4th August 2025

Interpreter

"Till then we must content ourselves with interpreting what hath been already fulfilled."

Isaac Newton

Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John (1733)

In all that our church family is dealing with at present, there have been many deep and searching conversations about faith. Following one such exploration, I found an old hymn speaking to me in new ways: *God moves in a mysterious way,* by the 18th century hymn writer, William Cowper.

God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.
He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.
Deep in the dark and hidden mines, with never-failing skill,
He fashions all his bright designs and works his sov'reign will.

Refrain:
So God we trust in you. O God, we trust in you.
When tears are great and comforts few,
We hope in mercies ever new,
We trust in you.

Oh, fearful saints, new courage take: the clouds that you now dread
Are big with mercy and will break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense but trust him for his grace.
Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face.

God's purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan his work in vain.
God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.

You'll make of that what you will. But I will say this of myself: I know from experience that "blind belief is sure to err". Blind belief, therefore, is no use to me anymore. I know what it's like to "scan his works in vain" and to be overwhelmed when dark clouds gather. But I'm past that. So what am I left with? The glorious revelation that "God is his own interpreter". What I don't know doesn't matter. God "will make it plain", so why should I fret and fear, when blessings will break upon *my* head?

"God moves in a mysterious way" is the truth. So it's my job, in trusting that mystery, to be ready, open and aware, so that I'll know the interpretation of God's truth when it's plain enough for me to understand.

Prayer for today

When tears are great, and comforts few, may my trust help me find new mercies. Amen

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