



The Church of Scotland

Church and Society Council

Surveillance and Social Justice – May 2017

Section 10. Surveillance from the Cross

10.1 Sparrows fall to the ground, and people's innermost thoughts and every action takes place within the sight of God. This is a powerful theological paradigm. At different times in the Christian life, this can be comforting and unsettling. A framed motto hanging above your bed reminding you that God sees everything, coupled with reminders of sin and its consequences can turn the comfort of God's watching into a threat.

10.2 Sadly, censorious and intrusive disciplinary actions by churches (mostly in the rather distant past), and Christian traditions that have deployed sacramental confession to keep people in line, tend to convey a negative dimension to the notion of God's gaze.¹

[See the full report](#)

¹ For but one source, see Alison Hanham, *The Sinners of Cramond: The Struggle to Impose Godly Behaviour on a Scottish Community, 1651-1851* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005).