

## LIMITING GOD NO. 272

A SERMON  
DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 28, 1859  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“They...limited the Holy One of Israel.”  
Psalm 78:41*

MAN is always altering what God has ordained. Although God’s order is ever the best, yet man will never agree therewith. When God gave forth the law it was engraved upon two stones. The first table contained the commandments concerning man and God, the second dealt with man and man. Sins against God are sins against the first table, sins against man are offenses against the second table.

Man, to prove constantly his perversity, will put the second table before the first, nay, upon the first, so as to cover and conceal it. There are few men who will not allow the enormity of adultery, fewer still who will dispute the wickedness of murder. Men are willing enough to acknowledge that there is sin in an offense against man. That which endangers the human commonweal, that which would disturb the order of earthly governments—all this is wrong enough even in man’s esteem, but when you come to deal with the first table it is hard indeed to extort a confession from mankind. They will scarce acknowledge that there is any such thing as an offense against God, or if they do acknowledge it, yet they think it but a light matter.

What man is there among you who has not in his heart often lamented sins against man, rather than sins against God? And which of you has not felt a greater compunction for sins against your neighbor, or against the nation, than for sins committed against God and done in His sight? I say that such is the perversity of man, that he will think more of the less than the greater. An offense against the Majesty of heaven is thought to be far more venial than an offense against his fellow creature.

There are many transgressions of the first table of which we think so little that perhaps we scarcely ever confess them at all, or if we acknowledge them, it is only because the grace of God has taught us to estimate them aright. One offense against the first table which seldom agitates the mind of an unconvicted sinner is that of unbelief, and with it, I may put the want of love to God. The sinner does not believe in God, does not trust in Him, does not love Him. He gives his heart to the things of earth, and denies it to his Creator.

Of this high treason and rebellion he thinks nothing. If you could take him in the act of theft, a blush would mantle his cheek, but you detect him in the daily omission of love to God, and faith in His Son Jesus Christ, and you cannot make him feel that he is guilty of any evil in this. Oh, strange contortion of human judgment! Oh! blindness of mortal conscience, that this greatest of iniquities—a want of love to the All-Lovely, and a lack of faith in Him who is deserving of the highest trust—should be thought to be as nothing, and reckoned among the things that need not to be repented of.

Among such sins of the first table is that described in our text. It is consequently one of the masterpieces of iniquity, and we shall do well to purge ourselves of it. It is full of evil to ourselves, and is calculated to dishonor both God and man, therefore let us be in earnest to cut it up both root and branch. I think we have all been guilty of this in our measure, and we are not free from it even to this day. Whether we be saints or sinners, we may stand here and make our humble confession that we have all “tempted the Lord our God and have limited the Holy One of Israel.”

What then is meant by limiting the Holy One of Israel? Three words will set forth the meaning. We limit the Holy One of Israel, sometimes by *dictation* to Him, at other times by *distrust* of Him, and some

push this sin to its farthest extreme by an utter and entire *despair* of His goodness and His mercy. These three classes all in their degree limit the Holy One of Israel.

**I.** In the first place, I say we limit the Holy One of Israel by DICTATING TO HIM.

Shall mortal dare to dictate to his Creator? Shall it be possible that man shall lay down his commands, and expect the King of heaven to pay homage to his arrogance? Will a mortal impiously say, “Not Thy will but mine be done”? Is it conceivable that a handful of dust, a creature of a day, that knows nothing, should set its judgment in comparison with the wisdom of the Only Wise? Can it be possible that we should have the impertinence to map out the path of boundless wisdom, or should decree the footsteps which infinite grace should take, and dictate the designs which Omnipotence shall attempt?

Startle! Startle at your own sin. Let each of us be amazed at our own iniquity. We have had the impudence to do this in our thoughts, we have climbed to the throne of the Highest, we have sought to take Him from His throne that we might sit there, we have grasped His scepter and His rod, we have weighed His judgments in the balances and tried His ways in the scales, we have been impious enough to exalt ourselves above all that is called God.

I will first address myself to the saint, and with the candle of the Lord attempt to show to Israel her secret iniquity, and to Jerusalem her grievous sin.

Oh heir of heaven, be ashamed and be confounded, while I remind you that you have dared to dictate to God! How often have we in our prayers not simply wrestled with God for a blessing—for that was allowable—but we have imperiously demanded it. We have not said, “Deny this to me, O my God, if so Thou pleasest.” We have not been ready to say as the Redeemer did, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,” but we have asked and would take no denial. Not with all humble deference to our Lord’s superior wisdom and grace, but we have asked and declared that we would not be content unless we had that particular blessing upon which we had set our hearts.

