission of sin; and thirdly, that the commandments of Sacrifices in general, *were not at all absolute*, nor an essential point for human salvation; and therefore, cannot be observed but as *ceremonial, local, and temporal*.

First, if we adhere candidly to the Mosaic Code, we shall find that the primitive institution of sacrifices, either of animal, vegetable, or libations, were not at all essentially instituted for trespasses, and remission of sins. Thus, if we adhere to the history of the Patriarchs, who were the first promoters of Sacrifices, we shall meet with quite different notions on that subject. For, in all the accounts of the patriarchal sacrifices, as those of Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, &c. we observe that they were neither absolute, nor for remission of sins; they were all voluntary gifts, and free donations, as tokens of gratitude and obedience towards the universal benefactor; nor had they any other than those liberal sentiments in view in bringing offerings to the Deity. But in process of time, when mankind became numerous, the practice of Sacrifices deviated from

its primitive purity and simplicity ; it became at last an inheritance to priests, and servants of temples, and they were in consequence more varied and multiplied ; it became, moreover, absolute, and was insisted upon as of indispensable obligation.

Prophane history informs us that the Heathen sacrifices did not only extend to thanksgiving, and sin offerings, but that there were also augural and soothsaying sacrifices, viz. for inquiries of events to come, and mystical subjects and discoveries, either for political and public concerns, or for private and individual requests ; these sacrifices were ordained according to the fancies of the augural priests, (it is needless for me to expatiate on this point, as I write this for men of letters, who are well acquainted with prophane history). Such was the system of sacrifices promulgated at the time of the divine effulgence, which began with the departure of Israel out of Egypt. In short, sacrifices became a system subject to the whims and caprices of priests, and a very productive income to them ; but to intelligent minds, it appeared in a most degrading state.

At the exit from Egypt, when the divine republic and commonwealth of Israel was to be established, the practice of making Sacrifices in the various modes described, which had already

spread over the whole surface of the then human settlements, could not have been dispensed with. The divine wisdom who performed miracles in the firmament, and in the elements, yet, never wrought any miracle on the human character, that is, in such a manner as to change the minds of men from one extremity to another; especially, as he created men with the power of full choice, which substantiated the system of the divine Code, to do, or to leave; rewards, and punishments: any change or influence on the human mind, would militate against that famous and emphatic expression, saying, "I testify against you the Heaven and the Earth; that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live, &c." (Deut. xxx. 19.)^a With regard to his commandments, he also (evidently) dictated them in a gradual and economical system, so as not to impose upon the characters, propensities, and *choice* of mankind, nor to work a miracle in

^a With the exception to the text, saying "Go unto Pharaoh, for I have *hardened* his heart &c." (Ex. x. 1.) As the exit out of Egypt, with the various miracles wrought in it, which all tended to one point, viz. the manifestation of an omnipotent power, the effulgence of the divine Glory, and the authority of the sacred Code, was the second epoch to that of the Creation; all being out of the law of nature; so, this of the *hardening the heart* of Pharaoh, was the *spring* to the whole

changing the human mind. With regard to the point in question, therefore, the idolatrous practices then promulgated among mankind, the entire abolition of the same, and change of the minds, or customs of men, from one extremity to another, might be violence done to the *choice*, or as a miracle wrought on the human system; the divine legislator then thought proper not to abolish the general practice of sacrifices, but only to reduce it to a more limited system, to what it was at that time. Generally speaking, it was reduced only to *two* classes; the one class are קרבנות נדבה *i. e.* free-will gifts, such were תודות ושלמים thanks and peace offerings; and the other class were קרבנות חובה *i. e.* duty offerings, such were חטאות ואשמות sin and guilt offerings; the sacrifices of both classes were also ordained (not to the caprice, but) according to the fortune of the donor, or the transgressor, which was either of animal or vegetable productions, (as will be shown hereafter,) these the

of that memorable and most essential event for human salvation, as is declared by the succeeding clause of the context, "that I might show these my signs amidst them &c," *ib.* and surely had that exception. "And that thou mayst tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what I have wrought in Egypt, and the signs I have done among them; that ye may know that I am the Lord."

