



CHAPTER II.

THE CRISIS AS IT APPEARED TO EZEKIEL.

THE great question of the Divine relations to man's conduct in this life had long been the subject of agitating discussion and reflection, since social and national trouble had darkened the life of Judah. Asaph had recorded his perplexities regarding it in his famous psalm,¹ and others had followed in the same strain. The Book of Job embodied the difficulties that clouded pious minds, and gave the true solution, but to the mass of men the problem was still dark and anxious. Among the multitude, alike in Judah and on the Chebar, the ways of Providence were bitterly arraigned as unjust. The present generation, they maintained, though not so guilty as others before it, were punished, while their fathers had escaped. "The fathers," they said, in a sententious way, "ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."² Nor were specious arguments wanting to support this self-righteous commentary on

¹ Psalm lxxiii.

² Lit., "hunted, dulled." Unripe grapes are still much eaten in Syria, with the result that a sensation of discomfort in the teeth always follows for a short time. Delitzsch, *Hiob*, xv. 33. Prov. x. 26. In Hor., *Od.*, III. vi. 1, the same sentiment is expressed.