Now, whenever we come to God and ask for anything which we consider to be a real good, we have a right to plead earnestly, but we err when we go beyond the bounds of earnestness, and come to impudent demand. It is ours to ask for a blessing, but not to define what that blessing shall be. It is ours to place our head beneath the mighty hands of divine benediction, but it is not ours to uplift the hands as Joseph did those of Jacob and say, “Not so, my father.” We must be content if He gives the blessing cross-handed, quite as content that He should put His left hand on our head as the right. We must not intrude into God’s almonry, let Him do as seemeth Him good.

Prayer was never meant to be a fetter upon the sovereignty of God, much less a licensed channel for blasphemy. We must always subjoin at the bottom of the prayer this heavenly postscript, “Father, deny this if it be most for Thy glory.” Christ will have nothing to do with dictatorial prayers, He will not be a partaker with us in the sin of limiting the Holy One of Israel.

Oftentimes too, I think, we dictate to God with regard to the measure of our blessing. We ask the Lord that we might grow in the enjoyment of His presence, instead of that He gives us to see the hidden depravity of our hearts. The blessing comes to us, but it is in another shape from what we expected. We go again to our knees, and we complain to God that He has not answered us, whereas the fact has been that He has answered the spirit of our prayer, but not the letter of it. He has given us the blessing itself, but not in the shape we asked for it.

We prayed Him to give us silver, He has given us gold, but we blind creatures cannot understand the value of this new-shaped blessing, and therefore we go grumbling to Him as if He had never heard us at all. If you ask, especially for temporal mercies, always take care to leave the degree of those mercies with God.

You may say, “Lord, give me food convenient for me,” but it is not yours to stipulate how many shillings you shall have per week, or how many pounds in the year. You may ask that your bread may be given you and that your water may be sure, but it is not yours to lay down to God out of what kind of vessels you shall drink, or on what kind of table your bread shall be served up to you. You must leave the measuring of your mercies with Him who measures the rain, and weighs the clouds of heaven.

Beggars must not be choosers, and especially they must not be choosers when they have to deal with infinite wisdom and sovereignty.

And yet further, I fear that we have often dictated to God with regard to the time. As a church we meet together, and we pray God to send us a blessing. We expect to have it next week, it does not come. We wonder that the ministry is not blessed on the very next Sabbath day, so that hundreds are pricked in the heart. We pray again, and again, and again, and at last we begin to faint. And why is this? Simply because in our hearts we have been setting a date and a time to God.

We have made up our minds that the blessing must come within a certain period, and if it does not come, we do as it were spite our God by declaring we will wait no longer, that we have waited time enough, we have no more patience, we will be gone, it is clear the blessing will not come. We waste our words we imagine by seeking it.

Oh, how wrong is this!—What! is God to be tied to hours, or months, or years? Do His promises bear dates? Has He not Himself said “Though the vision tarry, wait for it, it shall come, it shall not tarry.” And yet we cannot wait for God’s time, but we must have our own time. Let us always remember it is God’s part to limit a certain day to Israel, saying, “Today, if ye will hear my voice.” But it is not our part to say to God, “Today if thou will hear *my* voice.”

No. Let us leave time to Him, resting assured that when the ships of our prayers are long at sea, they bring home all the richer cargo, and if the seeds of supplication are long buried, they shall produce the richer harvest, for God, honoring our faith which He has exercised by waiting, shall multiply His favors and enlarge His bounty.

Your prayers are out at interest at a great percentage. Leave them alone. They shall come back—not only the capital, but with compound interest—if you will but wait till the time runs out, and God’s promises becomes due.

Brethren, in these matters we cannot acquit ourselves, and I fear that much more than this will be necessary before our sin is fully unveiled. We have limited the Holy One in other ways, and I may remark that we have done this with regard to our prayers and efforts for others. A mother has been anxious for her children’s conversion. Her eldest son has been the object of her fervent prayer. Never a morning has passed without earnest cries to God for his salvation, she has spoken to him with all a mother’s eloquence, she has prayed in private with him, she has used every means which love could suggest to make him think of a better world.

But all her efforts at present seem to be wasted. She appears to be ploughing upon a rock, and casting her bread upon the waters. Year after year has rolled on—her son has left her house, he has commenced business for himself, he begins now to betray worldliness. He forsakes the house of prayer which his mother frequents. She looks around every Sabbath morning, but John is not there. The tear is in her eye. Every allusion in the minister’s sermon to God’s answering prayer makes her heart beat again. And at last she says, “Lo these many years have I sought God for this one blessing, I will seek no longer. I will, however, pray another month, and then, if He hear me not, I think I can never pray again.”

