

*THE GROWTH OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AMONG
THE JEWS.*

VII. THERE are other Pseudepigrapha which we might examine with reference to our subject, such as The Assumption of Moses, The Psalms of Solomon, The Apocalypse of Baruch, The Sibylline Books, and The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, but I refrain from handling them, partly from fear of making this investigation too lengthy, and partly from the difficulty of assigning correct dates to many of these documents and dis severing the genuine text from Christian interpolations. These difficulties do not occur in the case of Philo-Judæus. This writer, who flourished about the time of our Lord, has many speculations concerning the soul, its origin, its nature, and its destiny, but he is entirely silent about the resurrection of the body, whether this reticence expressed his own disbelief in the doctrine, or merely a disinclination to offend the prejudices of the heathen philosophers to whom he endeavoured to recommend the Hebrew religion by accommodation, refining and allegory. He holds that all souls pre-exist, living in the air which is thus peopled with its own inhabitants. Some of these, having earthly downward tendencies, enter into material bodies, from which, if they live a virtuous, contemplative life, they soar again to heaven, and are called in Scripture Angels, and by the Greeks Demons and Heroes.¹ The death of the soul is its corruption, the reception and assimilation of evil. Arrived at this stage it is, as it were, entombed in the body, and is punished either with it or without it, for Philo in this, as in many other points, is inconsistent and

¹ Philo, *De Somn.*, i. 22. (vol. i. pp. 641, 642, Mang.); *De Gigant.*, 2, 3. (vol. i. pp. 263, 264).

unsatisfactory.¹ But he nowhere mentions the restoration of the body. He speaks indeed of Palingenesia in reference to the whole man, εἰς παλιγγενεσίαν ὀρμήσομεν,² but he never explains this except by his notion of the entrance of some souls into human bodies.

Josephus is not a satisfactory witness as to the belief and tenets of his contemporaries, inasmuch as his statements are biassed by his desire to make them acceptable to the Greeks and Romans, the outside world for whom he wrote. To them the doctrine of the Resurrection appeared especially strange and paradoxical. Hence in his references to it Josephus employed ambiguous terms which would lead one to believe that he held the transmigration of souls. Thus in describing the three chief sects among the Jews, he affirms of the Pharisees that they believed that the souls of good men passed into another body (μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα); and in his own speech to his soldiers he assures them that those who die honourably and piously, are rewarded with everlasting happiness, and inhabit a holy place in the heavens,³ whence after the revolution of ages they are introduced into other pure bodies (*Bell. Jud.*, III. viii. 5; II. viii. 14). In another place (*Ant.*, XVIII. i. 3), speaking of the Pharisees, he says that they believe that the souls of men are immortal, and that after death they receive, under the earth, punishment or reward, according as they have addicted themselves to virtue or vice in their lifetime, the evil being bound in eternal confinement, the good rising to life again.⁴

¹ *Leg. Alleg.*, i. 33 (vol. i. p. 65).

² *De Cherub.*, 32 (vol. i. p. 159).

³ As Josephus places all souls in Sheol, by οὐρανοῦ χῶρον τῶν ἁγιώτατων he means probably only a part of this locality. If this is so, this will be an interesting mention of the Division of Hell with which the Parable of Dives and Lazarus has familiarized us. The last portion of the passage to which reference is made is this: ἔνθεν ἐκ περιτροπῆς αἰώνων ἀγνοῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζοντα σώμασιν.

⁴ Ταῖς μὲν εἰργμὸν αἰδίου προστίθεσθαι, ταῖς δὲ βραστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν.

Whether by the last expression Josephus means the restoration of life to the body is doubtful. Holding the soul to be a portion of the Divinity (*μοῖρα Θεοῦ*), imprisoned for a time in a mortal tenement, he probably encouraged rather a Platonic view of the material body, and published no definite statement about its final destiny, using ambiguous words to express the popular opinion. His account of the Essenes scarcely handles the question of the Resurrection. This sect, he says,¹ held that the soul was immortal, being composed of the most refined æther, and that it was drawn down to the body, as to a prison, by a certain natural yearning (*ἰνυγί τιμι*), but that when delivered by death from this bondage, it soared aloft and was made happy in Elysium. He brings an instance of the moral effect of their belief in the future life, how that, in the war with the Romans, though tortured with extreme cruelty, they could not be induced to break their law, but bore their agonies with a smile and joyfully yielded up their souls, as being confident of receiving them again.² Taken strictly, these last words would imply the Resurrection; but we must allow the studied ambiguity to stand for what it is worth, and we do not know from other sources the exact opinion of the Essenes on this doctrine.

