

ALFRED J. CHURCH

THE
STORY OF THE LAST
DAYS
OF JERUSALEM

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From Josephus

BY THE

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TO

MARIANNE THORNTON

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY KINDNESSES

This Book is Dedicated

PREFACE.

In this story I have followed the narrative of Josephus, making many omissions but no other change of importance. It did not fall within the scope of my work to estimate his veracity and trustworthiness; but I may here say that a close acquaintance with his history will not incline the reader to put much confidence in his narrative on any point where interest or vanity may have tempted him to depart from the truth. In one matter, which is of such interest and importance that an account of it may be given here, he seems to have deliberately falsified history. The ingenuity of a German critic, Jacob von Bernays, detected in the *Chronicle* of Sulpicius Severus (a Christian writer, A.D. 350 — 420) a very slightly disguised quotation from one of the lost books of the *History* of Tacitus. The passage may be thus translated.

"Titus is said to have called a council of war, and then put to it the question whether he ought to destroy so grand a structure as the Temple.

Some thought that a sacred building, more famous than any that stood upon the earth, ought not to be destroyed. If it were preserved, it would be a proof of Roman moderation: if destroyed, it would brand the empire for ever with the stigma of cruelty. On the other hand there were some, and among these Titus himself, who considered that the destruction of the Temple was an absolute necessity, if there was to be a complete eradication of the Jewish and Christian religions. These superstitions, opposed as they were to each other, had sprung from the same origin; the Christians had come forth from among the Jews; remove the root and the stem would speedily perish."

In the interest, doubtless, of his Imperial patrons, the family of Vespasian*, Josephus represents the destruction of the Temple as having been accomplished against the will of Titus.

* For a strange instance of his flattery of this family, see p. 80.

I have to express my obligations to Dean Milman's *History of the Jews*, and to the article, "Jerusalem," by Mr. Ferguson, in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

A. J. C.

Hadley Green,

November 13th, 1880.