

“IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?”

NO. 2020

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?”-Jeremiah 32:26, 27.

THIS method of questioning the person to be instructed is known to teachers as the Socratic method. Socrates was wont, not so much to state a fact, as to ask a question and draw out thoughts from those whom he taught. His method had long before been used by a far greater teacher. Putting questions is Jehovah’s frequent method of instruction. When the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind it was with a series of questions. “Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?” and so forth.

Questions from the Lord are very often the strongest affirmations. He would have us perceive their absolute certainty. They are put in this particular form because he would have us think over his great thought, and confirm it by our own reflections. The Lord shines upon us in the question, and our answer to it is the reflection of his light. The Infallible One challenges a contradiction, or even a doubt. “Is anything too hard for me?” is the strongest way of saying that nothing can be too hard for him, for it proclaims defiance to heaven, and earth, and hell, to produce a difficulty which can perplex the Lord.

I invite you, therefore, dear friends, to turn the question over in your minds till the omnipotence of Jehovah shall be your one all-absorbing thought. You cannot think of anything which renders it necessary to put a foot-note to the text. Search ye well, and see if it needs qualification. See whether there is an exception to the rule of absolute omnipotence. Revolve the divine question long and well- "Is anything too hard for me?" May your thoughts be awake at this time! May the truth of the text take possession of your minds, and fill them with its fragrance even as the woman's box of ointment filled the room with its perfume!

I. I shall ask you first to consider the wonderful question of our text which the Lord put to the prophet, VIEWING IT AS NECESSARY. The utterance of these words was no superfluity, there was need for them to be spoken. Flesh is frail, and mortal minds are forgetful; and Jeremiah, great as he was, was but a man.

It was needful to tell the prophet this, though he knew it. He never doubted that the Lord is Almighty, and yet it was needful for Jehovah himself to speak home this truth to his mind and heart. It is often necessary for the Lord himself to drive home a truth into the mind of his most faithful servant. None can teach as the Lord teaches. Truth is never fully known by the sons of Zion until the Lord teaches it to them; hence it is written, "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." We learn much in many ways, but we learn nothing vitally and practically till the Spirit of God becomes our schoolmaster. The God of truth must teach us the truth of God or we shall never learn it. Jeremiah knew this truth in his inmost soul; see the seventeenth verse of this chapter: "I prayed unto the Lord, saying, Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." He expressed the truth admirably, and yet the Lord saw it needful to give him a special divine revelation, to impress it more fully upon his heart. Brethren, it is one thing to know that such a doctrine is true, and quite another thing to know the truth itself. We need to be persuaded of it so as to embrace it. It is a glorious thing to see truth blaze out as if written in letters of fire. We are far too apt to put truth down in our creed, and after that to shut it away from practical every-day use. We believe it, and we should be indignant if anybody disputed it; and yet we ignore it. Truth laid upon the shelf is as good as unknown. Doctrines which are disputed often have the most influence upon the community, because they are brought clearly before men's minds; and being threshed out, they yield seed for the

sower and bread for the eater. We read in one of the Epistles, "I put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." There is a proverb which says that "Truth is mighty, and will prevail." That is true, as far as it goes; but truth may be formally admitted and then it may be laid aside, and so may never prevail. It is ill to treat a truth like some great Egyptian king, who is swathed in fine linen, embalmed with precious spices, and pompously placed in the tomb with other honorable mummies. The Lord would not have the truth of his own omnipotence thus dealt with, and therefore he cometh forth from his secret place, and speaks personally to his servant, saying, "Is anything too hard for me?" May the Lord do the same with us in reference to the precious truths of his gospel! May the Holy Spirit himself take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us; then shall we see them in their own light, and know them as divine realities!

But I go a step further, and say, that it is necessary for us to be thus specially instructed, even though we know a truth well enough to plead it in prayer, as Jeremiah did when he cried "There is nothing too hard for thee." That man is no mean scholar in the classes of Christ who has learned to handle Scriptural truths when pleading with the Lord. Oh, that we used more argument in prayer! Prayers are weak when they lack pleadings. "Bring forth your strong reasons, saith the Lord." The sinews of prayer are the holy arguments which we urge with the Lord, such as his own promises and our great needs, his own glory, his covenant, the malice of the enemy, and so forth. We know great truths well when we see their bearing towards God in supplication; and yet, though we may be able to plead it in supplication, we may not even then know the truth to the full. O men of God, ye that are fathers in Israel, may the Holy Spirit still teach you, till you know all the power and fullness of his truth. In lowliness of spirit I doubt not that you still cry-

