

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF SIN

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“O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.”
Psalm 69:5.

IT seems, then, that the best of men have a measure of foolishness in them and that, sometimes, that foolishness shows itself. How gentle and tender ought we to be with others who are foolish when we remember how foolish we are, ourselves! How sincerely ought we to rejoice in Christ, as made of God unto us wisdom, when we see the folly that is bound up in our hearts and which too often shows itself in our talk and in our acts! Yet while the best of men have folly in them, it is one of the marks of a good man that he knows it to be folly and that he is willing to confess his sin before God. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” If we stand as the Pharisee stood in the Temple and cry, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are,” we shall go home, as the Pharisee did, without the justification which comes from God. It is the truly good man who stands afar off with the publican and cries, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner,” and he, also, shall go to his house “justified rather than the other.”

There is one solemn thought which deeply impresses the man who is right at heart, but who sees his own foolishness and sin and mourns it—and that thought is that *God* sees it—and sees it more perfectly than he sees it, himself. His own sight of it makes him repent and humble himself. And his knowledge of God's sight of it helps him to that repentance and humiliation. God sees everything concerning every man, but the most of men care not about God seeing them. They do not give it so much as a passing thought. It is the gracious man, the child of God who, from a broken heart, cries out, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.” And this it is that makes a Christian man so greatly value the precious blood of Christ and the perfect righteousness which Jesus Christ has worked out, albeit that Omniscience still perceives sin, yet Justice does not perceive it.

God knows we are sinners, but He imputes to all Believers the righteousness of Christ and looks upon them as they are in Him. He cleanses us in the precious blood of Jesus so that we are clean in His sight and, “accepted in the Beloved.” What a wonderful Atonement is that which hides from God that which cannot be hidden, so that God does not see what, in another sense, He must always see—and forgets what it is impossible for Him, in another sense, ever to forget! In a just and judicial way, God casts our sin behind His back and ceases to see iniquity in His people because they are clean, every whit, through washing in the—

*“Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins.”*

Now, looking at our text, I am going to call attention to the great Truth of the Omniscience of God, desiring that each one of us may say from our heart, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.”

I. First, concerning God's knowledge of man's sin, I remark that IT MUST BE SO. I am not going to argue, but just to talk a little to set this Truth of God before you with greater assurance of certainty.

God must know our foolishness, for, first, He is *infinite in knowledge*. We cannot conceive of a God whose knowledge is limited. That condition belongs to the finite, the creature, but not to the Infinite, the Creator, the great First Cause of everything! God knows all the past, all the present and all the future. He knows all the things that might have been and are not. He knows what might have come out of certain germs and what yet may come, which at the present

seems to be far remote. All knowable things must be known to the Most High—the very Nature of God implies it and, therefore, He must know *my foolishness*, for I know something of it myself—He must know much more than I know and my sins are not hid from him, for they are not altogether hidden from myself. God must know perfectly what I only perceive in part, though that partial perception is terrible to my own heart. Yes, the infinite knowledge of God is an absolute certainty and, consequently, His knowledge of the folly and sin of every heart is beyond all question.

Moreover, God is *everywhere present*. At all times, He is in every place and, therefore, our foolishness and sin must be known to Him. It is not merely that you committed a folly or a sin and that it was *reported* to God. No, but He was there during the doing of it. What? Though the blinds were drawn and the doors were fast closed? Yet HE was there and all through the sin He stood by you and observed your every thought and every movement! There is no darkness that hides from Him, nor any other form of screen that can be used to shut out the glances of the eyes of the Eternal. He does not see from a distance, but He is on the spot. You cannot conceive of a place where God is not, for He fills all space! There could no more be a boundary to His existence than to His knowledge and, therefore, we are sure that our text is true, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.”

