

Faith's Review and Expectation

John Newton, Olney Hymns (London: W. Oliver, 1779)
included in the 1841 Nauvoo Hymnal

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, Who called me here below,
Shall be forever mine.

*An additional stanza by an unknown author
appeared as early as 1829 from the Baptist
Songster's hymn 'Jerusalem My Happy Home.'*

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Latter-day Saint View of Grace

Christian churches tend to categorize each other by whether they believe we are saved by Faith alone, by Grace alone, or by Works alone - and each view can be completely supported by the teachings in the New Testament. The Latter-day Saint Church is one that has been assigned by many to the "Works alone" category. Unfortunately many Latter-day Saints also believe this. A simple reading of the scriptures with a truly open mind is enough to convince any reader that ALL THREE are required for salvation. For those who do not understand the Latter-day Saint view of Grace, which includes most Latter-day Saints, I present this two-minute Sunday School lesson.

What is Grace?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, late member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "God's grace consists in his love, mercy, and condescension toward his children. The creation of the earth, life itself, the atonement of Christ, the plan of salvation, kingdoms of immortal glory hereafter, and the supreme gift of eternal life - all these things come by the grace of him whose we are." (Bruce R. McConkie, MORMON DOCTRINE (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc., 1966) pg. 338-339)

Grace, Faith, and Works

Elder George Teasdale, late member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "We represent Christ by accepting His doctrine. When we are in favor of the doctrine of Christ we manifest our faith by our works, and consequently are saved by grace and are justified by faith, because we manifest our faith by our works. There is the key... "I pray God our eternal Father that we may have grace to overcome

temptation, obey His commandments and in the end be saved in His kingdom through Jesus Christ." (Conference Report, April 1899)

The key phrases in this quote are:

"saved by grace"...

"justified by faith" ...

"manifest our faith by our works"

What does the Book of Mormon say?

2 Nephi 25:23: "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."

A prophet explains this Book of Mormon passage:

"As a Church, we are in accord with Nephi, who said, "it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (2 Ne. 25:23.)

"By grace the Savior accomplished His atoning sacrifice so that all mankind will attain immortality. By His grace, and by our faith in His atonement and repentance of our sins, we receive the strength to do the works necessary that we otherwise could not do by our own power. By His grace we receive an endowment of blessing and spiritual strength that may eventually lead us to eternal life if we endure to the end. By His grace we become more like His divine personality. Yes, it is "by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (2 Ne. 25:23.)

"What is meant by 'after all we can do'? 'After all we can do' includes extending our best effort. 'After all we can do' includes living His commandments. 'After all we can do' includes loving our fellowmen and praying for those who regard us as their adversary. 'After all we can do' means clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and giving 'succor to those who stand in need of our succor' (Mosiah 4:15) - remembering that what we do unto one of the least

of God's children, we do unto Him. (See Matt. 25:34-40; D&C 42:38.)

"'After all we can do' means leading chaste, clean, pure lives, being scrupulously honest in all our dealings and treating others the way we would want to be treated." (Ezra Taft Benson, "After All We Can Do", Christmas Devotional, Salt Lake City, Utah, Dec. 9, 1982)

"Therefore ye are justified of faith and works, through grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to them only who are of the law, but to them also who are of the faith of Abraham; who is that father of us all." (Romans 4:16, Inspired Version)

...or, as one of my children explained:

"Grace is everything God and Christ does for us, which is, like, everything, right? We prove ourselves worthy of everything they do for us through, like, having Faith in them. And don't we prove we have Faith in them through how we act and what we do...? Isn't that, like, what we call our Works?"

Many Latter-day Saints think this is opposite everything they have been taught. Let me make one more thing clear: we are 'saved' through the love and grace of God and through the atonement of Jesus Christ. However, we are 'exalted' (rewarded) to whatever degree of glory in His presence we are worthy of by our works and actions in this mortal life. So please note the difference between 'Salvation' and 'Exaltation'. As the movie 'Man's Search for Happiness' has been teaching us for over forty years, Salvation is a gift, but Exaltation we must earn.