***"I find myself a learner yet,
Unstable, weak, and apt to slide."***

May the Comforter continually bring to your remembrance the things which Jesus has told you, till you know the heart and soul of them. Ye gracious mothers in Israel, may God reveal himself to you more and more, and even those truths which you already plead in your closet may he yet cause you to realize more vividly still. May you weave songs as well as

prayers out of the truth of God. This truth of his omnipotence, may he come and speak it to our hearts as he did to the heart of Jeremiah,

***“Behold, I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh:
is there anything too hard for me?”***

But I must yet go a step further. It is necessary for God thus to reveal truth individually to each of our hearts even though we may have acted on it. Jeremiah had acted on the fact that nothing was too hard for God. He had but very little money; and in days of famine and pestilence money was very precious. A morsel of bread was worth silver during the siege. Poor Jeremiah had not many shekels, and those shekels would all be wanted in one way and another for the necessities of life; and yet he had counted into the scales the price of a piece of land at Anathoth, which he would probably never see, much less enjoy. The Lord had bidden him do so, and he had done it without demur. Beloved, it is a great thing to be a little child before God, unquestioningly obedient to our Father’s will. We may not calculate consequences, nor estimate difficulties; we are to do what the Lord tells us, as he tells us, when he tells us. O ye Jeremiahs, it is

***“Yours not to reason why,
Yours at all price to buy.”***

Jeremiah did not doubt, debate, or even delay. He signed the deed, and took care to have it properly preserved. If you see any difficulty, obey the Lord first, and seek an explanation afterwards, for so the prophet did. He obeyed in the full confidence that nothing was too hard for God. After his obedience, he began to look back on what he had done, and to be considerably bewildered, while trying to make out how God would justify what he had done. Elijah himself was faint, though he had taken the prophets of Baal and slain them before the Lord: but the faintness came after the conflict, and not before it. This is much the best time for faintness, if we faint at all. He was the prophet of fire, a man of iron firmness for his Master, yet after the strong excitement had passed, he was overcome, and it was needful for his Lord to revive him. The best of men are men at the best. If the Lord lifts you up into the purity and dignity of a child-like faith, yet you will have your moments when you will cry, “Lord, speak to me thyself again, even though it be out of the whirlwind; and let me know that I have done all these things according to thy word, and not after my own fancy.” Even the practice of truth does not raise us above the need of having it again and again laid home to the soul.

So, you see, our gracious God applies to our hearts the truth which we know, which we plead, and which we practice, that it may come even yet more fully into our soul, and abide there.

Another necessity for this arises out of further manifestations with which we are to be favored. God had caused Jeremiah to know his omnipotence so far, but he was to see still more of it. Faith has led you into marvellous places; but there are greater things before you, and the Lord presses truth upon you that you may receive more of it. Did you ever climb a mountain? A friend of mine, when among the Alps, asserted confidently that he could reach the top of a certain mountain in half-an-hour. It certainly looked very near us, but my eye had been better educated to estimate distances among mountains, and I assured him that it would take him all the day to stand upon that ridge. The fact is, that when you have climbed one stiff bit of hill you find yourself bound to go down into a valley before you can tackle the next ascent. There are hills above hills, and one summit is a sort of look-out from which you see that you have much further to go. That which looked like a part of the side of the hill may really be a mountain by itself; and when you have ascended it, you have the cheering privilege of seeing that you are now at the bottom of the next. In fact, although you are decidedly higher, you often seem to have further to go than when you started. It is just so with our experience of divine things: when we know the Lord to the full of our capacity, that capacity enlarges, and we begin to learn again. We know more, and for that very reason are far more conscious of our ignorance than we were at the first. The Lord himself came to his servant Jeremiah, and thus prepared him for those greater things which he was about to reveal. The Lord had told him what to do, and he had done it, and thus he had believed up to the highest degree of that which was revealed to him; and therefore the Lord was going to reward his obedient faith by committing to him other mysteries and prophecies of the future. The city was to be burned and to be destroyed. God would wash out the footprints of sin in the blood of the sinners; and lay their land utterly waste; and yet the day would come when the scattered people would come back, and lands and vineyards would be bought and sold, whereof the buying of the field at Anathoth was a type and a pledge. Then the Lord would restore the nation to more than its former prosperity, and make with the people an everlasting covenant that he would not turn away from them to do them good, and would put his fear in their hearts that they should not depart from him. All that he had already believed

would prepare Jeremiah to believe in this amazing blessing. Possibly some of you imagine that it would be an easy thing for him to believe well of Israel but, indeed, you forget how the people had treated him. He had been dealing with them patiently and tearfully for many years, and they had proved a most perverse, rebellious, and cruel people. They had jested at his tears, disbelieved his prophecies, and refused his warnings. He was even then in prison for having spoken the truth. So that it needed that God himself should come to him and cheer him as to these people, saying, "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" The stiff necked people could be brought to obedience, and should be, for the Lord himself would do it. The Lord would take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and make them a lovingly obedient people. This was impossible with Jeremiah, but possible with Jehovah. He will yet be glorified even in the midst of those who have dishonored him, and despised his prophets.

