

S. M. G.

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THE POETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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## II.

AT first it seems as if an immeasurable interval separated these psalms of emotion, these outbursts of joy and praise, or sorrow and contrition, from the calm, contemplative consideration of the great problems of life, or from the pithy, sententious instructions of the proverb. And yet the transition from one to the other is not far to seek. The connecting link lies in the psalms of sorrow. They lead to wisdom. God's chastening brings reflection. "By the sadness of the countenance the heart," which is the Old Testament expression for profound discernment, "the heart is made better." But it is necessary to dwell for a little on the process by which this takes place. By profound afflictions, such as those of Job and David, and by disappointments which touched the very heart of life, such as those which chastened the latter days of Solomon, the terrible problem of evil is brought home to the very heart of the Old Testament saints. "Why go I mourning?" "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." These are all the language of profound emotion as well as of thoughtful contemplation. Reason is driven to question, and the firmest faith still humbly cries, Why? Such