

THE
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“THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD”—Prov xix. 1.

SERMON.

Habakkuk iii. 2, “O Lord, revive and work in the midst of the years.”

The ministry of the prophet Habakkuk seems to have been contemporaneous with that of the prophet Jeremiah. He foretells the judgments which should be executed on the Jewish nation by the Chaldeans; and the fearful recompense which should come on the heads of the Chaldeans by the instrumentality of the Medes and Persians. But, unwilling that his people should wait so long without a blessing, even the whole period of their threatened captivity, he is led, in a divine ode—an ode of peculiar sublimity—to implore of God the restoration of his favour towards them, and to intreat Him to blend his judgments with mercy. “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.”

Consider. I.—The nature of a religious revival.

A religious revival operates on the interests of devotion, in a similar manner as the revival of literature has influenced the interests of philosophy and science, and as a revival of trade affects the commercial interests of a country. A revival in religion is a return to life and vigour from a state of languor and decay.

To be more particular, however, we will notice

1. What is God's work in the heart of man.
2. What is the Revival of that work.

1st. What is God's work in the heart of man.

In the affairs of religion man may do much; there may be repentance like that of Ababs or like that of Judas; there may be knowledge “so as to apprehend all mysteries;” there may be faith “so as to remove mountains;” there may be almsgiving, so as to “give our goods to feed the poor;” nay, there may be martyrdom, so as to “give our body to be burned; and yet it be only man's work. In the outward works man may do, all the intellectual understanding man may attain to; but God's work is beyond all this, it is something superior to what man can accomplish. The work of God in the soul is called the new birth. “To as many as received him, whom he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood;” not by