Thus you see how wise it was of the Lord to repeat to his servant that which he knew, pleaded, and acted on, that he might be made to believe still more fully in the all-sufficiency of the Lord his God.

II. Under the second head of our discourse we shall look at the text REGARDING IT AS DECISIVE.

"Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" This argument is decisive. For the argument is fetched from the Lord himself. Note this. In his prayer, Jeremiah drew his encouragement from what the Lord had done. Observe "Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." Creation is a fine argument. The God that made the heavens and the earth without help from any can surely do anything he pleases. Ho who made the mountains, and the sea, and the isles thereof can do anything. He who created the skies and made the stars also in the far-off space-those great and mighty orbs-what is there that he cannot do? This was good argument for Jeremiah; but Jehovah does not point to his works, nor quote creation nor providence: he speaks of himself: the source of all, whence a thousand earths and heavens might flow like streams from a fountain. There it stands in its majestic simplicity: "I am Jehovah." When we look to God alone, and think, by the help of his Spirit, of who he is and what he must be, then we realize that nothing can be too hard for him. Alas, what feeble notions we have of God! I dare say

we think that we magnify him, but in reality we belittle him with our highest thoughts. When we go down to the sea of trial, and do business on great waters of trouble, we find that we know little enough of God. When we see his wonders on the deep we are astonished and overwhelmed, and if one of his storms should arise our faith is staggered. If we did but rise to an idea of God, if we could but form a fair idea of the immeasurable greatness of his power, doubt and mistrust would become impossible. "Is anything too hard for me?" saith Jehovah. Meditate much upon the divine Father, Creator and Preserver; upon the divine Son, the risen Redeemer, who hath all power in heaven and in earth; upon the sacred Spirit, of whom the rushing mighty wind in the tornado is but a faint symbol, and you will feel that here is the source of all might. "I am Jehovah." The argument takes you to himself, and coming to you from his own mouth the reason is a decisive one.

But he means us also to see the argument as founded on his name, "I am Jehovah." I am always sorry that our revisers had not the courage of their knowledge, and had left the divine name as it is in the original Hebrew, and given us the word "Jehovah" where they usually put LORD. It is a name of awe and glory, and the Christian church must get back to it, and return more distinctly to the worship of Jehovah. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, this God is our God for ever and ever; and we might more clearly have recognized this, if the incommunicable name had been preserved to us in our version of the sacred Scriptures.

The name brings out the personality of God. Those who say that there is no God, are, some of them, forced to admit that there is a central force, a power which makes for righteousness. They talk of an impersonal something, but we believe in a personal God, and he who has no personal God has, in truth, no God at all. I cannot call an unknown force my Father, and I cannot address my trust or my prayer to it. It, indeed! The Creator of persons an it! We want him, a person, a conscious, thinking, acting personality. This we have here: "I am Jehovah." The name signifies self-existence. God does not exist because of his surroundings: he draws nothing from without, his life is in himself. He derives no support or aid from anything outside of himself; indeed, there is nothing which has not come of him. All things were made by him, and he sustaineth all things by the word of his power.

The name of Jehovah reminds us that he has within himself sufficiency for all his will; he hath adequate power of performance for all his purposes and decrees; Jehovah wills, and it is done. He has created legions of angels, but he borrows nothing from them. He can truly say, "I am, and there is none beside me." Those mysterious living creatures which are nearest to his throne are his creatures, and not his helpers. The best instructed and the most willing of his servants, derive their all from him, but supply him with nothing. Remembering the name, Shaddai, God all-sufficient, we understand all the better his question, "Is anything too hard for me?" He lays the burden of the question upon his own self; the whole stress of that which is hard in itself, and too hard for others, he meets with that word, "I am Jehovah." All the power that can possibly be required in any imaginable case is in that name "Jehovah"! It is an immeasurable word: the eagle's wing cannot rise to its height; he that dives into the abyss cannot reach its depth. Jehovah's name is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, broader than space, and greater than all things. What can we know of this infinite word, "I am Jehovah"?

