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PSALM 148: 1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens! Praise him in the heights!

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The psalmist calls on all the creation to praise the Lord. The angels and visible heavens, Psa 148:1-6; the earth and the sea, Psa 148:7; the meteors, Psa 148:8; mountains, hills, and trees, Psa 148:9; beasts, reptiles, and fowls, Psa 148:10; kings, princes, and mighty men, Psa 148:11; men, women, and children, Psa 148:12, Psa 148:13; and especially all the people of Israel, Psa 148:14.

This Psalm has no title: but by the Syriac it is attributed to Happai and Zechariah, and the Septuagint and the Ethiopic follow it. As a hymn of praise, this is the most sublime in the whole book.

Verse 1

Praise ye the Lord from the heavens - The Chaldee translates, "Praise the Lord, ye holy creatures from the heavens. Praise him, ye armies of supreme angels. Praise him, all ye angels who minister before him." מן השמים min hashshamayim signifies whatever belongs to the heavens, all their inhabitants; as מן הארץ min haarets, Psa 148:7, signifies all that belongs to the earth, all its inhabitants and productions.

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PSALM 148: 2 Praise him, all his angels! Praise him, all his army!

PSALM 148: 3 Praise him, sun and moon! Praise him, all you shining stars!

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Verse 3

Praise ye him, sun and moon - The meaning of this address and all others to inanimate nature, is this: Every work of God's hand partakes so much of his perfections, that it requires only to be studied and known, in order to show forth the manifold wisdom power, and goodness of the Creator.

Stars of light - The brightest and most luminous stars: probably the planets may be especially intended.

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PSALM 148: 4 Praise him, you heavens of heavens, You waters that are above the heavens.

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Verse 4

Heavens of heavens - Heavens exceeding heavens. Systems of systems extending as far beyond the solar system, as it does beyond the lowest deeps. The endless systematic concatenation of worlds.

Ye waters that be above the heavens - This refers to Gen 1:7 (note), where see the notes. Clouds, vapours, air, exhalations, rain, Snow, and meteors of every kind.

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PSALM 148: 5 Let them praise the LORD's name, For he commanded, and they were created.

Verse 5

He commanded, and they were created - He spake the word expressive of the idea in his infinite mind; and they sprang into being according to that idea.

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PSALM 148: 6 He has also established them forever and ever. He has made a decree which will not pass away.

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Verse 6

He hath also stablished them - He has determined their respective revolutions and the times in which they are performed, so exactly to show his all-comprehensive wisdom and skill, that they have never passed the line marked out by his decree, nor intercepted each other in the vortex of space, through revolutions continued for nearly 6000 years.

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PSALM 148: 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures, and all depths!

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Verse 7

Praise the Lord from the earth - As in the first address, he calls upon the heavens and all that belong to them; so here, in this second part, he calls upon the earth, and all that belong to it.

Ye dragons - תנינים tanninim, whales, porpoises, sharks, and sea-monsters of all kinds.

And all deeps - Whatsoever is contained in the sea, whirlpools, eddies, ground tides, with the astonishing flux and reflux of the ocean.

Every thing, in its place and nature, shows forth the perfections of its Creator.

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PSALM 148: 8 Lightning and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling his word;

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Verse 8

Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours - All kinds of meteors, water, and fire, in all their forms and combinations. And air, whether in the gentle breeze, the gale, the whirlwind, the tempest, or the tornado; each accomplishing an especial purpose, and fulfilling a particular will of the Most High.

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PSALM 148: 9 mountains and all hills; fruit trees and all cedars;

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Verse 9

Mountains, and all hills - Whether primitive, secondary, or alluvial; of ancient or recent formation, with all their contents, quarries, mines, and minerals. But what a profusion of wisdom and skill is lavished on these! To instance only in the different metals, earths, and minerals; especially the precious stones.

Fruitful trees - עץ פרי ets peri, fruit trees of all kinds.

And all cedars - Every kind of forest tree. The formation of the fruits, their infinitely varied hues and savours, proclaim the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God: not less so, the growth, structure, and various qualities and uses of the forest trees.

