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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

Our Mountain Home So Dear

1. Our mountain home so dear,
Where crystal waters clear
Flow ever free,
Flow ever free,
While thru the valleys wide
The flow'rs on ev'ry side,
Blooming in stately pride,
Are fair to see.

2. We'll roam the verdant hills
And by the sparkling rills
Pluck the wildflow'rs,
Pluck the wildflow'rs;
The fragrance on the air,
The landscape bright and fair,
And sunshine ev'rywhere
Make pleasant hours.

3. In sylvan depth and shade,
In forest and in glade,
Where-e'er we pass,
Where-e'er we pass,
The hand of God we see
In leaf and bud and tree,
Or bird or humming bee,
Or blade of grass.

4. The streamlet, flow'r, and sod
Bespeak the works of God;
And all combine,
And all combine,
With most transporting grace,
His handiwork to trace,
Thru nature's smiling face,
In art divine.

MUSIC

Evan Stephens, 1854-1930

TEXT

Emmeline B. Wells, 1828-1921

SCRIPTURES

Most of the hymns that speak of the mountains refer to the mountains in Utah where the saints gathered. This hymn does not specifically mention where these mountains are, but it can be safely assumed the writer is referring to the Utah mountains. The mountains became the symbol of the saints' safety from those who would do them harm, like the walls of their home that protected them from the damaging elements. The valleys in Utah were very desolate, so the greenery and water sources of the mountains were a heaven-sent relief from the parched and barren valleys. One of the first things they did was to start to channel the streams and rivers to their fields to produce food. Along with that came the watering of gardens and eventually, lawns that greened up the valleys and made them beautiful to behold.

We will wander all over the hills green with grass and flowers, and by the little ribbons of water we will pick the wild flowers. Smell of the mountain air, the sun shining everywhere make the hours spent in the mountains very pleasant.

The word "sylvan" refers to the woods. A glade is an open space within the woods. So in the shady depths of the woods, as well as in the open places, wherever we go we see the hand of God in the leaves, the flower buds, the trees, the birds, the bees or even just a blade of grass.

A streamlet is a small stream. The streamlet, the flower, and the grass all speak of the works of God. The last half of the sentence is so beautifully poetic that it is difficult to say the same thing without sounding clumsy and awkward. All of these things combine to create divine artwork that shows the handiwork of God, traced in every detail of the scene. It is so beautiful that it seems that even nature herself is smiling through the beauty of the land.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:16-20, Doctrine and
Covenants 104:14

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