

Title: **DARK PROVIDENCES CLEARED**
 IN DUE TIME

Text: John 13:1-20

Subject: *Lessons from the Foot Washing*

Date: Sunday Morning — July 18, 2010

Tape: John #91

Reading: *Psalm 77:1-20*

PSALM 77

*To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun,
A Psalm of Asaph.*

1. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2. **In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord:** my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3. **I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.** Selah.

4. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

7. **Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?**

8. **Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?**

9. **Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in**

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anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

10. And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

11. I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

14. Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people,

the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

16. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

17. The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

18. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

19. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

INTRODUCTION

How many times have you seen or known some terribly painful, traumatic, almost devastating thing, and thought to

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yourself, “What good can come of this? How is this going to work for good? How will this benefit anyone? Can this be honoring to God?” I have!

Illustrations: **Personal tragedies:** — *Wayne’s murder* — *Todd’s Sickness* — *Danette’s Aneurism* — *Tina’s Attempts* — *Amanda’s Aneurism* —
Earthly Disasters — *Famine* — *War* — *Disease* — *Terrorism*

We know that our heavenly Father is too wise to err, too strong to fail, and too good to do wrong. Yet, when tragedies come close to home, we cannot help asking, “Why did this thing happen?” We may not openly say it, but we ask in frustration, perhaps in anger or resentment — “God, what are you doing?”

If God the Holy Spirit will enable me, I want to give you a message from our Lord that will help to prepare you for the dark providences we face in this world. The title of my message is, **“DARK PROVIDENCES CLEARED IN DUE TIME.”** In John 13, as our Savior began to wash his disciples’ feet, Peter was confused by the Master’s conduct and said to him, in verse 6, — **“Lord, Dost thou wash my feet?”** **Then, in verse 7, “Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”**

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When Jacob awoke from his dream, he said, “**Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not**” (Genesis 28:16). When Samson’s strength was gone, we are told, “**He wist not that the Lord was departed from him**” (Judges 16:20). What is said of our Savior’s presence and absence, his goings and comings, may also be said of his doings — “**What I do,**” he says, “**thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.**”

Specifically this word from our Savior in John 13:7, “**What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter**” specifically refers to our Lord’s act of washing his disciples’ feet. But it is a statement that is clearly applicable to God’s providence.

Proposition: The fact is, the design or intention of God’s works of providence are often, if not usually, hidden from his people; but they shall be revealed in due time.

William Cowper’s great hymn puts it like this...

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

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Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break,
In blessing on your head.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain.
God is His own Interpreter;
And He will make it plain.”

Let's read our text together. Then, I want to show you six things that are clearly set before us in this passage of Holy Scripture. May God the Holy Spirit, who inspired John to record this event, now teach us its lessons.

JOHN 13:1-20

1. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto

him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

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13. Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14. **If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.**

15. For **I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.**

16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither

20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send

he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17. **If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**

18. I speak not of you all: **I know whom I have chosen:** but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me **hath lifted up his heel against me.**

19. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am (he).

receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

IMMUTABLE LOVE

First, the love of Christ for us is immutable and incessant (v. 1).

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out

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of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”

(John 13:1)

The love of Christ for his elect is a love surpassing thought. There is nothing like it in this world below. The narrow, self-centered thoughts, and words, and deeds of humanity cannot comprehend it. Our Savior knew that his disciples would all soon forsake him. Yet, he loved them to the end.

- His love for us is from everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3).
- His love for us is for everlasting (Romans 8:39).
- Christ delights to receive sinners (Luke 15:2).
- Once he has received a sinner, he will never reject him for any reason (John 6:37).

GOD’S ABSOLUTE DOMINION

Second, learn this: **God’s dominion over all things is absolute.** Even the most base, vile, and despicable acts of reprobate men and women are under the absolute rule of our God and heavenly Father (vv. 2-3). Even the work of Satan himself is under the rule and control of our God and Savior (Psalm 76:10; Proverbs 16:4).