Mother, retract the words. Blot out such a thought from your soul, for in this you are limiting the Holy One of Israel. He is trying your faith. Persevere, persevere while life lasts, and if your prayers be not answered in your lifetime, mayhap from the windows of heaven you shall look down and see the blessing of your prayers descend on the head of your child.

This has been the case too, when we have sought to do good to our fellow men. You know a certain man in whose welfare you take an extraordinary interest. You have availed yourself occasionally of an opportunity of addressing him, you have pressed him to attend the house of God, you have mentioned him in your private devotions, and often at your family altar. You have spoken to others that they might pray with you, for you believed the promise, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

But now months have rolled on, and your friend seems to be in a more hopeless condition than ever. *Now* he will not go to the house of God at all, perhaps some ungodly acquaintance has such power over

him that your efforts are counteracted by his evil influence. All the good you can do is soon undone, and you are ready to say, “I will never use another effort, I will turn my attention to someone else. In this man’s case, at least, my prayers will never be heard. I will withdraw my hand, I will not use unprofitable labor.”

And what is this but limiting the Holy One of Israel? What is this but saying to God, “Because You have not heard me when I wished to be heard—because you have not exactly blessed my efforts as I would have them blessed, therefore I will try this no more”? Oh impudence! oh impertinence to the majesty of heaven! Christian! cast out this demon and say, “Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God.”

Once again attempt, and not once, but though a thousand times you fail, try again, for God is not unfaithful to forget your work of faith and your labor of love. Only continue to exercise your patience and your diligence. In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand, for either this or that shall surely prosper in its appointed season.

While thus charging the people of God with sin, I have been solemnly condemning myself, and if a like conviction shall abide upon all my believing hearers, my errand is accomplished. I will address myself now to those who cannot call themselves the children of God, but who have lately been stirred up to seek salvation.

There are many of you who are not hardened and careless now. There was a time when you were callous and indifferent, but it is not so with you at the present moment. You are anxiously saying, “What must I do to be saved?” and have been, perhaps, very earnestly in prayer during the last two or three months. Every Sunday morning’s service sends you home to your knees, and you cannot refrain from sighs and tears even in your daily business, for you cry as one that cannot be silenced, “Lord, save, or I perish!”

Perhaps Satan has been putting it into your heart that since your prayers have not been heard, it is now of no avail. “Oh,” says the evil one, “these many months have you prayed to God to put away your sin, and He has not heard you. Give it up, never bend your knees again. Heaven is not for you, therefore make the best of this world, go and drink its pleasures, suck in its joys, lose not the happiness of both worlds, make yourself gay here, for God will never bless you and save you hereafter.”

And is this what he has said? Oh! listen not to him, he designs your destruction. Hearken not to his voice. There is nothing he desires so much as that you should be his prey, therefore be on your watchtower against him, and listen not to his cajoling. Hearken to me for a season, and God bless you in the hearing, that you may no longer limit the Holy One of Israel.

Sinner what have you been doing, while you have said, “I will restrain prayer because God has not as yet answered me”? I say what have you been doing? Have you not been stipulating with God as to the day when He shall save you? Suppose it is written in the book of God’s decree, “I will save that man and give him peace after he has prayed seven years,” would that be difficult for you? Is not the blessing of divine mercy worth waiting for?

If He keep you tarrying at His gate day after day—though should you wait fifty years—if that gate opens at last, will it not well repay your waiting? Knock man, knock again and go not away. Who are you that you should say to God, “I will have peace on such a day or else I will cease to supplicate”? This is a common offense with all poor trembling seeking souls. Confess it now and say unto God, “Lord I leave the time with You, and I will not cease to supplicate, for—

*‘If I perish I will pray,  
And perish only there.’”*

And do you not think, again, that perhaps the cause of your present distress is that you have been dictating to God as to the way in which He shall save you? You have a pious acquaintance who was converted in a very remarkable manner. He was suddenly convicted and as suddenly justified in the

sight of God. He knows the very day and hour in which he obtained mercy, and *you* have foolishly made up your mind that you will never lay hold upon Christ unless you feel the same.

You have laid it down as in a decree, that God is to save you, as it were, by an electric shock, that you must be consciously smitten, and vividly illumined, or else you will never lay hold on Christ. You want a vision. You dictate to God that He must send one of His angels down to tell you He has forgiven you.

