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PSALM 115: 1 Not to us, LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for your loving kindness, and for your truth's sake.

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God alone is to be glorified, Psa 115:1-3. The vanity of idols, Psa 115:4-8. Israel, the house of Aaron, and all that fear God, are exhorted to trust in the Lord, Psa 115:9-11. The Lord's goodness to his people, and his gracious promises, Psa 115:12-16. As the dead cannot praise him, the living should, Psa 115:17, Psa 115:18.

This Psalm is written as a part of the preceding by eighteen of Kennicott's and fifty-three of De Rossi's MSS.; by some ancient editions the Septuagint, the Syriac, the Vulgate, the Ethiopic, the Arabic, and the Anglo-Saxon. The old Anglo-Scottish Psalter reads it consecutively with the foregoing. Who the author of both was, we know not, nor on what occasion it was written. It seems to be an epinikion or triumphal song, in which the victory gained is entirely ascribed to Jehovah.

Verse 1

Not unto us, O Lord - We take no merit to ourselves; as thine is the kingdom, and the power in that kingdom, so is thy glory.

For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake - Thy mercy gave thy promise, thy truth fulfilled it.

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PSALM 115: 2 Why should the nations say, "Where is their God, now?"

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Verse 2

Wherefore should the heathen say - This appears to refer to a time in which the Israelites had suffered some sad reverses, so as to be brought very low, and to be marked by the heathen.

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PSALM 115: 3 But our God is in the heavens. He does whatever he pleases.

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Verse 3

He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased - There was too much cause for his abandoning us to our enemies; yet he still lives and rules in heaven and in earth.

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PSALM 115: 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

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Verse 4

Their idols are silver, etc. - They are metal, stone, and wood. They are generally made in the form of man, but can neither see, hear, smell, feel, walk, nor speak. How brutish to trust in such! And next to these, in stupidity and inanity, must they be who form them, with the expectation of deriving any

good from them. So obviously vain was the whole system of idolatry, that the more serious heathens ridiculed it, and it was a butt for the jests of their freethinkers and buffoons. How keen are those words of Juvenal! - - Audis Jupiter, haec? nec labra moves, cum mittere vocem.

Debueras, vel marmoreus vel aheneus? aut cur

In carbone tuo charta pia thura soluta

Ponimus, et sectum vituli jecur, albaque porci

Omenta? ut video, nullum discrimen habendum est.

Effigies inter vestras, statuamque Bathylli.

Sat. xiii., ver. 113.

Dost thou hear, O Jupiter, these things? nor move thy lips when thou oughtest to speak out, whether thou art of marble or of bronze? Or, why do we put the sacred incense on thy altar from the opened paper, and the extracted liver of a calf, and the white caul of a hog? As far as I can discern there is no difference between thy statue and that of Bathyllus."

This irony will appear the keener, when it is known that Bathyllus was a fiddler and player, whose image by the order of Polycrates, was erected in the temple of Juno at Samos. See Isa 41:1, etc.; Isa 46:7; Jer 10:4, Jer 10:5, etc.; and Psa 135:15, Psa 135:16.

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PSALM 115: 5 They have mouths, but they don't speak. They have eyes, but they don't see.

PSALM 115: 6 They have ears, but they don't hear. They have noses, but they don't smell.

PSALM 115: 7 They have hands, but they don't feel. They have feet, but they don't walk, neither do they speak through their throat.

PSALM 115: 8 Those who make them will be like them; yes, everyone who trusts in them.

PSALM 115: 9 Israel, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield.

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Verse 9

O Israel - The body of the Jewish people.

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PSALM 115: 10 House of Aaron, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield.

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Verse 10

O house of Aaron - All the different classes of the priesthood.

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PSALM 115: 11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield.

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Verse 11

Ye that fear the Lord - All real penitents, and sincere believers, trust to the Lord, in the almighty, omniscient, and infinitely good Jehovah.

He is their help and shield - He is the succor, support, guardian, and defense of all who put their confidence in him.

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PSALM 115: 12 The LORD remembers us. He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron.

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Verse 12

The Lord hath been mindful - He has never yet wholly abandoned us to our enemies.

He will bless the house of Israel - He will bless the people as a nation; he will bless the priesthood and Levites; he will bless all of them who fear him, great and small, in whatsoever station or circumstances found. There is a great deal of emphasis in this verse: several words are redoubled to make the subject the more affecting. I give a literal translation: - Psa 115:12 "The Lord has been mindful of us he will bless the house of Israel; she will bless the house of Aaron. Psa 115:13 He will bless them that fear Jehovah, the small with the great. Psa 115:14 Jehovah will add upon you, upon you and upon all your children. Psa 115:15 Blessed are ye of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psa 115:16 The heavens of heavens are the Lord's: but the earth he hath given to the sons of Adam."

Jehovah is absolute Master of the universe. He has made the heavens of heavens, and also the earth; and this he gives to the children of Adam. When he exiled him from paradise, he turned him out into the earth, and gave it to him and his sons for ever, that they might dress, till, and eat of its produce all their days.

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PSALM 115: 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, both small and great.

PSALM 115: 14 May the LORD increase you more and more, you and your children.

PSALM 115: 15 Blessed are you by the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

PSALM 115: 16 The heavens are the heavens of the LORD; but the earth has he given to the children of men.

PSALM 115: 17 The dead don't praise the LORD, neither any who go down into silence;

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Verse 17

The dead praise not the Lord - המתים hammethim, those dead men who worshipped as gods dumb idols, dying in their sins, worship not Jehovah; nor can any of those who go down into silence praise thee: earth is the place in which to praise the Lord for his mercies, and get a preparation for his glory.

PSALM 115: 18 But we will bless the LORD, from this time forward and forever more. Praise the LORD!

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Verse 18

But we will bless the Lord - Our fathers, who received so much from thy bounty, are dead, their tongues are silent in the grave; we are in their place, and wish to magnify thy name, for thou hast dealt bountifully with us. But grant us those farther blessings before we die which we so much need; and we will praise thee as living monuments of thy mercy, and the praise we begin now shall continue for ever and ever.

The Targum, for "neither any that go down into silence," has "nor any that descend into the house of earthly sepulture," that is, the tomb. The Anglo-Saxon: neither all they that go down into hell. Nogh the dede sal loue the Lorde, ne al that lyghtes in hell. Old Psalter. The word hell among our ancestors meant originally the covered, or hidden obscure place, from helan, to cover or conceal: it now expresses only the place of endless torment.