divine legislator adapted also to more refined sentiments, confining it as offered solely to the supreme Power, as is expressed in the words זבח לאלהים יחרם בלתי ליהודה לבדו "He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed," (Ex. xxii. 19.) It was also *local*, viz. Palestine and Jerusalem only; as is expressed "take heed to thyself; that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest," (Deut. xii. 13.) It was limited also to the tribe of Levi only; but was not to be made a display with in every place, nor through every man, who might assume to himself the title of a sacrificator. From what has been said, we have clearly to conclude, viz. that the primitive practice of sacrifices, as commenced by the Patriarchs, was by no means instituted for remission of sins, and trespasses, but merely as *free donations*, for the divine favour bestowed on them on various occasions; but that in process of time, its primitive virtue became corrupted, and changed into *absolute* forms; but, that with the divine legislation, it has become economically reduced and refined.

Now for the second. When we examine the orders of sacrifices as described in Leviticus, we shall also find that neither was the shedding of animal blood absolutely required for the remis-

tion of sins. Thus we read in Leviticus, ch. i. of burning offerings of the animal species; and ib. ii. 1—14. we read an order for meat offerings of flour with oil and incense &c. But still more to the purpose, we read of the sin and trespass offerings of the poor, ib. v. 11—14. “But if he be not able to bring two turtle doves, &c. then he that sinned shall bring for his offering, a tenth part of an epha of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil &c.” I think that there can be no plainer understanding than this, viz. that the shedding of animal blood, according to the Mosaic dispensation, is not essential for trespasses, and sin offerings at large. As the Pentateuch is open to the reader’s inspection, I shall not be prolix upon it; and shall only draw the conclusion, that there we obtain the best authority for our assertion, that the shedding of animal blood was neither absolute nor essential in the process of forgiveness of sin; and accordingly was merely ceremonial, and *circumstantial*.

Lastly for the third assertion. If we examine the Prophetical books at large, we shall find that they all confirm what I have advanced, viz. that the *whole system* of sacrifices were neither essential to salvation, nor absolute commandments. Thus we read “And Samuel said, Hath God as

great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices; as in obeying the word of God? Behold, to obey is preferable to offering sacrifices, and to hearken is more acceptable than the fat of rams." (Samuel 1. xv. 22.) King David said "Sacrifices and offerings thou didst not require, ears hast thou opened in me:" (meaning, that men ought to listen to absolute rational commandments applicable to human welfare) "burnt and sin offerings thou didst not require." (Ps. xl. 6.) See also the 15th Psalm at large, in which among the articles of human salvation, the Psalmist does not mention one word about sacrifices. King Solomon said, "to do justice and judgement is more acceptable to God than Sacrifices." (Prov. xxi. 3.) Isaiah said "To what purpose is the multitude of sacrifices unto me? said the Lord; am I to be satisfied with burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, or with the blood of bullocks, of lambs, and of he goats, things of which I had no desire, &c." (Isaiah i. 11.) See also *ib.* ch. viii. at large, in which moral and philosophical principles are displayed, and in which no mention whatever is made of sacrifices. Jeremiah said, "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor did I command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices; but this I commanded them

saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, &c." (Jer. vii. 22—23.) Hosea said, "For I desired mercy, but not sacrifices; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hosea vi. 6.) Micah expresses himself more emphatically, saying, "Wherewith shall I appear before God, and bow myself before the eternal one? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? &c. He hath instructed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth God require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 6, 7, 8.) There are a great many more passages in the Prophetical Books pointing to the same object; but to avoid multiplicity, I shall satisfy myself with the above quotations.

