

# Lesson 10: Hymn— Deciding When to Tie Repeated Notes

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Materials needed: Sample of a Hymn Marked in Shortcut Mode; Sample from *Hymns from the L.D.S. Hymnal* . . . ; Sample from *Three-Staff Hymn Accompaniments* . . . ; Redeemer of Israel: Example of Fully-Prepared Score; Hymn 19 (*Hymnbook*)

This is The New LDS Organist Lesson 10: Hymn Playing—Deciding When to Tie Repeated Notes.

If possible, later in the lesson it will be best to be seated at the organ console. You should have the written materials for this lesson at your fingertips. I am Dr. Don Cook from Brigham Young University.

Lesson 10 is for organists who are playing hymns in both shortcut and polish modes. We will explore options for dealing with repeated notes in either mode, beginning with a very simple, direct approach. Also, you will learn about using the expression pedals of the organ. If you then wish to learn some guidelines that will help you to deal with repeated notes on your own, they will be presented in some detail during the optional second part of the lesson.

The foundations for many of the terms and concepts used in this lesson are laid out earlier in this course. It would be best to know the concepts in lessons 1, 4, and 5 before beginning this one.

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[The nature of the problem]

This lesson would be unnecessary if the music in the hymnbook were organ music. But it is *vocal* music, and some musical features that work well when the music is sung are *not* as effective when that same music is played at the organ. Playing notes that repeat in the *same* voice (“repeated notes”) or that repeat *between two* voices (“common tones”) is the most important of these features. The constant tone of the organ can make it difficult to distinguish between two repeated tones when playing in legato style. If the space between the tones is too large, it sounds choppy and unmusical—one might say too rhythmic. If the space is too small or if the tones are tied, it sounds over-sustained and indistinct—not rhythmic enough.

[Introducing several approaches to making these decisions; first, playing from an arranged score]

This lesson will present three ways to deal with repeated notes in hymn playing. The simplest way: either play the repeated notes as written (some hymns are just fine that way); or play from a score that is arranged for organ. Here is a list of resources that contain such arranged scores:

- the hymns included in this course
- Cook *Easy Organ Hymn Settings*
- Cundick/Cook *Three-Staff Hymn Accompaniments*
- Carol Dean *Hymns from the L.D.S. Hymnal Marked for the Organ*
- many of the hymns in Parley Belnap’s *Hymn Studies*
- hymns prepared by a well-trained organist

This is the approach that we would strongly recommend for the first several weeks or even months of hymn playing in either polish or shortcut mode. This course includes over two dozen hymns arranged for organ, offering limited but immediate help with repeated note treatment. You can use the resources listed above for even more.

Eventually you will want to learn how to make those decisions yourself, but that can come later—as you begin to feel more comfortable at the organ.

Work with your priesthood leaders in selecting hymns from among the resources on that list that are available to you, spending your time learning to play them as well as you can. For now, take the time to look at the example from each of these resources that is included with this course, and compare it with the original score in the hymnbook. Notice how some of the repeated notes are tied, while others are left to be played as written. Some of the many considerations that lead the editor to add those ties are *introduced* later in this lesson for those who are interested. If you are satisfied with relying on the prepared scores, continue through the next topic and then stop the lesson.

[Dynamic expression via the expression pedals]

The expression pedal (or pedals), introduced in lesson 1, are commonly used in two ways: first, to set the general volume level of the organ; and second, to change the volume level during a piece. When an organ is installed, it is usually voiced—or its volume level adjusted—so that it can be played under normal circumstances with the expression pedal (or pedals)—not the crescendo pedal—fully opened. When playing a congregational hymn, you should be able to open them fully and then (usually) leave them alone throughout the hymn. Adjusting the volume through wise stop choice is standard procedure. If the organ is simply too loud, first try reducing your stop combination (such as removing chorus mixtures, reeds, or 2-foot principal stops). If that does not solve the problem, then try closing the expression pedals slightly—up to one-fourth of the pedal stroke. If that is better, try setting the pedals in that position *every time* you play congregational hymns, making further volume adjustments by skillful combination of stops. This procedure will help take some of the guess work out of setting the volume for congregational hymn accompaniment.

