

rude dance, as at best but vanity and folly, doing good to neither body nor soul. But allow me to ask, what is the difference—the *essential* difference between it and dances in civilized lands? If the one is foolish the other cannot be wise. But there is a difference, and it turns the scale rather in favour of the former. These dark-hearted heathen have regard for the honour and pleasure of their deity in their dances. So much cannot be said of such exercises as generally practised in christian lands. Such as frequent these scenes banish the thoughts of God from their hearts on such occasions.

In pouring out the blood before the altar let us see the yearning of darkened souls for peace of conscience and reconciliation to offended deity. O, that they could be persuaded to accept of the sacrifice of Calvary, and of the atonement there made! And, O that we had more men and women to bring the word of life before those who are perishing for lack of knowledge; and to bring the light of life before those who are groping in the dark for it, and not knowing where to find it!

The Lord send labourers to his own harvest!

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## THE ORDINANCE OF PRAISE.

### No. III.

In our last article we considered the ordinance of praise as it existed in the early or formative ages of the Jewish dispensation. Before passing to the next era, we may briefly notice some of the specimens of the sacred song of that age. We have already adverted to the song of Moses at the Red Sea. The period of the sojourn in the Wilderness presents us with one song peculiarly interesting as being embodied in the book of Psalms and thus forming part of the devotional poetry of all subsequent ages. The 90th Psalm is called a prayer of Moses, the man of God. Objections have been raised to the Mosaic authorship, but it is confirmed by its contents. Those who have denied the authenticity of the title have failed to find any indication of any other, or to agree upon a time, to which it would be more suitable, and on

the contrary have been obliged to admit that there is no era, to which it would better apply, nor any other whose spirit it would better express. "The poem," says Ewald, "has something uncommonly striking, solemn, sinking into the depths of the Godhead. In contents and language it is throughout original and powerful; and as it is undoubtedly very old, it would have been universally considered as correctly derived from Moses, had we known exactly the reasons which guided the collector. Moses might well have been seized by these awful thoughts at the close of his wanderings, and the author whoever he be, is clearly a man grown gray with vast experience, who here takes his stand at the end of his earthly course."

In this view the Psalm is interesting, not only as the oldest of the book of Psalms, and among the oldest poetical compositions in the world, but from its authorship and the circumstances in which it was composed. Its plaintive exhibitions of the brevity of human life—its sorrowful contrast of the fleeting generations of man with the mountains, at whose feet they had wandered, and with the eternity of him, who existed before these mountains were brought forth, and its penitential lamentation over the multitude swept away by the wrath of God, impressive under any circumstances, are doubly so, if viewed as the expressions of the lawgiver of Israel, over the people whom he had brought out of Egypt, wasting away under the curse of Jehovah.—From the concluding verses which speak of coming good in contrast with years of affliction, the Psalm seems to have been composed near the close of the sojourn in the Wilderness, and when their sadness was beginning to be lightened by the prospect of enjoying the goodly land.

As early as this period, we find mention of a book of sacred tales, called the book of the wars of the Lord, a brief portion of which has been preserved in the 21st chapter of Numbers. The wars of Israel with the surrounding nations were all religious undertakings—emphatically wars of the Lord, undertaken not for national aggrandizement or glory but to accomplish the