

which they had been brought by a departure from the Most High. The passage under review is often familiarly quoted with the implied interpretation that the work of God means true religion, vital piety. "Revive thy work" is supposed to be equivalent to, Reawaken a spirit of true religion throughout the land. And certainly Habakkuk's prayer includes this, though it includes also something more. But by the rendering referred to, the idea is brought out in a wrong way. The word "revive" is never, according to scriptural usage, connected with religion. Persons are revived, not piety. The familiar style of the Sacred Oracles is, revive *us*, quicken *us*. "In the midst of the years" means, now, in this our day. The expression, "make known," is elliptical, but the meaning evidently is, make known thy power and grace in turning thy people to thyself, and in delivering them from impending calamities.

The purport of the ode, to which the above prayer is an introduction, may be described in a single sentence. The Chaldean armies are about to sweep in desolating tide over the land; the Jewish nation is, in itself, helpless against such a foe; but Jehovah, the God of Israel, is omnipotent; he has often interposed in a marvellous way for his people in times past; and he is able to shield those who trust in him still. None, therefore, who really fear him, and are making him their stay, need to be alarmed. This is what the ode amounts to, brought down to simple prose. But the ideas of the prophet are not uttered in the language of prose. Under the influence of a divinely elevated and warmed imagination, he gives his thoughts forth in imagery of singular splendour and sublimity; and his diction, like his conceptions, is grand. He sees the wonders that God wrought for Israel of old depicted as in a panorama, where, however, general images of majesty and power predominate over particular definite occurrences; and the few great particular incidents which do