“He employs the wicked themselves to carry on his work, and make their wicked designs to contribute to

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advancement of his holy and glorious design; as he did make the treason of Judas, the sentence of Pilate, the malice of the Jews, to contribute for the work of redemption.” (Ralph Erskine)

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” (Psalms 76:10)

“The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” (Proverbs 16:4)

Yes, our heavenly Father wisely and sovereignly uses his enemies and ours, contrary to their will, to do that which will advance his cause, as when the Philistines were constrained to send the ark of God back to Israel (1 Samuel 5:1-7:17).

- Dagon’s Falls
- Hemorrhoids upon the Inhabitants of Ashdod
- Golden Stones and Golden Mice
- 50,000 Men of Bethshemesh Slain
- Children of Israel Repented and Put Away Their Strange gods, the gods of Baalim and Ashtaroth
- Samuel Offered a Suckling Lamb — Christ
- Philistines were Conquered
- Israel Delivered

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- An Altar Built to Jehovah

JUDAS' BRAZEN HYPOCRISY

Third, nothing in all the world is more corrupt or more callous than the heart of a hypocrite. There sat Judas at the table with the Son of God and his disciples. But he had already struck his deal with the Jew's priests to betray the Savior (v. 2). What brazen hypocrisy!

“And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;” (John 13:2)

Judas stands as a beacon to warn us of what deep corruption may be found in the hearts of very religious people.

- He shows us how far a man may go in religion and yet be rotten at heart.
- He shows us how much a person may know about the things of God and yet not know God.
- He shows us how high one may rise in the eyes of men and in religious office and yet be unconverted
- Judas shows us how confident a person may be that he is saved, even when he is on the brink of hell!

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We must not be surprised, overwhelmed, or overly disturbed when we find such hypocrites among God's saints. Not all who are washed in the waters of baptism have been washed in the blood of Christ (v. 10). — “**They are not all Israel which are of Israel**” (Romans 9:6).

“Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.” (John 13:10)

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5)

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (2 Peter 1:10)

BLOOD WASHED

Fourth, I must again declare to you, eternity bound sinners, that we must be washed in the blood of Christ. The only way we can be saved is by being washed in the blood of Christ. The only saved sinner is the blood washed sinner (vv. 8-10).

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“Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. ⁹ Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. ¹⁰ Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.” (John 13:8-10)

What can wash away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!
Oh, precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow!
No other fount I know —
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

(Zechariah 13:1) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

(1 Peter 1:18-21) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before

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the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, ²¹ Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

(1 John 1:7-9) “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin... — ...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We cannot be saved unless Christ has washed us in his blood (1 Corinthians 6:11).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

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We must be washed in the blood judicially. That took place for all God's elect when the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption and obtained eternal redemption for us at Calvary (Hebrews 1:3).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ³ Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrews 1:1-3)

We must be washed in the Savior's blood experimentally, too. That takes place in regeneration and effectually calling, when God the Holy Spirit applies the cleansing blood to our hearts, giving us faith in Christ, purging our consciences of guilt before God, bringing life and immortality to light by the Gospel (Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:14).

(Titus 3:3-7) “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. ⁴ But after that the kindness and

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love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶ Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; ⁷ That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

(Hebrews 9:12-14) “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Even those who are cleansed and forgiven need a daily application to the blood of Christ for daily pardon. — “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin” (1 John 1:7, 9).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

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Illustration: Bathing in the sea — Wash sand from their feet.

HUMILITY EXEMPLIFIED

Fifth, in this passage of Scripture the Lord Jesus gives us a blessed example of genuine humility and love (vv. 5-17).

(John 13:5-17) “After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. ⁶ Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? ⁷ Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. ⁸ Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. ⁹ Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. ¹⁰ Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. ¹¹ For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. ¹² So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³

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Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. ¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. ¹⁷ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

True humility and love willingly condescends to do whatever is needed to meet the needs of those who are the objects of our love. Though it is apparent that our Savior washed Judas' feet, too, the message is in what he did for his disciples. — **The Son of God stooped to wash his disciples' feet, and he still does!** — When may it be said that Christ stoops to wash his disciples' feet in a spiritual sense?

- When he shows us the foulness of our feet — Our Sin!
- When he makes us dip our feet in the fountain of His blood (Zechariah 13:1).

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away!

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(1 John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

- When he enables us, with tears of repentance, to wash and kiss His feet (Luke 7:38; Ezekiel 16:63).

(Ezekiel 16:63) “That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.”

This self-denying, loving service is our responsibility to one another in this world (vv. 14-15).