From these Prophetical orations, we obtain in the plainest language, the validity of the third assertion, viz. that the whole of the commandments of sacrifices, were neither *absolute* ones, nor *essential* for human salvation; otherwise, how could the prophets be in unison in exclaiming against absolute laws, enacted by the divine legislator, as essential for salvation, and declaring them null? one of these missions must then absolutely be false. Nay, from what I have proved in the first two paragraphs, that the primitive institution of sacrifices was not essentially establish-

ed for remission of sins, and that the shedding of animal blood was not in any wise essential for sacrifices, and offerings, the institution thereof could then not have been absolute, but merely ceremonial, and temporal; the Prophets then, with a moral philosophical air, did justly exclaim against the infatuation of the vulgar practices, and forms of false devotion, which sought to appease the Deity with a fat ram, a roasted bullock, a vessel of good wine, &c. though the heart was corrupted and deprived of all justly divine and moral principles; at which Isaiah (xxix. 13.) exclaimed, "Wherefore the Lord said, For as much as this people draw near me with their mouth and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me are but commandments practised by custom, &c." (which in our present time is a general practice either Jew or Christian). This must have been congenial also with the views of Moses himself, as he justly expressed them, "and he *shall confess* that he hath sinned in that thing." (Lev. v. 5.) And thus we observe throughout the Pentateuch, that in trespasses between men and men, the first and the chief thing is retribution; and a sacrifice was but an additional thing, as any transgression of a civil or moral nature is equally a transgression against the deity; for "in the

image of God he created men:" and the Author of the creation surely wishes for its just preservation; but that by no means were sacrifices made the essential point, and still less as of absolute obligation.

Having proved so far from Scripture, I may bring also a few authorities from our great Rabbies, who were the *links of Tradition*, and who presented us the subject in question in the same light as described before.

Thus we read in Mishnah Kadushin, 1st section, 9th lesson, כל מצות התלויות בארץ אינן נזהרות אלא בארץ וכו' "All commandments which depend on land productions are commandable only in the land of Israel; &c." Tithes, agricultural donations, and sacrifices, being land productions, are then commandable only in Palestine, but are not obligatory out of its boundaries. This proves sacrifices to be only local and temporal. We read also an instance in Mishnah Halah (at the conclusion of it) "that many of the then dispersed in Babylon, Mesopotamia, Syria, and other countries proximate to Palestine, brought sacrifices to Jerusalem, but the doctors of the Temple did not accept of them, with the view "שלם חובה יקבע הדבר חובה" *not to cause it to be as an absolute law.*" From these Rabbinical Oral laws we obtain the same conclusion, that sacrifices were *local*

and *temporal*, and accordingly only ceremonial, but by no means absolute, or essential to human salvation.

Before I conclude my arguments as deduced from Scripture and the Mishnah, I shall then not hesitate also to advance one argument from reason. I must notice to the reader, that the various commandments comprised in the Pentateuch were all essential to the nation, as a guide for their temporal welfare, either in civil, moral, political or religious views; which evidently forms the road to a future state and an everlasting salvation. It will then surprise us when we shall consider, that the whole bulk of those commandments, such as the jurisprudence, criminal, conjugal, inheritant, &c. as well as the ritual laws, such as those relating to sabbatical observances, festivals, divine services, circumcision, the abstaining from impure animals, and other corporeal impurities, &c. all these commandments were general and universal, being allotted to the nation at large, at all times, and in all places of abode; while the laws regarding sacrifices have all these peculiar exceptions, they are limited to a *class*, viz. the tribe of Levi; to *place*, in the temple of Jerusalem and in Palestine only; and to *time*, when the commonwealth of Israel are in possession of their Patriarchal inheritance

(Palestine). Is it consistent with reason, but still more with divine justice, that sacrifices should be so essential to human salvation, and yet to make their observance *conditional*, and to confine them to the mentioned *trium*, viz. class, place, and time? It is also worth notice, that all the before-mentioned Prophets, when censuring the misconduct of their nation, always brought *sacrifices* as the only point in question, and did never treat on any other observances.