VIII. We have now arrived at the Christian era, when, as we have seen, the doctrine of the Resurrection had become firmly established in the popular mind, and Christ could speak of it without reserve, feeling that to many among his hearers the idea would be intelligible and acceptable. Travelling outside of the New Testament, we find the dogma prevailing in distant lands whither the Jews had carried their religion and exclusiveness. A remarkable collection of Jewish monuments has been discovered in the Crimea, the inscriptions on which have been copied and

¹ *Bell. Jud.*, II. viii. 11.

² *Ἐθνημοὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἠφίεσαν, ὡς πάλιν κομιούμενοι.* *Bell. Jud.*, II. viii. 10.

published by Chwolson in *Memoires de l'Académie Impériale de St. Petersbourg*.¹ Similar inscriptions occur elsewhere; many of like character may very probably be found in Palestine and Babylon, as they certainly exist in Italy written both in Greek and Latin. Those in the Crimea date from A.D. 6 to A.D. 960; and when we consider the time that must have elapsed before so distant a settlement could have been peopled by the Jews, we must conclude that the sentiments expressed on these memorials of the dead had prevailed long before, and appertain to a period much antecedent to their actual date. The common use of contractions also in the lettering of the inscriptions tends to shew that the blessings and prayers thus abbreviated had become popular and usual. One of the earliest runs thus: "May his soul be fast bound in the bundle of life, and may his resting place be in glory." (Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 29.) Others are the following: "May he go in peace and rest in his bed." "May his rest be in Paradise in glory." "May his soul dwell in happiness."² "Blessings on him at the mention of the dead." And one which was intended to have special reference to the Resurrection: "May the dew go up over his resting place"; for the Rabbis taught that the resuscitation of the dead should be effected by a heavenly dew which should fall upon their graves and quicken their dust into life.³ We see here how firm a hold the doctrine had taken upon the Hebrew mind, shaping and enlightening the imperfect tradition and the vague yearnings of earlier times, so that it is difficult to mark any distinction between the aspirations on the tombs of Christians and Jews in those primitive ages. The same fact can be observed in the catacombs of Rome. There is an ancient Jewish burying-place in the Vigna Bandanini, the inscriptions in which were transcribed and published by

¹ VII. Série, Tom. ix.

² Ps. xxv. 13.

³ See Isaiah xxvi. 19. Comp. Exod. xvi. 14. Chwolson, p. 90 ff.

Raffaëlle Garucci in 1862.¹ These are all, with, I believe, but one exception, written in what purports to be Greek or Latin, but is really a mixture of barbarisms, anomalies and errors which is wonderful. The Greek inscriptions are engraved in uncial letters of course without accents. They are such as these: **ΕΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ Η ΚΟΙΜΗΣΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ. ΕΝ ΑΓΑΘΟΙΣ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΔΙΚΕΩΝ Η ΚΥΜΗΣΙΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ.** And in Latin: "Dormitio tua in pace." "In Domino," or "in irene cymesis tua." "Dormitio tua inter dicaeis." There is one in Hebrew given by Garucci which may be thus translated: ² "In the fourth day of the week, the 21st day of the month July, in the year 4914 of the creation, died the Rabbi Jacob Ben-Ezekias, chief elder, being seventy years old, one month. . . . May his soul be joined to the bundle of the living, and may he live with the just in the world to come. Amen. Amen." Another is remarkable as asking for the prayers of readers in behalf of the dead person: **ΕΝΘΑΔΕ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ ΙΩΣΗΣ ΤΟ ΝΗΠΙΟΝ ΗΔΥΝ ΕΤ Β Η Μ** [=aged two years eight months] **ΠΡΟΚΟΠΙΣ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΚΡΙΣΠΑΙΝΑ ΔΕ ΜΗΤ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΟΙΟ ΕΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΤΗΝ ΚΟΜΗΣΙΝ** [*sic*] **ΑΥΤΟΥ.**³

IX. There is another testimony to the belief of the Jews to be found in their Liturgies and forms of Prayer. Some of these have been handed down from pre-Christian times, and were, it is stated, in use in our Lord's day, as they have continued to be employed unto the present.⁴ The following quotations from Burial Services published by authority,

¹ *Cimitero degli Antichi Ebrei scoperto recentemente in vigna Bandanini.* Roma, 1862.

² Pp. 28, 29. There is an interesting article on such inscriptions in *The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1864.

³ *Nuovi Epigr. Giud. di vigna Bandanini*, p. 8. *Edinburgh Review*, ubi supr., p. 246.

