

THE

LIFE OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS.

THE family from which I am derived is not an ignoble one, but hath descended all along from the priests; and as nobility among several people is of a different origin, so, with us, to be of the sacerdotal dignity is an indication of the splendour of a family. Now, I am not only sprung from a sacerdotal family in general, but from the first of the twenty-four courses; and as among us there is not only a considerable difference between one family of each course and another, I am of the chief family of that first course also; nay, farther, by my mother I am of the royal blood; for the children of Asamoneus, from whom that family was derived, had both the office of the high priesthood, and the dignity of a king, for a long time together. I will accordingly set down my progenitors in order. My grandfather's father was named Simon with the addition of Psellus: he lived at the same time with that son of Simon the high priest, who, first of all the high priests, was named Hyrcanus. This Simon Psellus had nine sons, one of whom was Matthias, called Ephlias; he married the daughter of Jonathan the high priest, which Jonathan was the first of the sons of Asamoneus, who was high priest, and was the brother of Simon the high priest also. This Matthias had a son called Matthias Catus, and that in the first year of the government of Hyrcanus; his son's name was Joseph, born in the ninth year of the reign of Alexandra; his son Matthias was born in the tenth year of the reign of Archelaus; as was I born to Matthias on the first year of the reign of Caius Cæsar. I have three sons: Hyrcanus, the eldest, was born on the fourth year of the reign of Vespasian; as was Justus born on the seventh, and Agrippa on the ninth. Thus have I set down the genealogy of my family as I have found it described in the public records, and so bid adieu to those who calumniate me as of a lower original.

Now my father Matthias was not only eminent on account of his nobility, but had a higher commendation on account of his righteousness, and was in great reputation in Jerusalem, the greatest city we have. I was myself brought up with my brother, whose name was Matthias, for he was my own brother by both father and mother; and I made mighty proficiency in the improvements of my learning, and appeared to have both a great memory and understanding. Moreover, when I was a child, and about fourteen years of age, I was commended by all for the love I had to learning; on which account the high priests and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law. And when I was about sixteen years old, I had a mind to make trial of the several sects that were among us. These sects are three: the first is that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essens, as we have frequently told you; for I thought that by these means I might choose the best, if I were once acquainted with them all; so I contented myself with hard fare, and underwent great difficulties, and went through them all. Nor did I content myself with these trials only; but when I was informed that one whose name was Banus lived in the desert, who used no other clothing than grew upon trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by night and by day, in order to preserve his chastity, I imitated him in those things, and continued with him three years. So when I had accomplished my desires, I returned back to the city, being now nineteen years old, and began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, which is of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them.

But when I was in the twenty-sixth year of my age, it happened that I took a voyage to Rome, and this on the occasion which I shall now describe. At the time when Felix was procurator of Judea, there were certain priests of my acquaintance, and very excellent persons they were, whom on a small and trifling occasion he had put in bonds, and sent to Rome to plead before Cæsar. These I was desirous to procure deliverance for, and that especially because I was informed that they were not unmindful of piety towards God even under their afflictions, but supported themselves with figs and nuts. Accordingly I came to Rome, though it were through a great number of hazards by sea; for, as our ship was drowned in the Adriatic sea, we that were in it, being about six hundred in number, swam for our lives all the night; when, upon the first appearance of the day, and upon our sight of a ship of Cyrene, I and some others, eighty in all, by God's providence prevented the rest, and were taken up into the other ship. And when I had thus escaped, and was come to Dicearchia, which the Italians call Puteoli, I became acquainted with Aliturus, an actor of plays, and much beloved by Nero, but a Jew by birth; through his interest I became known to Poppea, Cæsar's wife, and took care as soon as possible to entreat her to procure that the priests might be set at liberty. And when, besides this favour, I had obtained many presents from Poppea, I returned home again.

And now I perceived innovations were already begun, and that there were a great many very much elevated, in hopes of a revolt from the Romans. I therefore endeavoured to put a stop to these tumultuous persons, and persuaded them to change their minds; and laid before their eyes against whom it was that they were going to fight, and told them that they were inferior to the Romans not only in martial skill, but also in good fortune; and desired them not rashly, and after the most foolish manner, to bring on the dangers of the most terrible mischiefs upon their country, upon their families, and upon themselves. And this I said with vehement exhortation, because I foresaw that the end of such a war would be most unfortunate with us. But I could not persuade them, for the madness of desperate men was quite too hard for me.

I was then afraid, lest by inculcating these things so often, I should incur their hatred and their suspicions as if I were of our enemies' party, and should run into the danger of being seized by them, and slain; since they were already possessed of Antonia, which was the citadel; so I retired into the inner court of the temple. Yet did I go out of the temple again, after Manahem and the

principal of the band of robbers were put to death, when I abode among the high priests and the chief of the Pharisees. But no small fear seized upon us when we saw the people in arms, while we ourselves knew not what we should do, and were not able to restrain their seditions. However, as the danger was directly upon us, we pretended that we were of the same opinion with them, but only advised them to be quiet for the present, and to let the enemy go away, still hoping that Gessius (Florus) would not be long ere he came, and that with great forces, and so put an end to these seditious proceedings.