Moreover, God is also *everywhere perceiving*. He is never a blind God, nor a blindfolded God. His knowledge is never, even for a moment, stopped and rendered intermittent, but, as His Presence is on the highest hill and in the deepest cavern, far away on the wild sea or in the plain where the foot of man has scarcely made a track, so, in that Presence there is a constant sight, an unflinching observation at all times. You would not, I hope, reduce God to the level of One who has eyes and sees not! “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” The fact that eyesight and hearing come from Him proves how abundantly He possesses those faculties, Himself. He sees and He hears in every place and there was never anything done of man without His knowledge. The secret murder, the silent plot where everybody had sworn an oath of secrecy—all was known to God. There was never a thought in a human mind, although the man had not uttered it in words even to himself, but what the Lord perceived it. Does not this make the fact certain that He knows my foolishness and that my sins are not hidden from Him? Infinite in knowledge, everywhere present, and everywhere perceiving everything, He must know my foolishness and my sin. Dr. Watts forcibly expresses this idea in his hymn on God's Omnipresence—

*“In all my vast concerns with You,
In vain my soul would try
To shun Your Presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of Your eyes.
Your all-surrounding sight surveys
My rising and my rest.
My public walks, my private ways,
And secrets of my breast.
If winged with beams of morning light,
I fly beyond the west.
Your hand, which must support my flight,
Would soon betray my rest.
If over my sins I think to draw
The curtains of the night.
Those flaming eyes that guard Your Law
Would turn the shades to light.
The beams of noon, the midnight hour,
Are both alike to Thee—
Oh, may I never provoke that power
From which I cannot flee!”*

Beside that, God is *always reading the heart*. We have heard a good deal about thought-reading. I hope that the most of you will never be gifted in that direction, for such a power would make it very unpleasant for many. One said that he wished that he had a window in his bosom, that everybody might read his thoughts. I think that if he were at all a sensible man, he would need to pull the blind down before long! There is something which, now and again, crosses the purest mind which he would not wish another to perceive—and he who watches his thoughts with an exemplary vigi-

lance will sometimes be off his guard and tolerate an imagination which he would not wish to pollute any other person's mind. But though we cannot read each other's hearts, God can read them. There is no possibility of lying to the Lord so as to deceive Him. He reads the hypocrite when he puts on his fine vestments and prays his prayer in the most devout style—and even when he gets into his closet and bows before his God only after a formal manner. We may have performed what looked like a holy deed. We may have sung a solemn Psalm. We may have appeared unto our fellow men to be among the excellent of the earth, but if it is not really so, no one can hide himself in secret, or conceal the deceit of his spirit in the dark place from the eyes of the Most High.

Though you should climb to the top of Carmel in the pride of your heart, or go down with Jonah to the bottoms of the mountains in your deceit, yet shall He find you out, strip you, unmask you and set you in the sunlight to be despised of men and all intelligent beings, as they, also, shall see your lies. O Beloved, God must have seen my foolishness! And my sins cannot be hid from Him since He reads the secrets of the heart and the tortuous passages of the soul are easily threaded by His unerring wisdom!

We are sure, also, that He knows our foolishness and our sin because *He knows what is yet to be*. To know what men have already done is a light matter compared with knowing what men will yet do. There are black crimes which are recorded by Moses in Scripture which Moses never could have known if God had not first seen them and then communicated the knowledge of them to him. There are many incidents mentioned in the Pentateuch which could only have come to the knowledge of Moses through the Revelation of the Spirit of God and, therefore, God Himself knew all about those events. But, throughout the prophecies there are intimations of the sins of men that would yet be committed and, more especially, that sin of sins—the Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ—that crime of crimes is described in all its dreadful details!

Now, if God saw all that and recorded it by the agency of His servants centuries before it happened, there can be no hope that anything which has ever occurred has escaped the observation of the Most High! You are all books and every page is open to the eyes of the great Reader who reads you from the first letter to the last! There is nothing which any man can possibly conceal from God. Men love what they call, secrets, yet there are no such things in very truth where God is concerned, for He observes everything! It matters not what it may be—minute or majestic, malevolent or benevolent, a curse or a blessing—it all passes before that eye which never wearies or sleeps, or suffers anything to escape its notice! It is so, it must be so if God is God—He knows my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from Him.

II. Now let us just turn the current of our thought while I ask, concerning God's knowledge of man's sin, AFTER WHAT FASHION IS IT? If God knows, in what particular way does He know?

