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Mormonbasics.com is humbled to bring you a commentary on the hymns published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This commentary is presented in a two-column format. The original text, as presented in the hymnbook published by the LDS Church, is in the left column. The comments on the right are provided by mormonbasics.com. We have even changed the color of the text so there won't be any question as to who wrote what.

Personal note from the commentator:
The hymns of the Church are sacred text. The Lord has made it very clear to us through his prophets that the singing of hymns is a form of prayer, and as such is sacred communication. Much of the sacred Spirit and reverence we experience in our meetings, especially Sacrament Meeting, comes from the Spirit that accompanies the singing of the hymns.

The hymns are written in poetic form, and as such are able to take certain licenses and liberties with the English language that cannot normally be expressed in any other way. It is certainly not the aim of this commentary to improve on the beauty of the poetic expressions found in our sacred hymns. As a teacher of English to those who speak other languages, I have found that many of the hymns have expressions that are difficult for some people to understand.

Because hymns are written to fit a set rhythmic pattern or meter, often the expression has to be condensed to fit in a small space, but still convey its intended meaning. It is the combination of the rhythm, text, and music that create such a powerful Spiritual experience when singing the hymns. My attempts to explain some of the meaning behind the text should not detract from the original meaning, nor should it replace the original meaning. Hymns, like parables, take on different meanings as the circumstances of our lives change. My commentary is only a starting point for (hopefully) a better understanding of the overall meaning of the hymn in this work. Anyone else writing this same commentary would have different perspectives and points to make. That is the nature of a commentary. I pray that what I say will, in some way, help in your understanding of this hymn. Since this is a personal study of the hymns, I will sometimes use the first person when writing the commentary.

Kelly P. Merrill

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We Ever Pray for Thee

1. We ever pray for thee, our prophet dear,
That God will give to thee comfort and cheer;
As the advancing years furrow thy brow,
Still may the light within shine bright as now,
Still may the light within shine bright as now.

To "ever pray" is to pray always or continuously. We should always include our prophet in our prayers. And what should we be praying for? Well, for one thing, we are told that we should be praying that the Lord will uphold his servant and give him strength to do the work laid before him by the Lord. In this verse we are told to include in our prayers that the prophet will be comforted and cheered or made happy in his service.

As he grows older (advancing years) and the cares of the world become visible in his face - we call them worry lines when our brow or forehead becomes full of creases or wrinkles - may the light, the spirit of joy we have always known him to have remain bright in his face, just as it does today.

2. We ever pray for thee with all our hearts,
That strength be given thee to do thy part,
To guide and counsel us from day to day,
To shed a holy light around our way,
To shed a holy light around our way.

With all our hearts we pray for our prophet. We pray he will be given strength to continue his work, his part, to guide us and counsel from day to day. "To shed a holy light around our way" means to continue to reveal truth to us so that our path through life is clear to us.

3. We ever pray for thee with fervent love;
And as the children's prayer is heard above,
Thou shalt be ever blest, and God will give
All that is meet and best while thou shalt live,
All that is meet and best while thou shalt live.

We continue to pray for our prophet with an intensity of love. And as our children's prayers are heard by God, we believe the prophet will always be blessed and that God will give him all that is proper and best during his life.

MUSIC
H. A. Tuckett, 1852-1918; adapted by Evan Stephens, 1854-1930

TEXT
Evan Stephens, 1854-1930

SCRIPTURES
Doctrine and Covenants 107:22