Now rest assured God will have nothing to do with your dictation. With your desire to be saved He will have to do, but with your planning as to how He should save you, He will have nought to do. Oh, be content to get salvation anyhow if you do but get it. If you cannot have it like the prodigal son, who felt his father's arms about him and knew his father's kiss, and had music and dancing in the moment that he was restored—if you cannot come in by the front door, be content to enter at the back.

If mercy comes on foot do not despise her, for she is just as fair as when she rides in her chariot. Be content to go in sackcloth before God, and there to bemoan your guilt and to lay hold on Him who taketh away the sin of the world.

Sinner, believe in Christ. That is God's command and your privilege. Cast yourself flat on His atonement, trust you Him and Him alone, and if God chooses not to comfort you in the way in which you have expected, yet be content to get the blessing anyhow so long as you receive it at all. Limit not, I beseech you, the Holy One of Israel.

Upon this point of dictation I might tarry very long and give many instances. But I choose rather to close up this first head of my discourse by observing once again, what a heinous offense, what an unreasonable iniquity it is for any of us to attempt to dictate to God. Oh man, know that He is sovereign.

*“He everywhere hath sway,  
And all things serve His might.”*

Will you, a beggar, dictate to the King of kings, the Lord of lords, when the angels veil their faces before Him, and scarcely dare to look upon His brightness? Will you dare to lord it over Him, and command your Maker? Shall infinite wisdom stoop to obey your folly, and shall divine goodness be cooped and caged and imprisoned within the bars of your frantic desires? What! do you dare to mount the steps of His throne, and affront Him with your haughty speeches, when cherubim dare not look upon His brightness—when the pillars of heaven's starry roof tremble and start at His reproof? Will you seek to be greater than He is?

Shall mortal man be greater than his God? Shall he dictate to the Everlasting—he who is born of a woman and of few days, and full of folly? No, go you to His throne, bow yourself reverently before Him, give up your will, let it be bound in golden fetters a bond slave to God. Cry you this day, “Lord, have mercy on me a sinner, and let it be not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

Thus, then, I have discoursed on the first part of the subject.

**II.** In the second place, we limit the Holy One of Israel by DISTRUST.

And here again I will divide my congregation into the two grand classes of saints and sinners. Children of God, purchased by blood and regenerated by the Spirit, you are guilty here, for by your distrust and fear you have often limited the Holy One of Israel, and have said, in effect, that His ear is heavy that it cannot hear, and that His arm is shortened that it cannot save.

In your trials you have done this. You have looked upon your troubles, you have seen them roll like mountain waves, you have hearkened to your fears, and they have howled in your ears like tempestuous winds, and you have said, “My bark is but a feeble one, and it will soon be wrecked. It is true that God has said that through tempests and tossing He will bring me to my desired haven. But alas! such a state as this was never contemplated in His promise, I shall sink at last and never see His face with joy.”

What have you done, fearful one? O you of little faith, do you know what sin you have committed? You have judged the omnipotence of God to be finite. You have said that your troubles are greater than

His power, that your woes are more terrible than His might. I say retract that thought, drown *it* and you shall not be drowned yourself. Give it to the winds and rest you assured that out of all your troubles He will surely bring you, and in your deepest distress He will not forsake you.

“But,” says one, “I did believe this once, and I had hoped for an escape from my present predicament, but that escape has failed me. I did think that some friend would have assisted me and thus, I imagined I should have come out of the furnace.” Ah! and you are distrusting God because He does not choose to use the means which you have chosen, because His election and your election are not the same, therefore you doubt Him.

Why man, He is not limited to means—to any means, much less to one of your choosing. If He delivers you not by calming the tempest, He has a better way in store, He will send from above and deliver you, He will snatch you out of the deep waters lest the floods flow over you.

What might Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have said? Suppose they had got it into their heads that God would deliver them in some particular way. They did have some such idea, but they said, as if to prove that they trusted not really to *their* thought about the deliverance—“Nevertheless, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not worship thy gods, nor bow before the image which thou hast set up.” They were prepared to let God have His will, even though He used no means of deliverance.

But suppose, I say, they had conferred with flesh and blood, and Shadrach had said, “God will strike Nebuchadnezzar dead, just at the moment when the men are about to put us into the furnace the king will turn pale and die, and so we shall escape.”