The answer is, that *it is complete knowledge*. The Lord knows us altogether. I must confess that I cower down beneath that thought. That the Lord should know my public service is sufficiently awe-striking—but that He should know my *private* thoughts—ah, this sinks me into the very dust! The Lord knows not only the action, but the *motive of the action*—all the thoughts that went with my action, all the pride and self-seeking that came after it—and spoiled it when it might have been praiseworthy. “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord ponders the hearts.” The word, “ponders,” means that He weighs us, He takes the specific gravity of our actions. They may cover a great surface, yet there may be no real substance in them at all—but the Lord weighs them as goldsmiths weigh the metal that is subjected to their test. He takes care not to be deceived by anything that is apparent to our fellow men. “The fining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold: but the Lord tries the hearts.” There is nothing hidden from God's eyes—every separate part of us is open to His perpetual inspection! Think of that. God's knowledge is complete and baffles all evasion.

It is also *the knowledge of a holy Being*. You, perhaps, know some people who see all they can, yet do not see all that can be seen. It is with them as it was with the lady who said to Turner, as she looked upon one of his notable paintings, “Mr. Turner, I have never seen anything like that.” “No,” replied the artist, “I don't suppose that you have seen it. Don't you wish that you could?” So, when God looks at a man's life, He sees infinitely more in it than the man ever saw in it, himself, or than all his fellow creatures have seen. The keen eyes of envy and of malice will detect a fault, if fault there is, but keener is the eye of perfect holiness! The Lord's eyes are as a flame of fire. Being, Himself, essential Truth, He truly discovers everything that is within us and makes no mistakes. When we are dealing with God, mistakes on His part are quite out of the question. He knows us after the manner of a perfectly holy Being and many a thing that looked white to us, is absolutely black to God! His eyes can see according to the clear white light of Heaven, but you and I can only see

in some single ray of faint light—we see not as God sees. We shall, one day, be holy as He is holy, and we shall then look upon the affairs of this life in a strangely different light from that in which we look upon them now. And when once we get to Heaven, we shall realize how foolish we were to form the judgments that we did while we were here. “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as, also, I am known.” Think of this, dear Friends—the eyes that see you are the eyes of a perfectly holy God who, therefore, more readily discovers your shortcomings and your sins than all the eyes of men could do!

Reflect, again, that *God knows us with an abiding knowledge*. It is a great mercy that time brings with it relief of our sorrows by the oblivion in which it steep us. You lost your mother and you could not have lived a month suffering the pangs that you felt in the moment that you realized your loss. All your losses are the same as they were when they first befell you, but they do not eat into your spirit with that terrible force which was in them at the onset, for time has taken off their edge. It is so with sin—the first time that the youth told a lie, he could not sleep—but that first time was 40 years ago and he is almost sorry that I have brought it to his recollection! After a while, time covers up the remembrance of sin and we think that God has covered it up, too, but every sin, even of 50 years ago, is present to God's eyes just as if you were committing it at this moment! And your whole life does not stand out to Him as the dim past and the bright present—it is all *present* to Him. As when a man looks on a map and the whole of the country is before him, so does God look down upon our life as it is spread out for His inspection—He sees it all at once. Up from the graves of forgetfulness where you have buried them, your sins perpetually rise and confront the Judgment Seat of God. Think seriously of this matter, for it is after this manner that God knows our foolishness and that our sins are not hid from Him.

The Lord has *an eternal knowledge of our sins*. He will never forget them. If they are not washed away by the blood of Christ, He can never forget or cease to be angry because of them! He has written the record of man's sin in a book—He means it, therefore, to abide. He says, “Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures?” It is as if He had put men's sin by, to be called as a damning witness against them in that Great Day when every action and word and thought shall pass before the Judgment Seat. I do not know how this thought makes you feel, but it makes me tremble while I speak of it!

For, further, all our sins are *known to Him who is to be our Judge*. There will be no need of witnesses in that last dread day, for the Judge knows all about us! There will be no need to call this one and that to bear testimony as to our sin, for the Judge saw it, heard it and He has never forgotten it, nor does His memory fail Him as to any of the details. He will flash that eternal light of His into the conscience of the criminal and write upon the tablet of his heart the revived memory of all that he had forgotten—and there cannot be a more terrible Hell for a man than to be in the grasp of his memory and of his conscience in the Last Great Day. Yet so it will be and I beg each unconverted man, woman and child to recollect that his foolishness and his sin are known to Him to whom he must give an account at the Day of Judgment.