Use a similar procedure for preludes and postludes, but you should feel freer to change the volume level during the piece. Some composers mark crescendos and diminuendos in the music, and you can follow those markings with the expression pedals. In expressive pieces, even if there are no dynamic markings in the score, it may be appropriate to outline some of the phrases by subtle and tasteful opening and closing of the expression pedals. Here is a short example:

\*\*\*example of a hymn prelude with crescendo and diminuendo markings—two phrases

Your pedaling plan needs to allow one foot—usually the right foot—to leave the pedal keys whenever it is needed to operate the expression pedal. Sometimes a foot can only be freed up for a moment, but a long crescendo or diminuendo can still be executed. Open or close the expression pedal in several stages with quick and slight taps of the foot, as in the following example:

\*\*\*Schubert Litany, with the intermittent tapping of the expression pedal to affect the crescendo

In church or classical organ playing, you should never pump the expression pedal back and forth regularly, as is often done on home spinet organs or in some theater organ settings. Observing this very important distinction of style helps to set the stage for worship.

If you have two expression pedals, such as a Swell pedal and a Great/Pedal expression pedal, you can choose to operate them independently or together. To operate them together, place a single foot flat on the crack that separates the two pedals. Be sure that both heel and toe are securely planted. If your organ is equipped with an “All Swells” or “Great/Pedal on Swell” stop tab or thumb piston, this may be accomplished electronically. When engaged, the Swell expression pedal will control the volume of the entire organ.

This concludes our discussion of the simplest way to deal with repeated notes, and using the expression pedals. If you wish to learn about making *your own* decisions regarding repeated notes, the remainder of this lesson introduces that topic. Otherwise, you can stop this lesson and move on to lesson 11.

[Making decisions on repeated notes; the second way—apply a few rules or guidelines in making your own decisions]

As mentioned earlier, the time will come in your hymn playing when you will want or need to make your own decisions regarding the treatment of repeated notes. But the simplest way—relying on the decisions of others—offers both an easier way of beginning, and a good set of models for making your own decisions.

This brings us to a second, more complex way to deal with repeated notes: apply a few “rules” or guidelines derived by someone else in making your own decisions. Richard Elliott’s section titled “Repeated Notes” in the *OrganTutor Workbook*, Carol Dean’s rules given at the beginning of her book, and any notes you might have from organ workshops or training sessions are good examples. The remainder of this lesson will offer a few specific guidelines for dealing with repeated notes in this manner.

[The third way—learn the musical results of tying vs. repeating, applying them appropriately in each situation]

But there is a third way to learn how to deal with repeated notes: learn the musical results of various ways to treat repeated notes, listen as you apply them in the hymns, and use the one that seems most appropriate in a given situation. The *OrganTutor Organ 101* lesson titled, “Hymn Playing—Repeated Notes” uses this approach. The section in the *OrganTutor Workbook* titled “Repeated Notes, Tying, and Accent in Hymn Playing” presents several case studies of repeated-note treatment. This approach takes time to learn and apply, but is musically very satisfying. However, we encourage you to *wait* to pursue this way until after you are rather fluent in the basic techniques and skills introduced in this course.

Before going into any detail, be sure that dealing with the repeated notes takes its proper place as just one step in an effective plan for learning the hymn. You will be most successful marking the score with textual and musical phrasing *before* dealing with the repeated notes, and then waiting until *afterwards* to mark fingering and pedaling.

[The main principles]

To set the stage for the “rules” or guidelines that you can use in making your own decisions, here are the **main principles** that “fuel” them. Your treatment of repeated notes should:

1. clarify the soprano line (this is most important).
2. It should reflect the relative strength of the beats within the measure.

3. Your treatment of repeated notes should achieve an appropriate balance between rhythm and flow. And:
4. It should reflect the textual phrasing.

Now I will simply list the rules without explanation. After listing them, we will apply them together in playing a hymn.

[The “rules” for those working in both shortcut and polish mode]

First, here are the “**rules**”—the items that are mostly set in stone. And, by the way, these should be dealt with in this order:

1. Repeated notes *between two soprano notes* are always repeated (that is, never tied)
2. Repeated notes that occur *over a phrase break* (in either the text or the music) are usually repeated
3. *Common tones between soprano and alto* when soprano ascends are tied, and when soprano descends are usually repeated.

In those hymns to be played in shortcut mode, begin by applying those three rules. Mark them in the score, practice each one, and then play and listen. If more tying is needed, tie some of the bass notes. If you tie over barlines, make sure that the beat is clear enough for the congregation to feel the first beat of each measure. Play and listen. In places that still feel choppy, add a tie between tenor or alto repeated notes. If it still feels choppy, learn to play with good independence of line (that is, in polish mode), and that should take care of the problem!