I am aware that many of my Hebrew Rabbies, as well as the Rabbies of the Christian church, being amateurs of hypotheses, (which they call by the name of mysteries,) will not so easily give ear to my dissertation: nor is it advantageous to their temporal welfare to deviate from a system fomented for *that* purpose of old. Yet I do not hesitate its assertion; for מקרא אני דורש "I appeal to the sacred text itself," as well as to the purity of sacred reason, כי זה כל האדם

Hoc namque omnis hominis !

I could have brought a great many authorities in behalf of the point in question, from the many Rabbies posterior to the Mishnic doctors; in particular that of the great Maimonides, in his famous philosophical work *Morah Nebuchim*; (3d part, 32d section) But not to occupy mine

and the reader's time, I shall satisfy myself with the authorities deduced from the Bible itself, and those of the *Mishnic* doctors, being the chief ones in theological pursuits. Yet those who wish for more information I refer to the above-mentioned ; דוק ותשכח "Search, and you will find it."

To make a finish of the Discourse, I shall only sum up the articles proved before ; 1st, That the primitive institution of sacrifices was not at all invented for remission of sins ; 2dly, That neither was the shedding of animal blood essential for sacrifices, as pan-cakes formed also sometimes a pacification for the Deity, to cleanse a sinner ; and 3dly, That sacrifices in general were not at all essential for human salvation ; and accordingly they were only *ceremonial, local, and temporal* by laws, but no means *absolute*.

But (mind, reader) certain it is, that the doctrine which teaches that the shedding of animal blood of sacrifices is *absolute*, and essential for human salvation, is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity, and a system so absolute with them, that without it the whole of the doctrine of the shedding the blood of the Lamb of God, viz. the Messiah, must infallibly become annihilated, which is not the case with the purity of Judaism : as proved before.

As I was informed of the *candour* of the eminent divine Dr. Adam Clarke, who conceitedly and arrogantly expressed himself at a meeting of the *ci-devant* nefarious and infatuated London Society for the universal conversion of the Jews, by saying that there is not one Jew who knows the Hebrew language, and the literature thereof; and likewise the arrogance, the absurdities and sarcasms with which to my knowledge his bombastic comment on the Pentateuch is filled; I therefore loudly call upon him, as the guide and light of his time, to take into consideration, and refute if he be able, the objections I have made in this my Discourse; and I shall be much obliged to him for a reconciliation of the texts, and better information respecting the doctrine of Sacrifices.

THE END.

Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe Lane, London.

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Book 2d will contain 48 examinations most essential to the Pentateuch. The points treated upon are the following:—The different authors of the Hebrew Bible. The different times in which those authors lived, and the different style and character of the different books, with various critical remarks.—The *ambiguity* of the Septuagint translation, to which the Christian doctors so unanimously and zealously refer.—The *genuineness, the integrity and the divinity* of the Pentateuch; and that no hand whatever in posterior time was laid to it (as is advanced by infidels, and speciously supposed also by some Christian divines, as will be observed in the course of this treatise).—The *absolute falsity* and the corruptness of the pretended Samaritan Text, though by the Christian doctors taken as genuine.—In particular, the author has selected the most essen-

tial and conspicuous texts of the Hebrew Pentateuch, which are attacked by Doctors Kennicott, de Rossi, &c. and chewed over by the eminent divine of our days Dr. Adam Clarke in his bombastic comment on the Pentateuch, in which *they* charge the same with *omissions, interpolations, changeabilities, and wilful corruptions* by the Rabbies. All these false charges and fantastical insinuations will be removed by criticisms deduced from the text itself, and congenial with sound reason and with the history of the Hebrew succession before mentioned; and the authority of the Hebrew Rabbies and Philosophers anterior to Christianity.

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The work will contain about 50 sheets in quarto, on good paper; with the abovementioned 3 Copper Plates. Price to Subscribers 2l. 2s. Subscriptions taken by the author S. Bennett, 475, Strand. (N. B. No subscription money will be taken until the delivery of the work.)

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