One thought more might, perhaps, tend to impress some who have not yet felt the force of this Truth of God, and that is that *this knowledge will be published*. If God knows about our sin, it is tantamount to everybody knowing about it. “Oh,” says someone, “I trust it will not be so! I hope that nobody knows of that dark deed of mine.” I tell you, Sir, everybody shall know of it, “for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” There shall come a day, the Day for which all other days were made, when the books shall be opened and every man shall give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil and, further, our Savior said, “That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.” Can we bear to have it all known? Yet known it shall be, written as across the sky, when those we have deceived and deluded shall discover what we were—and we shall wake up to everlasting shame and contempt unless we find shelter in the atoning Sacrifice and are washed in the precious blood of Christ! If I could speak of these Truths of God as I ought to speak of them, they would move your hearts. I pray God that they may.

III. And now, thirdly, WHAT THEN? If God *sees* everything and sees it in the fashion I have tried to describe, what then?

Why, first, *how frivolous must those be who never think about it!* A man is about to commit a crime, but his child is present, so he hesitates, or somebody looks in the window and he cannot do the wrong he intended. How is it that men will tremble under the eyes of a child and almost at the presence of a dog—and yet God's Presence is nothing at all to them? A man, about to steal, had taken his child with him to help him secure the booty. He looked all round and said,

“There is nobody here, Boy.” But the lad said, “Father, there is one way you did not look—you did not look up—God can see you.” Just so. Men do not look up and if you tell them that God sees them, of what account is He to them? This is practical atheism, yet men say that *they* would not have crucified Christ. Sirs, as far as you can, you kill God, for you put Him out of your thoughts! You make nothing of Him and what is that but the Crucifixion of God? You despise Him so much that His Presence has no effect upon you, though the presence of any mortal man would have stopped you from your sin!

Next, dear Brothers and Sisters, *what care this ought to work in us!* How diligently we ought to do our work for God! How earnestly we ought to pray when we know that we always have the great Taskmaster's eyes upon us! Or, better still, that dear eye that looked in pity upon us when we were lost and ruined! The eyes of the Well-Beloved, who gave Himself for us, are always fixed upon us. “Fight, my children,” said a Highland chieftain, “fight and conquer, for your chieftain, though he lies here bleeding, has his eyes upon you.” And they fought like tigers under their leader's eye and thus should Christians fight against sin when the eyes of the beloved Captain who died for them is always upon them! There must be no sleeping, there must be no “scamping” of our work, as bad workmen do when the master is away. It must be gold, silver and precious stones that we build with—and every stone must be well laid upon the one great Foundation. Everything must be done at the very best because God sees it. You know how the heathen sculptor put it—he was working with his chisel and hammer upon the back part of a statue of which only the front was to be seen. The back part was to be built into the wall, so someone said to him, “Why are you toiling so elaborately at that which will be hidden in the wall?” He answered, “The gods can see inside the wall.” The heathen gods could not see, but our God can and, therefore, the secret part of one's life is, perhaps, the most important part of it! That which is never meant for the eyes of man, but wholly for the eyes of God, ought to have a double care exercised in the perfecting of it, that His eyes may rest upon it with a sacred complacency, according to His abounding Grace and mercy.

And *what holy trembling this ought to put within us!* It is often a joy to think that God knows everything. It was a true comfort to Peter when he could *say*, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” It is a great joy, when you are slandered and misrepresented, to be able to say, “Well, God knows the way that I take. And when He has tried me, He will bring me forth as gold. My true record is on high, so I need not fear what the record below may be.” That is a very delightful thought! At the same time, can any among you look forward to that Last Great Day without some trembling? Does it not take all your faith in the atoning blood and in the Divine Substitute to gird up your loins that you may face that Day without fear? Yes, and even that you may now live in the full conviction that your life is all known to God?