Let’s open the hymnbook to hymn 19, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” and prepare the score for playing in shortcut mode. Always mark your hymnbook in pencil. Refer also to the handout, “Sample of a Hymn Marked in Shortcut Mode.”

First, let’s identify the spirit of the hymn text and tune. The text is upbeat, but there is some dark contrast in the second verse. The word “brightly” is given, and the tempo is rather quick. While some would play a bright, jubilant hymn in a rather detached style, we will choose to play this and most hymns in a more legato style. We will strike a good balance between a smooth flow and a bright rhythm by choosing our ties carefully.

Before even considering ties, however, be aware that some hymns may not need any tying. Play through the hymn first with no ties. If you feel that some are needed, consider the rules just given, and the guidelines that will be described.

Listen as I play all the repeated notes as written, in legato style.

\*\*\*19, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” with no ties, in legato style

Repeating all the repeated notes as written seems too choppy, so we’ll add some ties. The simplest solution in shortcut mode would be adding ties in the bass part, and we will go over that solution in a few moments. But first let’s consider the manual parts.

We begin by applying the three rules. Mark a comma between all soprano notes that are repeated, such as between “thank” and “thee”, “guide” and “us”, “thank” and “thee” again, “light-” and “-en”, and so forth. Next, mark a vertical or diagonal line in the text wherever a phrase break should occur. In this hymn, let’s decide that such a break should occur in all verses after the word “days”, “gospel”, “rays”,

“hand”, and “command”. Finally, we need to identify all the common tones between soprano and alto where soprano ascends, and where soprano descends. The ascending common tones, which should be marked with a tie, occur at or after the syllables “we”, “God”, “to”, “these”, “we”, “send”, “be-” (in line 4), “boun-”, “and” (in line 5), and “love”. For the *descending* common tones, we’ll mark a straight line between the soprano notes to remind us to play legato, and a comma between the alto common tone to remind us to break. Descending common tones occur at or after the syllables “O”, “proph-”, “-et”, “lat-”, “for”, “bless-”, “-ing”, between “-te-” and “-ous”, “serve”, “thee”, and “to”. While it is not absolutely critical that these be played precisely when using shortcut mode, having the marks there will make it more likely. Now listen as I play the hymn as we have marked it so far, with the soprano repeated notes and the soprano/alto common tones intact:

\*\*\*19, soprano repeated notes and soprano/alto common tones intact

This is an improvement, but seems overly busy in the bass part. Tying repeated notes in the bass part of a hymn with so many repeated notes contributes much towards a smoother result. We’ll tie for four beats in the bass at “thank”, for three beats at “proph-et”, between “guide” and “us”, between “these” and “lat-ter”. The patterns that we have all ready treated will reappear throughout the hymn, so go through and mark similar passages in the same way. We’ll also tie unique passages between “light-en our minds”, and in the next-to-last measure, between “love to o-” and “thy com-”. Now listen as I play our final result, with soprano repeated notes and soprano/alto common tones intact, and with ties in the bass as described:

\*\*\*19, soprano repeated notes, soprano/alto common tones, and bass ties intact

The very frequent soprano/alto common tones in this hymn may seem overwhelming, especially when playing in shortcut mode, so here is a simpler alternative. Play ties in the bass part as just described, allowing the manual parts to be detached where independence is difficult—mainly at the descending common tones. The long notes in the bass created by the ties will help to offer some continuity, even though the manual parts will be detached. It may sound something like this:

\*\*\*19, bass ties intact, manual parts detached at points of difficulty with independence

Now that you have the hymn marked for playing in shortcut mode, try playing the first two lines from your score. Pull principals 8, 4, and 2 on the Great, and in the Pedal pull the main 16-foot stop and Great to Pedal. Plant your right foot on the center-most D, and your left foot on the low A. Follow as many of the markings in the manual parts as you can, and play the bass part with the ties that you have added. Don’t be too concerned with the details—instead, focus on playing without pauses! Stop the lesson and give it a try.