But upon his coming and fighting, he was beaten, and a great many of those that were with him fell. And this disgrace which Gessius with Cestius received, became the calamity of our whole nation; for those that were fond of the war were so far elevated with this success, that they had hopes of finally conquering the Romans. Of which war another occasion was ministered, which was this: Those that dwelt in the neighbouring cities of Syria seized upon such Jews as dwelt among them, with their wives and children, and slew them, when they had not the least occasion of complaint against them: for they did neither attempt any innovation or revolt from the Romans, nor had they given any marks of hatred or treacherous design towards the Syrians. But what was done by the inhabitants of Scythopolis was the most impious and highly criminal of all; for, when the Jews, their enemies, came upon them from without, they forced the Jews that were among them to bear arms against their own countrymen, which it is unlawful for us to do: and when by their assistance they had joined battle with those that attacked them, and had beaten them, after that victory they forgot the assurances they had given these their fellow-citizens and confederates, and slew them all, being in number many thousands (13,000.) The like miseries were undergone by those Jews that were the inhabitants of Damascus. But we have given a more accurate account of these things in the books of the Jewish War. I only mention them now, because I would demonstrate to my readers, that the Jews' war with the Romans was not voluntary, but that, for the main, they were forced by necessity to enter into it.

So when Gessius had been beaten, the principal men of Jerusalem seeing that the robbers and innovators had arms in great plenty, and fearing lest they, while they were unprovided with arms, should be in subjection to their enemies, and, being informed that all Galilee had not yet revolted from the Romans, but that some part of it was still quiet, they sent me and two others of the priests, Joazar and Judas, in order to persuade the ill men

them to lay down their arms, and to teach them this lesson, that it were better to have those arms reserved for the most courageous men that the nation had, for that it had been resolved, that these our best men should always have their arms, ready against futurity, but still so, that they should wait to see what the Romans would do.

When I had therefore received these instructions, I came into Galilee, and found the people of Sepphoris in no small agony about their country, for reason that the Galileans had resolved to surrender it, on account of the friendship they had with the Romans, and because they had made a league with Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria. But I delivered them all out of the fear they were in, and persuaded the multitude to deal kindly with them, and permitted them to send to those that were their own hostages with Gessius to Bana, a city of Phenicia, though I still found the inhabitants of Tiberias ready to take arms, and that on the occasion following :

There were three factions in this city. The first was composed of men of worth and gravity ; of these Julius Capellus was the head. Now he, as well as all his companions, Herod, the son of Marius, and Herod the son of Gamalus, and Compens gave their advice, that the city should continue in their allegiance to the Romans, and to the king. But Pistus, who was guided by his son Justus, did not acquiesce in that resolution. But the second faction was composed of the most ignoble persons, and was determined for war. But as for Justus, the son of Pistus, who was the head of the third faction, although he pretended to be desirous about going to war, yet was really desirous of innovation, supposing that he should gain power to himself by the change of affairs. He therefore came into the midst of them, and endeavoured to inform the multitude, that "The city Tiberias had ever been a city of Galilee, and that in the days of Herod the tetrarch, who had built it, had obtained the principal place, and that he had ordered that the city Sepphoris should be subordinate to the city Tiberias ; that they had not lost this pre-eminence even under Agrippa the father, but had retained it, until Felix was procurator of Judea. But he told them, that now they had been so unfortunate as to be made a present by Nero to Agrippa junior ; and that upon the submission of Sepphoris to the Romans, that was become the capital city of Galilee, and that the royal treasury and the archives were now removed from them." When he had spoken these things, and a great many more against Agrippa, in order to provoke the people to a revolt, he added, "that this was the time for them to take arms, and join with the Galileans as their confederates, and to gather a

great number of forces in order to punish them." And, as he said this, he exhorted the multitude to go to war ; but as to this man, and how ill were his character and conduct in life, and how he and his brother were the authors of our destruction, I shall give the reader an account in the progress of my narration. So when Justus had, by his persuasions, prevailed with the citizens of Tiberias to take arms, nay, and had forced a great many so to do against their will, he went out, and set the villages belonging to Gadara and Hippos on fire.

This was the state Tiberias was now in. But as for Gishcala its affairs were thus: When John, the son of Levi, saw some of his citizens much elevated upon their revolt from the Romans, he laboured to restrain them, and entreated them that they would keep their allegiance to them. But he could not gain his purpose, although he did his endeavours to the utmost ; for the neighbouring people of Gadara, Gabara, and Sogana, with the Tyrians, got together a great army, and fell upon Gishcala, and took Gishcala by force, and set it on fire ; and when they had entirely demolished it, they returned home. Upon which John was so enraged, that he armed all his men, and joined battle with the people forementioned, and rebuilt Gishcala after a manner better than before, and fortified it with walls for its future security.

But Gamala persevered in its allegiance to the Romans, for the following reasons, Philip the son of Jacimus, who was their governor under king Agrippa, had been unexpectedly preserved when the royal palace at Jerusalem had been besieged ; but as he fled away, had fallen into another danger, and that was, of being killed by Manahem, and the robbers that were with him ; but certain Babylonians, who were of his kindred, and were then in Jerusalem, hindered the robbers from executing their design. So Philip stayed there four days, and fled away on the fifth, having disguised himself with fictitious hair, that he might not be discovered ; and when he was come to one of the villages to him belonging, situated at the borders of the citadel of Gamala, he sent to some of those that were under him, and commanded them to come to him. But God himself hindered his intention, and this for his own advantage also ; for had it not so happened, he had certainly perished. For a fever having seized upon him immediately, he wrote to Agrippa and Bernice, and gave them to one of his freed men to carry to Varus, who at this time was procurator of the kingdom, which the king and his sister had intrusted him withal, while they were gone to Berytus with an intention of meeting Gessius. When Varus had received these letters of Philip, and had learned that he was preserved, he was

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