Just let us think for a minute or two more about this subject and then I will close. The Lord knows all about us, so that He knows our omissions. I do not know any subject that so much depresses me, humbles me and lays me in the dust as the thought of my omissions. It is not what I have done about which I think so much as of what I have not done. “You have been very useful,” says one. “Yes, but might I not have been 10 times more useful?” “You have been very diligent,” says another. “Yes, but might I not, somehow, have been more diligent? Might I not have done my work in a better spirit? If I had been better, would not my work have been better? If I had borrowed more of my Master's strength, which I might have had, might I not have accomplished much more?” Do you ever feel satisfied with yourself? If so, I would advise you to fling that satisfaction out of the window, as Jehu said of the painted Jezebel, “Throw her down!” A sense of satisfaction with yourself will be the death of your progress and it will prevent your sanctification. Many a man might have been sanctified if he had not thought that he was already sanctified. By that thought he clutched the shadow and so he lost the substance! Mind that such a thing as that does not happen to you.

Our Lord knows all the faults of our holy things—the coldness of our prayers, the wandering of our thoughts, the scantiness of our alms-giving and the hardness of our hearts—so that they do not go in generous tenderness with the gift we feel bound to bestow. Our sermons, our Bible reading, our Sunday school teaching—the Lord sees the faults of them—while our friends often see the excellences of them. I have had many abusive letters at different periods of my life, but specially in the early part of my career in London I think that I had as much abuse as ever fell to the lot of anybody. But, as I read letter after letter, I said to myself, “O foolish writers, if you knew me better, you could say sharper things than *these*—that would sting me much more—but, happily, you have never been able to lay your hands on the truth. You have had to tell a lie in order to abuse me and that does not hurt me a bit. If you had known me as God does, you

might have had something to say which would have caused me great sorrow.” If men could read the secrets of your soul, sincere though you have tried to be, they would see such failures, slips and errors that you would not dare to set your holiest things in the light of day—yet the Lord knows the sins—even of your holy things.

Then the Lord also knows our lies. That is a very tender point. “We do not lie,” we say, but is there any man among us who is perfectly true? When you prayed, did you not say a little more than you had ever attained in your own experience? Or you were talking about yourself and you wished to be very sincere and truthful, but you put just a touch of color into the picture, did you not? At least you painted yourself with your finger over your scars—there are not many like Oliver Cromwell, who said, “If you make a portrait of me, paint me as I am, warts and all.” You may do that with the warts on your forehead, but I question whether you would like the warts on your *character* to be seen. “I hate flattery,” says one. Why, you are flattering yourself all the while that you are saying that! “But,” says one, “I feel that I am humble.” Do you? Then I guess that you are not really so, for he who is humble still laments his pride and thus shows his humility better than in any other way. But, whatever we are, God sees all our lies and there is nothing hidden from Him.

Lastly, the Lord knows—and this is the best thing that He knows about us—He knows, concerning some of us, that we are clinging to Christ alone! Unless I am utterly deceived, I can truthfully say to the Lord Jesus Christ—

*“Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on You.”*

Can you say the same, dear Friend? If you can, take heart. Do not be afraid of God knowing all, but rather say, as we read a little while ago, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Pray with David, “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Come and cast yourself upon the Omniscience of God, desiring to be cleansed—spirit, soul and body—and made meet to enter where the redeemed and glorified Church adores the Lord forever without fault before His Throne!

God bless this searching message to every one of you for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. G. SPURGEON: *PSALM 139.*

1. *O LORD, You have searched me, and known me.* God does not need to “search” us, for that implies a lack of knowledge, a knowledge obtained by search. But the meaning of the text is that God knows us as well as if He *had* examined us through and through, just as an excise officer searches a house to find contraband goods. “O Lord, You have searched me, and known me.”

2. *You know my sitting down, and my rising up.* “Such commonplace things as these, my sitting down at home, my rising up to go to my business, You, O Lord, observe and know even such minor matters as these.”

2. *You understand my thoughts afar off.* “Before the thought has entered my mind, You know what it will be. When I run far away from You in my own apprehension, You are still so near to me that You can hear my mind think and You know the meaning of my thoughts when I try to think crookedly.”

3. *You compass my path and my lying down,* “You surround me when I go out, or when I rest at home; when I labor, or when I sleep. You set a fence around about my every action and my non-action, too.”

