

THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

AS TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.*

“Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”—*Ecclesiastes* xii., 7.

THE Jews are a mere handful of people, and are deprived of home, of country, and of nationality. . At no period of the world's history were they intellectually great or numerically powerful. To-day they are scattered over the face of the earth and are to be met with in every nation under heaven. They mingle with us in our everyday life, speak our language, mix in our social festivities, trade with us, sit in our legislative assemblies, and act as good citizens generally. Yet they remain distinct from us, they preserve those characteristics by which they were recognized thousands of years ago, and in numbers they appear neither to increase nor diminish, at least not to any extent worth naming. They have outlived the rise and fall of mighty empires, and witnessed the decline and fading away of powerful races and great peoples. Solitary spectators themselves unchanged, they have gazed on the ebb and flow of the tidal wave of civilisation as it has passed over one land after another and then receded again, leaving darkness and ignorance to return. Now, how are we to explain the fact of the marvellous preservation of this race of people amidst such strange vicissitudes, and the still more extraordinary fact that the literature produced by them in the earlier period of their history has come to occupy the position which it does

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