

QCQ Chapters 21-24

1. “God knows; and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at red-heat! By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people!” (Hawthorne 235)
2. This quote, spoken by Dimmesdale, supports the theme of punishment and redemption, showing that God’s punishment was an evil that was needed in order to save Dimmesdale from being lost. With the use of anaphora, Dimmesdale reveals that the torture of the last seven years has led him to finally seek the penitence that he would have lacked otherwise. He realizes that Chillingworth has tried to take him away from God in his attempt to inflict vengeance on him. Hawthorne makes the argument that Dimmesdale’s punishment ended only when he renounced his falsehoods and became truthful with himself and the townspeople. The scene on the scaffold at midday shows that Dimmesdale’s sins have been brought before the judgment of the crowd and God, thus concluding the story where it begins.
3. Why does Dimmesdale believe that God has shown him mercy through his afflictions?