\*\*\*pause

Before discussing the guidelines, let’s review. To this point we have covered a few basic principles and rules for dealing with repeated notes. We applied the rules in the manual parts of a hymn, and added ties in the bass part. Because applying the rules as applied in the manual parts may become too complex for playing in shortcut mode, an alternative was presented. In this alternative approach, we play the ties in the pedal part and as many of the marks in the manual part as possible.

The remainder of this lesson explores some guidelines that offer help in a variety of circumstances.

[The “guidelines” for those wishing to go further at this stage]

When you need to make your own decisions on the treatment of repeated notes in hymn playing, first apply the rules given earlier. Then consider adding ties using the following “**guidelines**”. These are items that you may or may not choose to apply, depending on the specific situation. It will take practice to apply these, but the fine balance between flow and rhythm that can be achieved is worth it. The order of these items is not important:

- **The Barline.** Repeated notes over a barline are usually repeated. Exceptions might be considered occasionally in the bass.
- **Strong to weak.** Repeated notes from strong to weak beats are usually tied. The strong beats in 4/4 measures are 1 and 3; in 3/4 it is beat 1; in 6/8 it is the first and fourth pulses. The last beat of the measure, the “upbeat,” can also be rather strong.
- **Weak to strong.** Repeated notes from weak to strong beats are usually repeated.
- **Three or four voices.** When repeated notes occur in three or four voices and some tying is desirable, tie in one or two of the lower voices (often the bass, bass and alto, or the inner voices).
- **Two voices.** When repeated notes occur in two voices and some tying is desirable, tie in one voice.
- **One voice.** When repeated notes occur in only one voice, usually no tying is needed.
- **Drumbeat or drone effects.** If your decisions create a “drumbeat effect”—a pattern that repeats too much, or a “drone effect”—an excessively smooth passage, break up or change the pattern.

Learning to apply these guidelines goes beyond the scope of this course. When the time comes, try dealing with the repeated notes as we have done in this lesson. Mark the repeated notes first according to the three rules. Next, play the hymn without any additional ties. In places where it feels too choppy, try first adding ties in the bass part according to the guidelines. Finally, in places where it still feels too choppy, add ties in the inner parts according to the guidelines. You will find additional help in the *OrganTutor* workbook and computer tutorial, and in Belnap *Hymn Studies*.

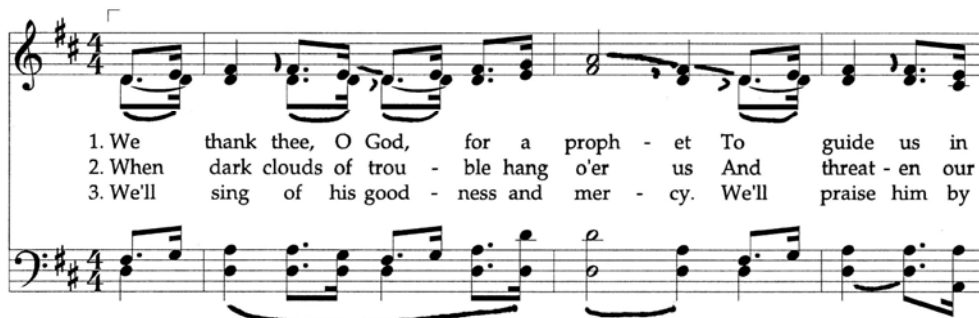
In summary, this has been The New LDS Organist Lesson 10: Hymn Playing in Polish Mode—Deciding When to Tie Repeated Notes. Three approaches were presented for dealing with repeated notes in hymn playing. The first, either playing the repeated notes as written or playing from a score that is arranged for organ, was strongly recommended for new LDS organists. Learning to use the expression pedals was also discussed. For hymn playing, you were encouraged to determine the best position for these pedals and to leave them in that position throughout. For preludes and postludes, the dynamics of the music can be brought out by subtly and tastefully opening and closing the expression pedals.

For those who want to make their own decisions regarding the treatment of repeated notes, the other two ways were explored. The second way was then introduced, apply a few “rules” or guidelines derived by someone else. Some resources were offered, and then a list of three basic rules was given. We applied these rules in hymn 19, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” and prepared the score to that point. Finding that the hymn was still too choppy, we added ties in the bass voice. The more optional guidelines were then introduced. The third way was then presented: learn the musical results of various ways to treat repeated notes, listen as you apply them in the hymns, and use the one that seems most appropriate in a given situation. You were encouraged to wait to explore this way until mastering the more basic hymn playing techniques.