3. *And are acquainted with all my ways.* “You know all that I do, as One that is most intimate and familiar with me. You, great God, ‘are acquainted with all my ways.’”

4. *For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether.* “Not only the words *of* my tongue, but the words *on* my tongue, are known to You, O Lord.” As we sang just now—

*“My thoughts, before they are my own,
Are to my God distinctly known!
He knows the words I mean to speak,
Ere from my opening lips they break.”*

5. *You have beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.* “I am taken as in an ambush: I am held captive; I cannot get away. ‘You have beset me behind and before’—more than that, You have arrested me, ‘laid Your hand upon me.’”

6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.* “You have it, but I cannot reach it. You have it, but, ‘I cannot attain unto it.’”

7, 8. *Where shall I go from Your spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, You are there.* For so it runs in the Hebrew. The translators put in the word, “are,” as you can see by the italics. “If I ascend up into Heaven, you there”—that is all the Psalmist says.

8. *If I make my bed in Hell, behold, You.* Again it is more emphatic without the words supplied by the translators. “You, O God, are in the depths as well as in the heights, You are everything in every place, You are All in All.”

9, 10. *If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Your hand lead me.* “I cannot go anywhere except You enable me to go.”

10, 11. *And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.* “There is no escaping that way, for the night shall be transformed into light, and I shall be as clearly perceived in the darkness as in the daylight.”

12. *Yes, the darkness hides not from You.* “It hides from eyes which are but mortal, but You are pure Spirit and You discern not through the impinging of light upon the retina of the eye.”

12. *But the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to You.* Now the Psalmist goes back to the very foundation and origin of his being.

13. *For You have possessed my reins.* “You are within the secret portions of my bodily frame.”

13, 14. *You have covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* Therefore Galen, the oldest and the best-known of the ancient surgeons, was known to say that an undevout anatomist must be mad, as another said that an undevout astronomer was mad, for there is such a marvelous display of skill and wisdom, delicacy and force in the making of a man, that we may, each one, say, “I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

14-16. *Marvelous are Your works; and that my soul knows right well. My substance was not hid from You, when I was made in secret, and curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.* Still he dwells upon his birth and all that went before it—and he did well to speak of those marvels. We are too apt to forget God's goodness to us in our infant days, but we should remember that we come not into this world without a Creator and in that Creator we find a Friend, the best we have ever had, the best we can ever have! Oh, for Grace never to wish to stray away from Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being!

17. *How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!* How often God has thought of each one of us! Remember that if you were the only man in all the world, He would not think more of you than He does now that you are only one of myriads of myriads! The infinite mind of God is not divided by the multiplicity of the objects brought before it, but His whole mind goes forth to contemplate each individual. What deep thoughts, what bright thoughts, what faithful thoughts God has had concerning us! “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!”

18. *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with You.* “Whether I sleep or wake, You are with me, but, better still, I am with You! Before I fell asleep, I put my soul into Your hands. And when I awoke, I found it there.”

19. *Surely You will slay the wicked, O God.* It cannot be that God, who sees everything, will forever endure the wickedness of men. It cannot be that He will suffer all crime and villainy and blasphemy to escape with impunity! “Surely You will slay the wicked, O God.”

19. *Depart from me therefore, you bloody men.* “I do not want to be with you, or to have you with me, in the day when God metes out vengeance upon the ungodly.”

20-22. *For they speak against You wickedly and Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD that hate You? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them my enemies.* We are bound to love our enemies, but we are not bound to love God's enemies. We are to wish them, as enemies, a complete overthrow, but to wish them, as men, a gracious conversion, that they may obtain God's pardon and become His friends, followers and servants.

23. *Search me, O God.* Is it not amazing that what the Psalmist started with as a doctrine, now becomes a prayer? Before, he said, “O Lord, You have searched me, and known me.” Now he cries, “Search me, O God!

23. *And know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.* Every attribute of God works for the good of those who trust Him. If you are a Believer, you may ask for His infinite power to protect you and His infinite knowledge to search you.

24. *And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* May God first make that our prayer and then graciously hear it, for His great name's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—182, 190, 139 (SONG I).

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