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ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS

Flavius Josephus



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give him the testimony of being a wise man who is fully acquainted with our laws, and is able to interpret their meaning; on which account, as there have been many who have done their endeavors with great patience to obtain this learning, there have yet hardly been so many as two or three that have succeeded therein, who were immediately well rewarded for their pains.

3. And now it will not be perhaps an invidious thing, if I treat briefly of my own family, and of the actions of my own life⁵⁸⁷ while there are still living such as can either prove what I say to be false, or can attest that it is true; with which accounts I shall put an end to these Antiquities, which are contained in twenty books, and sixty thousand verses. And if God permit me, I will briefly run over this war⁵⁸⁸, and to add what befell them further to that very day, the 13th of Domitian, or A.D. 03, is not, that I have observed, taken distinct notice of by any one; nor do we ever again, with what befell us therein to this very day, which is the thirteenth year of the reign of Cesar Domitian, and the fifty-sixth year of my own life. I have also an intention to write three books concerning our Jewish opinions about God and his essence, and about our laws; why, according to them, some things are permitted us to do, and others are prohibited.

THE END

⁵⁸⁷ See the Life at the beginning of the volume.

⁵⁸⁸ What Josephus here declares his intention to do, if God permitted, to give the public again an abridgement of the Jewish War hear of it elsewhere, whether he performed what he now intended or not. Some of the reasons of this design of his might possibly be, his observation of the many errors he had been guilty of in the two first of those seven books of the War, which were written when he was comparatively young, and less acquainted with the Jewish antiquities than he now was, and in which abridgement we might have hoped to find those many passages which himself, as well as those several passages which others refer to, as written by him, but which are not extant in his present works. However, since many of his own references to what he had written elsewhere, as well as most of his own errors, belong to such early times as could not well come into this abridgement of the Jewish War; and since none of those that quote things not now extant in his works, including himself as well as others, ever cite any such abridgement; I am forced rather to suppose that he never did publish any such work at all; I mean, as distinct from his own Life, written by himself, for an appendix to these Antiquities, and this at least seven years after these Antiquities were finished. Nor indeed does it appear to me that Josephus ever published that other work here mentioned, as intended by him for the public also: I mean the three or four books concerning God and his essence, and concerning the Jewish laws; why, according to them, some things were permitted the Jews, and others prohibited; which last seems to be the same work which Josephus had also promised, if God permitted, at the conclusion of his preface to these Antiquities; nor do I suppose that he ever published any of them. The death of all his friends at court, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and the coming of those he had no acquaintance with to the crown, I mean Nerva and Trajan, together with his removal from Rome to Judea, with what followed it, might easily interrupt such his intentions, and prevent his publication of those works.