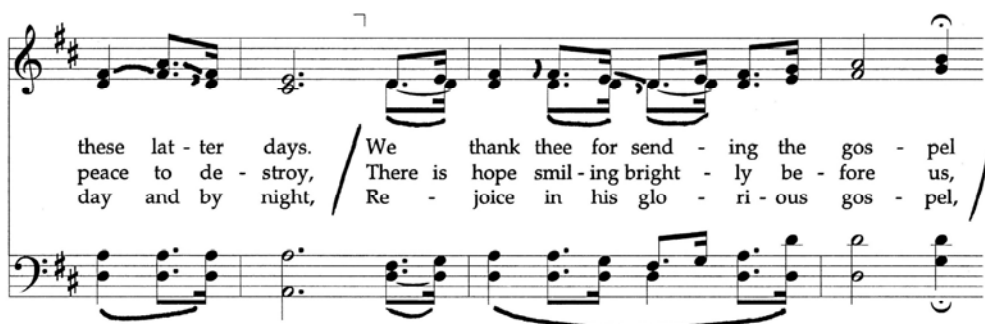
Lesson 11 is next, Playing Postlude Music Appropriately. You will learn how to select and play postlude music in a manner appropriate for the sacrament service. Also, you will learn how to build various types of solo combinations to be for use in prelude and postlude music.

Happy practicing!

# Sample of a Hymn Marked in Shortcut Mode



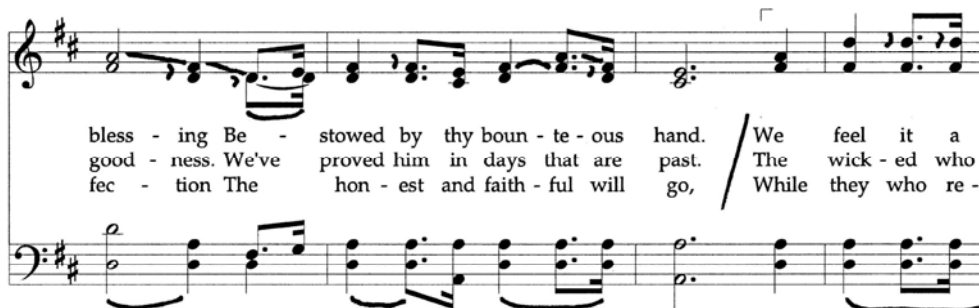
1. We thank thee, O God, for a proph - et To guide us in  
2. When dark clouds of trou - ble hang o'er us And threat - en our  
3. We'll sing of his good - ness and mer - cy. We'll praise him by



these lat - ter days. / We thank thee for send - ing the gos - pel  
peace to de - stroy, / There is hope smil - ing bright - ly be - fore us,  
day and by night, / Re - joice in his glo - ri - ous gos - pel, /



To light - en our minds with its rays. / We thank thee for ev - e - ry  
And we know that de - liv - rance is nigh. / We doubt not the Lord nor his  
And bask in its life - giv - ing light. / Thus on to e - ter - nal per -



bless - ing Be - stowed by thy boun - te - ous hand. / We feel it a  
good - ness. We've proved him in days that are past. / The wick - ed who  
fec - tion The hon - est and faith - ful will go, / While they who re -



plea - sure to serve thee And love to o - bey thy com - mand.  
fight a - gainst Zi - on Will sure - ly be smit - ten at last. /  
ject this glad mes - sage Shall nev - er such hap - pi - ness know. /

# Sample from *Hymns from the L.D.S.* *Hymnal Marked for the Organ* by Carol Dean

## Father in Heaven, We Do Believe "Integer Vitae"

180

*With conviction* ♩ = 96

1. Fa - ther in Heav'n, we do be - lieve. The pro - mise Thou hast made;  
 2. We now re - pent of all our sin. And come with bro - ken heart,  
 3. O Lord, ac - cept us while we pray. And all our sins for - give;  
 4. Hum - bly we take the sa - cra - ment. In Je - sus' ble - ssed name;

Thy word with meek - ness we re - ceive. Just as Thy Saints have said.  
 And to Thy co - v'nant en - ter in. And choose the bet - ter part.  
 New life im - part to us this day. And bid the sin - ners live.  
 Let us re - ceive thru' co - ve - nant. The Spi - rit's heav'n - ly flame.