O my friends, they would have trembled indeed when they went into the furnace if they had chosen their own means of deliverance, and the king had remained alive. But instead of this, they gave themselves up to God, though He did not deliver them. And though He did not prevent their going into the furnace, yet He kept them alive in it, so that not so much as the smell of fire had passed upon them.

It shall be even so with you. Repose in God. When you see Him not, believe Him, when everything seems to contradict your faith, still stagger not at the promise. If HE has said it, He can find ways and means to do it. Rest assured, sinner, He could come from His throne to do it Himself in person, rather than suffer His promises to be unfulfilled. The harps of heaven should sooner lament an absent God than you should have to mourn a broken promise. Trust in Him, repose constantly on Him, and limit not the Holy One of Israel.

Do you not think that the church as a great body has done this? We do not any of us expect to hear that a nation is born in a day. If it should be said that in a certain chapel in London this morning some thousand souls had been converted under one sermon, we should shake our heads incredulously, and say it cannot be. We have a notion that because we have only had drops of mercy of late, we are never to have showers of it, because mercy seems only to have come in little rills and trickling streamlets, we have conceived the idea that it never can roll its mighty floods like the huge rivers of the western world.

No, we have limited the Holy One of Israel, especially as preachers have we done it. We do not expect our ministry to be blessed, and therefore it is not blessed. If we had learned to expect great things we should have them. If we had made up our minds to this, that the promise was great, that the Promiser was great, that His faithfulness was great, and that His power was great, and if with this for our strength we set to work expecting a great blessing, I trow we should not be disappointed.

But the universal church of Christ has limited the Holy One of Israel. Why, my friends, if God should will it, you need not ask where are to come the successors of such and such a man. You need not sit down and ask when such and such a one is gone where shall be another who shall preach the Word with power.

When God gives the word, great shall be the multitude of them that publish it, and when the multitude shall begin to publish, believe me, God can move thousands as easily as He can move tens, and where our baptismal pool has been stirred by ones and twos He can bid millions descend to be baptized into our holy faith. Limit not, O limit not, you church of the living God, limit not the Holy One of Israel.

And now I turn to the poor troubled heart, and although I accuse of sin, yet I doubt not the Spirit shall bear witness with the conscience, and leading to Christ, shall this morning deliver from its galling yoke. Poor troubled one, you have said in your heart, "My sins are too many to be forgiven." What have you done? Repent you, and let the tears roll down your cheeks. You have limited the Holy One of Israel. You have put your sins above His grace. You have considered that your guilt is more omnipotent than omnipotence itself. He is able to save unto the uttermost them who come unto God by Christ. You cannot have exceeded the boundlessness of His grace. Be your sins ever so many, the blood of Christ can put them all away, and if you doubt this, you are limiting the Holy One of Israel.

Another says, I do not doubt His power to save, but what I doubt is His willingness. What have you done in this? You have limited the love, the boundless love of the Holy One of Israel. What, do you stand on the shore of a love which ever must be shoreless. Was it deep enough and broad enough to cover the iniquities of Paul, and does it stop just where you are? Why, are you the limit then, you stand as the limiting landmark of the grace of the Holy One of Israel. Out upon your folly! get rid of this your mistrust. He whose love has embraced the chief of sinners, is willing to embrace you, if now hating your sin and leaving your iniquity, you are ready to put your trust in Jesus.

I beseech you, limit not the Holy One of Israel by thinking He is unwilling to forgive. Are you conscious of the sin you are committing when you think God unwilling to save? Why, you are accusing God of being a liar. Does not that alarm you? You have done worse than this, you have even accused Him of being perjured, for you doubt His oath. "As I live, saith the LORD, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live." You do not believe that? then you make God to be perjured.

Oh! tremble at such guilt as this. "No, but," you say, "I would not accuse Him, but He would be quiet just if He *were* unwilling to save me." I am glad you said that, that proves you do not accuse His justice. But I still say you are limiting His love. What does He say Himself? has He limited it? Has He not Himself said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"! And you are thirsty, and yet you think that His love cannot reach you?

Oh! while God assures you that you are welcome, be not wicked enough to throw the lie in the teeth of mercy. Limit not the Holy One of Israel. "But sir, I am such an old sinner." Yes, but limit not God. "But I am such a black sinner." Limit not the efficacy of the cleansing blood! "But I have aggravated Him so much." Limit not His infinite longsuffering. "But my heart is so hard." Limit not the melting power of His grace. "But I am so sinful." Limit not the potency of the atonement! "But sir, I am so hard hearted, and I feel so little my need of Him." Limit not the influences of the Spirit by your folly or your stubbornness, but come as you are, and put your trust in Christ, and so honor God and He will not dishonor your faith.