⁴ See the authorities in Dr. F. G. Lee's work, *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer for the Departed*, p. 30 ff. Jer. Taylor, *Liberty of Prophesying*, Bk. i. § 20.

will shew how vivid and practical is their realization of the great doctrine. "Thou who raisest to life again the departed, have mercy upon him who lieth here." "Thou who art our succour and defence, redeem the soul of thy servant who putteth his trust in Thee." "Thou, the light of the living, and the glory of those who sleep, raise him up again in thy mercy."¹ One of the most ancient of all these prayers is the following: "Thou sustainest the living, Thou comfortest the dying, Thou raisest up again the departed. . . . redeem the posterity of thy faithful servant A., whether they have departed this life or are still in the flesh. Raise them up again, Thou who delightest in life; write their names in thy book, and grant them life everlasting." So in a Form for the evening service for the New Year: "Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever; it is Thou who revivest the dead and art mighty to save. . . . Thou settest at liberty them that are bound, and wilt accomplish thy faith unto those that sleep in the dust." So too in an ancient ritual of the Spanish Jews used at funerals, for the souls of the dead: "Have pity on him, O Lord, living God, Master of the Universe, with whom is the source of life, that he may always walk in the way of life, and that his soul may repose for ever and ever with those elected unto life everlasting."²

X. While thus the Jews firmly believed in the Resurrection of the dead, it was no universal resurrection that they held. Maimonides summarized the doctrines of Judaism in thirteen articles, which he calls "Foundations or roots of faith," and which every Jew is required to believe on pain of excommunication. The last of these is this: "I believe with a perfect faith that the dead will be restored to life, when it shall be so ordained by the decree of the Creator."³ This general statement was considerably modified by glosses

¹ Lee, p. 33.

² Lee, pp. 35, 36.

³ J. Allen, *Modern Judaism*, 2nd edition, 1830, p. 99.

and explanations. Some said that all should rise except those who affirmed that the Law was not from heaven, or that the Resurrection could not be proved from the Law.¹ Whenever the Resurrection is spoken of, said others, it refers exclusively to the rising of the blessed to inherit everlasting happiness, for it is the indwelling of the Spirit which raises men to immortal life, and He abides not with the evil.² It was constantly maintained that no Gentiles, but only pious Israelites, would rise; or that good Jews would arise at the coming of the Messiah, and the rest of the nation at the end of the world; or that the righteous would rise to be rewarded, the wicked to be punished, and those neither good nor bad would not be raised at all. The most that was granted in the case of Gentiles was that those among them who observed the Noachic precepts might have part in the Resurrection, those precepts being seven in number, viz.: Not to commit idolatry; not to blaspheme God's name; to practise justice towards all men; not to be guilty of incest; not to murder; not to steal; and to eat no member of a living creature.³ The agent in the raising of the dead was expected to be the Messiah. In remarkable union with the famous passage in 1 Peter iii. the Jews held that Messiah would descend into hell and free the souls of Israelites from that abode of gloom for the merit of circumcision; He would bring them all to earth again, except those who denied the Resurrection or had imbibed the pernicious doctrines of Epicurus.⁴ It was believed that the bodies of pious Israelites would come forth glorified from the places wherein they had been laid and would be joined to their souls. This was deemed to be η

¹ Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.*, in Mat. xxii. 29. So in St. Paul's time the Pharisees seem to have generally believed in the resurrection of the just and unjust. See Acts xxiv. 15.

² Schoettgen, in Joh. vi. 36.

³ Allen, p. 103.

⁴ Bertholdt, *Christologia Judæorum*, p. 171 ff.

ἀνάστασις τῶν δικαίων or *ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη*. After Satan is defeated and cast into hell, then shall arise all the rest of men who are descended, however remotely, from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.¹ But the speculations on this subject are various, and we need not pursue them in detail. They are alluded to here merely to shew how the doctrine of the Resurrection has penetrated the schools of the Rabbis and influenced their eschatology. The teaching of the Jewish Church of the present time is thus given in one of their popular text books²: “I believe with a perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead, at the time when it shall please the Creator.” This is the thirteenth of the creeds or chief principles of the Jewish religion, which all Jews are required to receive; and it is grounded on the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel. It is further now argued that at that period, not Hebrews only, but all mankind will alike be brought to judgment according to the prophecy of Malachi (iii. 18): “Then shall He return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

WILLIAM J. DEANE, M.A.

¹ Bertholdt, *Christologia Judæorum*, pp. 176, 203.

² *Class Book for Jewish Youth*, by Rev. H. A. Henry. London: 5638—1877. pp. 90, 91.