Text: Parley P. Pratt, 1807-1857  
Music: Jane Romney Crawford, 1883-1956

For sacrament: Verses 1 - 4  
For baptism: Verses 1-3, 5-6

Most of the hymns in the LDS hymnbook are marked in this manner. Contact Carol Dean at [carolorg@msn.com](mailto:carolorg@msn.com)



# Sample from *Three-Staff Hymn* *Accompaniments* by Robert Cundick and Don Cook

Louis M. Gottschalk

hymn no. 170

Aimed at ease in performance, this four-part version offers a separate pedal staff and a good treatment for the repeated notes. Fingering, pedaling, and phrasing must be added as has been done below.

*Worshipfully* (♩ = 72)

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves: Treble Clef (Right Hand), Bass Clef (Left Hand), and Bass Clef (Pedal). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Worshipfully" with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The score includes extensive fingering (1-5) and phrasing slurs. Dynamic markings include piano (p). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

# Redeemer of Israel

## Example of Fully-Prepared Score

① Intro: SA trumpets (duet then accomp.)

Confidently ♩ = 84-100

*Gt* 1. Re - deem - er of Is - rael, Our on - ly de - light, On  
 2. We know he is com - ing To gath - er his sheep And  
*man.* 3. How long we have wan - dered As strang - ers in sin, And  
 3/1 4. As chil - dren of Zi - on, Good tid - ings for us. The

whom for a bless - ing we call, Our shad - ow by day And our  
 lead them to Zi - on in love, For why in the val - ley Of  
 cried in the des - ert for thee! Our foes have re - joiced When our  
 to - kens al - read - y ap - pear. Fear not, and be just, 4 For the

pil - lar by night, Our King, our De - liv - 'rer, our all!  
 death should they weep Or in the lone wil - der - ness rove? +sw/gt  
 sor - rows they've seen, But Is - rael will short - ly be free. ②  
 king - dom is ours. The hour of re - demp - tion is near.

Text: William W. Phelps, 1792-1872; adapted from Joseph Swain, 1761-1796  
 Included in the first LDS hymnbook, 1835.  
 Music: Freeman Lewis, 1780-1859

① SW: Tr 8  
 Gt: Pr 8 4 2  
 Pd: Pr 16 8, Gt/Pd

② Gt: + Mix  
 + SW/Gt  
 Pd: + Tr 16  
 + SW/Pd

The following have been added into the score:

- Text*
- Keywords underlined
  - Phrasing (given with slurs, breath marks [V] and verse numbers in the text)

*Plan for treatment of repeated notes*  
 (ties only)

*Fingering and pedaling*  
 (note changes in the last two measures to allow for right-hand stop changing between verses)

- Music—Instructions for the introduction*
- Modified “boundaries” (marked with double diagonal lines)
  - Idea (soprano and alto duet, then accompanied)
  - Registration (trumpet duet alone, then with flue accompaniment)

- Registrational plan*
- Combination listed for pistons 1 and 2
  - Manual indications (given at the beginning of each verse)
  - Stop change indications (given at the end of each verse)

## We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet

*Brightly* ♩ = 76-92

1. We thank thee, O God, for a proph - et To guide us in  
 2. When dark clouds of trou - ble hang o'er us And threat - en our  
 3. We'll sing of his good - ness and mer - cy. We'll praise him by

these lat - ter days. We thank thee for send - ing the gos - pel  
 peace to de - stroy, There is hope smil - ing bright - ly be - fore us,  
 day and by night, Re - joice in his glo - ri - ous gos - pel,

To light - en our minds with its rays. We thank thee for ev - e - ry  
 And we know that de - liv' - rance is nigh. We doubt not the Lord nor his  
 And bask in its life - giv - ing light. Thus on to e - ter - nal per -

bless - ing Be - stowed by thy boun - te - ous hand. We feel it a  
 good - ness. We've proved him in days that are past. The wick - ed who  
 fec - tion The hon - est and faith - ful will go, While they who re -

plea - sure to serve thee And love to o - bey thy com - mand.  
fight a - gainst Zi - on Will sure - ly be smit - ten at last.  
ject this glad mes - sage Shall nev - er such hap - pi - ness know.

*Text:* William Fowler, 1830–1865

*Music:* Caroline Sheridan Norton, 1808–ca. 1877

Doctrine and Covenants 21:1–5

Mosiah 2:41