If you will but now for half a moment consider how faithful God has been to His children and how true He has been to all His promises, I think that saint and sinner may stand together and make a common confession and utter a common prayer, "Lord, we have been guilty of doubting Thee, we pray that we may limit Thee no longer."

Oh! remember, remember more and more God's love and goodness to His ancient people, remember how He delivered them many a time, how He brought them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, think how He fed them in the wilderness, how He carried them all the days of old, remember His faithfulness to His covenant and to His servant Abraham, and say will He leave you, will He forget His covenant sealed with blood, will He be unmindful of His promise, will He be slow to answer or slack to deliver?

Scout the thought, drive it far away, and now come, and at the foot of the cross renew your faith, in the sight of the flowing wounds renew your confidence and say, "Jesus, we put our trust in Thee, Thy Father's grace can never fail, Thou hast loved us, and Thou wilt love us despite of our sins, Thou wilt present us at last before Thy Father's face in glory everlasting."

**III.** And now, to conclude, I need your solemn attention while I address myself to a very small number of persons here present, for whose sorrowful state I feel the greatest pity. It has been my mournful duty as pastor of so large a congregation, to have to deal with desperate cases. Here and there, there are men and women who have come into a state which, without meaning to wound them, I am free to confess, I think, is sullen DESPAIR.

They feel that they are guilty, they know that Christ is able to save, they also doctrinally understand the duty of faith, and its power to bring peace, but they persevere in the declaration that there is no mercy for them. In vain you find out a parallel case, they soon discover some little discrepancy and so escape you. The most mighty promises lose all their force because they turn their edge by the declaration—"That does not mean me."

They read in the Word of God that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," they are sinners, but they cannot think He came to save them. They know right well that He is able to save them to the uttermost, they would not *say* they had gone beyond the uttermost, but still they think so. They cannot imagine that free grace and sovereign love can ever come to them. They have, it is true, their gleams of sunshine, sometimes they believe, but when the comfortable presence of God is gone, they relapse into their old despair.

Let me speak very tenderly, and O that the Spirit of God would speak also! My dear brother and sister, what are you doing? I ask you, what are you doing?—if you are not limiting the Holy One of Israel? Would you dishonor God? "No," say you, "I would not." But you are doing it.

You are saying that God cannot save you, or if not saying that, you are implying—that all the torture you have felt in your conscience, and all the anxiety you have in your heart, have never yet moved God to look on you. Why, you make God to be the most hard-hearted of all beings. If you should hear another groan as you are groaning, you would weep over him, but you think that God looks on you with cold indifference, and will never hear your prayer. This is not only limiting—it is slandering the Holy One of Israel.

Oh, come forth, I beseech you, and dare to believe a good thing of your God. Dare to believe this, that He is willing now to save you—that *now* He will put away your sins. "But suppose, sir, I should believe something too good?" No, that you cannot do. Think of God as being the most loving, the most tender-hearted being that can be, and you have thought just rightly of Him. Think of Him as having a mother's heart that mourns over its sick babe, think of Him as having a father's heart, pitying his children, think of Him as having a husband's heart, loving his spouse and cherishing her, and you have just thought rightly of Him.

Think of Him as being one who will not look on your sins, but who casts them behind His back. Dare for once to give God a little honor. Come, put the crown on His head, say, "Lord, I am the vilest rebel out of hell, the most hard-hearted, the most full of blasphemous thoughts, I am the most wicked, the most abandoned, Lord let me have the honor now of being able to say, Thou art able to save even me,' and on Thy boundless love, Thy great, Thine infinite grace, do I rely."

One of Charles Wesley's hymns, which I forget just now, has in it an expression something like this—Lord, if there is a sinner in the world more needy than I am, then refuse me, if there be one more undeserving than I am, then cast me away, if there be one who needs grace and mercy, pity and compassion, more than I, then pass me by. "But Lord," says he in his song, "thou knowest I the chief of sinners am, the vilest of the vile, the most hardened, and the most senseless, then, Lord, glorify Thyself by showing to men, to angels, and to devils, what Thy right hand can do!"

May the Holy Ghost enable you now to come forth from the dungeon of despair, and no longer limit the Holy One of Israel.

I shall add no more, but leave the effect of this sermon with my God. May every one of us believe Him better, and have greater thoughts of Him, and never let us be guilty henceforth of confining, as it were, within iron bonds the limitless One of Israel.



Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org).