PSALM 148: 10 wild animals and all livestock; small creatures and flying birds;

Verse 10

Beasts - החיה hachaiyah, wild beasts of every kind.

All cattle - בהמה behemah, all domestic animals; those used for the service of the house, and those for agricultural purposes.

Creeping things - All the class of reptiles, from the boa constrictor, that can combat, kill, and swallow whole the royal tiger, to the cobra de manille, a poisonous reptile as small as a fine needle; with those still smaller animals that are found in water, and require the power of the microscope to bring them to view. In the production, preservation, habits, and properties of all these, there is a profusion of wisdom and economy that would require ages to exhibit.

Flying fowl - The structure of fowls is astonishing; and the exact mathematical manner in which flying fowls swim the air, and steer their course wheresoever they will; the feathers, and their construction, with the muscles which give them motion; strike the observer of nature with astonishment and delight.

PSALM 148: 11 kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth;

Verse 11

Kings of the earth - As being representatives of the Most High; and all people - the nations governed by them. Princes, as governors of provinces, and all judges executing those laws that bind man to man, and regulate and preserve civil society, praise God, from whom ye have derived your power and influence: for by him kings reign. And let the people magnify God for civil and social institutions and for the laws by which, under him, their lives and properties are preserved.

PSALM 148: 12 both young men and maidens; old men and children:

Verse 12

Both young men, and maidens - Who are in the bloom of youth, and in the height of health and vigor; know that God is your Father; and let the morning and energy of your days be devoted to him.

Old men, and children - Very appropriately united here, as the beginning and conclusion of life present nearly the same passions, appetites, caprices, and infirmities: yet in both the beneficence, all-sustaining power, and goodness of God are seen.

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PSALM 148: 13 let them praise the LORD's name, for his name alone is exalted. His glory is above the earth and the heavens.

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Verse 13

Let them - All already specified, praise the name of Jehovah, because he excels all beings: and his glory, as seen in creating, preserving, and governing all things, is על al, upon or over, the earth and heaven. All space and place, as well as the beings found in them, show forth the manifold wisdom and goodness of God.

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PSALM 148: 14 He has lifted up the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near to him. Praise the LORD!

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Verse 14

Be also exalteth the horn - Raises to power and authority his people.

The praise - Jehovah is the subject of the praise of all his saints.

A people near unto him - The only people who know him, and make their approaches unto him with the sacrifices and offerings which he has himself prescribed. Praise ye the Lord!

O what a hymn of praise is here! It is a universal chorus! All created nature have a share, and all perform their respective parts.

All intelligent beings are especially called to praise him who made them in his love, and sustains them by his beneficence. Man particularly, in all the stages of his being - infancy, youth, manhood, and old age: all human beings have their peculiar interest in the great Father of the spirits of all flesh.

He loves man, wheresoever found, of whatsoever color, in whatever circumstances, and in all the stages of his pilgrimage from his cradle to his grave.

Let the lisp of the infant, the shout of the adult, and the sigh of the aged, ascend to the universal parent, as a gratitude-offering. He guards those who hang upon the breast; controls and directs the headstrong and giddy, and sustains old age in its infirmities; and sanctifies to it the sufferings that bring on the termination of life.

Reader, this is thy God! How great, how good, holy merciful, how compassionate! Breathe thy soul up to him; breathe it into him; and let it be preserved in his bosom till mortality be swallowed up of life, and all that is imperfect be done away.

Jesus is thy sacrificial offering; Jesus is thy Mediator. He has taken thy humanity, and placed it on the throne! He creates all things new; and faith in his blood will bring thee to his glory! Amen! hallelujah!

The beautiful morning hymn of Adam and Eve, (*Paradise Lost*, book v., line 153, etc)., - "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good;

Almighty, thine this universal frame," etc. has been universally admired. How many have spoken loud in its praises, who have never attempted to express their feelings in a stanza of the hundred and forty-eighth Psalm! But to the rapturous adorers of Milton's poetry what is the song of David, or this grand music of the spheres! Know this, O forgetful man, that Milton's morning hymn is a paraphrase of this Psalm, and is indebted to it for every excellency it possesses. It is little else that the psalmist speaking in English instead of Hebrew verse.