Latter-day Saint Hymnal References to Grace

The word 'Grace' appears thirty-eight times in the current (1985) Latter-day Saint hymnal. These references refer to the full spectrum of definitions of the word. It may surprise some who think

'Grace' is a bad word just how often they refer to it in their congregational singing. Here is a sampling:

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;
But with joy wend your way.
Though hard to you this journey may appear,
Grace shall be as your day?
(#30, Come, Come, Ye Saints)

Glory to God on high! Let heav'n and earth reply.
Praise ye his name. His love and grace adore,
Who all our sorrows bore. Sing aloud evermore:
Worthy the Lamb!
(#67, Glory to God on High)

Tell of him in loud acclaim.
Sing the wonders of his name.
Sing with joy for grace made known,
Wondrous love to all men shown.
Tell of him in loud acclaim.
Sing the wonders of his name.
(#73, Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice)

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.
(#85, How Firm a Foundation)

Might I enjoy the meanest place
Within thy house, O God of grace,
No tents of ease or thrones of pow'r
Should tempt my feet to leave thy door.
All needful grace will God bestow
And crown that grace with glory too.
He gives us all things and withholds
No blessings due to upright souls.
(#88, Great God, Attend While Zion Sings)

Father, thy children to thee now raise
Glad, grateful songs for thy love and grace...?
(#91, Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise)

When your heart was filled with anger,
Did you think to pray?
Did you plead for grace, my brother,
That you might forgive another
Who had crossed your way?
(#140, Did You Think to Pray?)

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
Believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my ev'ry care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!
(#142, Sweet Hour of Prayer)

Sweetly swells the solemn sound
While we bring our gifts around
Of broken hearts, of broken hearts,
As a willing sacrifice,
Showing what his grace imparts.
(#146, Gently Raise the Sacred Strain)

My heart shall triumph in my Lord
And bless his works and bless his word.
Thy works of grace, how bright they shine!
How deep thy counsels, how divine!
(#147, Sweet Is the Work)

Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing;
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.
Let us each, thy love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace?
(#163, Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessings)

My days, unclouded as they pass,
And ev'ry onward rolling hour
Are monuments of wondrous grace,
And witness to thy love and pow'r.
(#164, Great God, to Thee My Evening Song)

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
(#166, Abide with Me!)

Oh, thank the Lord for grace and gifts
Renewed in latter days,
For truth and light to guide us right
In wisdom's pleasant ways.
(#167, Come, Let Us Sing an Evening Hymn)

As now we take the sacrament,
Our thoughts are turned to thee,
Thou Son of God, who lived for us,
Then died on Calvary.
We contemplate thy lasting grace,
Thy boundless charity;
To us the gift of life was giv'n For all eternity.
(#169, As Now We Take the Sacrament)

God, our Father, hear us pray;
Send thy grace this holy day.
As we take of emblems blest,
On our Savior's love we rest.
Grant us, Father, grace divine;
May thy smile upon us shine.
As we eat the broken bread.
Thine approval on us shed.
(#170, God Our Father, Hear Us Pray)

Oh, blessed hour! communion sweet!
When children, friends, and teachers meet
And, in remembrance of his grace,
Unite in sweetest songs of praise.
(#176, 'Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love)

Prepare our minds that we may see
The beauties of thy grace,
Salvation purchased on that tree
For all who seek thy face.
(#178, O Lord of Hosts)

I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.

I tremble to know that for me he was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he bled and
died.
(#193, I Stand All Amazed)

No creature is so lowly,
No sinner so depraved,
But feels thy presence holy,
And thru thy love is saved.
Tho craven friends betray thee,
They feel thy love's embrace;
The very foes who slay thee
Have access to thy grace.
(#197, O Savior Thou Who Wearest a Crown)

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth;
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
(#204, Silent Night)

May we no more our pow'rs abuse,
But ways of truth and goodness choose;
Our God is pleased when we improve
His grace and seek his perfect love.
(#240, Know This, That Every Soul Is Free)

As thou thy Child didst fill
with wisdom, love, and might,
To know and do thy will
and teach thy ways aright,
Our children bless, in ev'ry place,
That they may all behold thy face,
And, knowing thee, may grow in grace.
(#296, Our Father, by Whose Name)

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord his children sever;
Unto them his grace he showeth,
And their sorrows all he knoweth.
(#299, Children of Our Heavenly Father)

Ye who are called to labor and minister for God,
Blest with the royal priesthood,
 appointed by his word
To preach among the nations
 the news of gospel grace,
And publish on the mountains
 salvation, truth, and peace:
(#321, Ye Who Are Called to Labor)

Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
 For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
 Above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
 From sea to shining sea.
(#338, America the Beautiful)