“If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:14-15)

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In all things, Christ's example is our rule of life (1 John 3:16-17). And **all who follow our Lord's example find happiness and satisfaction in doing so.** — **“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”**(v. 17). Nothing brings greater joy to devoted saints than the privilege and grace of...

- Obedience to Christ!
- Usefulness to His people!

PROVIDENCE CLEARED

Sixth, all the dark mysteries and painful experiences of God's providence will be cleared up for God's saints in God's time (v. 7).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”
(John 13:7)

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace.
Behind the frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face!

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain.

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God is His own Interpreter;
And He will make it plain!

Illustrations:

- Jacob's Sorrows — "*All these things are against me!*"
- Joseph's Imprisonment.
- Moses' Commission — "*The tail of the bricks.*"
- Haman's Gallows.
- Paul's Imprisonment at Philippi.
- The Shipwreck at Melita.

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary; thy way is in the seas, thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known" (Psalm 77:13, 19).

"Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep" (Psalm 36:6).

"The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Psalm 111: 2).

- Sometimes God's providence appears to contradict His promises — (Moses sent to deliver Israel – Exodus 5:21-23).

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- Sometimes God's acts of mercy and grace in providence look and feel like acts of wrath and judgment (Job).

ISAIAH 54:1-17

1. **Sing, O barren**, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

2. **Enlarge the place of thy tent**, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

3. For **thou shalt break forth** on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4. **Fear not**; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be

thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for **thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth**, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

5. For **thy Maker is thine husband**; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6. ¶For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

7. **For a small moment have I forsaken thee**; but

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with great mercies will I gather thee.

8. **In a little wrath** I hid my face from thee for a moment; but **with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,** saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

9. For this is **as the waters of Noah** unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but **my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed,** saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

11. ¶ **O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest,** and not comforted, behold, **I will**

lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12. And **I will** make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13. And **all thy children** shall be taught of the LORD; and **great shall be the peace** of thy children.

14. **In righteousness shalt thou be established:** thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

15. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: **whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.**

16. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument

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for his work; and I have judgment thou shalt created the waster to condemn. **This is the** destroy. **heritage of the servants of**

17. **No weapon** that is **the LORD,** and **their** formed against thee shall **righteousness is of me,** prosper; and every tongue saith the LORD. that shall rise against thee in

- Sometimes God appears to be favorable to the wicked and indifferent, at best, to the righteous (Psalm 73).
- Many, many things in this world are confusing to God's people. — *"What I do now, thou knowest not."*
- When God gave Abraham a son, he required Abraham to sacrifice his son.
- When Moses brought Israel up to Canaan, God refused to let him take Israel in to possess the land.
- When time came to build the temple, David died.
- Sometimes duty is set against duty (Father/Pastor).
- Sometimes prophets are set against prophets (1 Kings 13).
- God often lifts up with one hand and casts down with the other; heals with one and wounds with the other. — **The demon possessed Son** got worse when he first came to Christ (Mark 9:19, 26). — **The ruler of the Synagogue's daughter died** while Christ was walking

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with her father to heal her. — **Lazarus died** while the Savior waited!

APPLICATION

1. When we think the Lord is doing nothing, he is working for us!
2. When we think He has forsaken us, He is with us! (Song of Solomon 5)
3. When we think everything is against us, everything is loaded down with mercy for us!
4. Our Lord will not let us walk by sight here. He demands and deserves that we walk by faith!
5. “**What I do now thou knowest not; but thou shalt know hereafter.**” In due time, he will inform us.
 - Sometimes During The Trouble (Sandy Parks Conversion).
 - Sometimes Shortly Afterward.
 - Sometimes Long, Long Afterward. — (The Father who Packed a Bible in His Rebel Son’s Gear)
 - Certainly In That Great Day When All Things Are Made Known (Romans 11:33-36).

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴ For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who

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hath been his counsellor? ³⁵ Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? ³⁶ For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

Often I wonder why I must journey
Over a road so rugged and steep.
Why all the darkness? Why all the heartache?
Why must Your chosen so often weep?
Farther along we'll know more about it.
Farther along we'll understand why;
Cheer up, believer, trust your great Savior. —
We'll understand it all by and by.

Amen.