Moreover, the name sets forth the truth that he is immutable: he is "I am that I am." Time does not affect him, nor change come near him. He is never less than Jehovah; he cannot be more. We may at any moment of the darkest night rest as confidently upon the I AM as in the brightest day.

In fact, the meaning of that glorious word is infinite and unutterable. I do not wonder that the Jew should fear to write it, and substitute for it the word Adonai, or Lord. We, casting away the superstition, feel an equal reverence, and when our God saith to us "I am Jehovah," we bow before him, and confess that all questioning of possibility is ended for ever.

Yet in the text please to notice that the argument is also founded on the Lord's relation to man. "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." There is no other God for man anywhere or at any time save Jehovah. The gods of the heathen, aha, aha! they deserve no such name: they are idols, but our God made the heavens. There is one living and true God for all flesh; there is, there can be no other; there is no room for another god, for our God filleth all things. He is the God of all flesh, for "it is he that made us, and not we ourselves." We have neither been evolved by law, nor struck out by chance. The wretched it, which idiots talk of, is no sire of ours: Jehovah is the Maker of all flesh.

*“His sovereign power, without our aid,
Made us of clay and formed us men.”*

We rejoice that all flesh have such a God. Yet note that before the Lord men are only “flesh.” Hear this, ye kings and great ones of the earth! He calls you “flesh.” How sorrowfully do we see the truth of this in the heartrending sickness of one of the greatest and best beloved of potentates! How wretchedly do we see it amidst the pomp of the funeral when the greatest of the great are carried out to be laid in the pasture-ground of the worm! Hear this, ye men of light and leading! Ye who have bedecked your names with all the letters of the alphabet! You, too, with all your learning, are but flesh. Do I hear you say of such a one: He is a great man? Is “great” a word which can be linked with flesh? What is the grandeur, the glory, the pomp of flesh? All flesh is grass, and grass is cut down, and withereth. Right surely is he accursed that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. You tell me of the charms of beauty. You sing of your beloved so white and ruddy; think what they will come to by-and-by. Flesh! Ah me! Leave it to itself. Is there anything fouler or more putrid than flesh when God calls back the spirit which quickeneth it? Behold the harvest of flesh in the garner of the sepulcher! See how the great reaper heaps up corruption! This is what we are, men and brethren. God sees us in our true condition, and he calls us “flesh.” Yet I do rejoice that, while we are flesh, he is our God. How is the worm linked to the immortal! Happy men who have such a God! Not that flesh and blood, as they are, can inherit the kingdom of God, nor that corruption can dwell with incorruption; but for believers in the Lord Jesus there is a resurrection which shall lift us into a body of a nobler sort. We shall soon be rid of this carrion, and we shall be aloft with him where he dwelleth; and then, in the day of his appearing, even this poor body shall put on glory, and in our flesh shall we see God. As the Lord maketh the dull gold of earth into clear gold, like unto transparent glass, even so he maketh this vile body to be like the glorious body of our risen and ascended Lord. We bow before the Lord, even we who are but dust and ashes, yea, worse, who are but flesh, and we bless his name, that yet he deigns to call us his people, and to be our God. The argument is that, since Jehovah is the God of all flesh, he can effect his purposes by men, and work among them things which seem impossible.

The argument is so great that it puts all other arguments out of court. Poor Jeremiah is puzzled: he has been buying that acre or two of land which he will never see, and his pockets are empty; and Baruch has been putting

away the title-deeds in an earthen vessel, with a half-smile upon his face. The prophet sits down and thinks over the transaction, and his reason or the devil whispers, "What a fool you are! You might just as well have bought a horn of the new moon." Yet, somehow it must be made to appear a wise and sensible transaction, for the Lord never makes fool of his people. Jeremiah feels that, as the command came from Jehovah, his own judgment is out of court: it is for the Lord, and not for him, to make good the transaction. All Jerusalem was to be burned and destroyed; what could be the use of his purchase? But, then, the condition of Jerusalem was not the point to be considered. God had said, "I am Jehovah," and that had put the King of Judah and his mighty men out of the reckoning. Is anything too hard for Jehovah? Come, Jeremiah, rake up your difficulties; set in order the discouraging circumstances; call in your friends, who all shake their heads at you, and point their fingers to their brows, as much as to insinuate that you are a little gone from your senses; and then, answer them all with this "nothing is too hard for Jehovah." This clears the deck of every doubt that would board your vessel. Blessed argument which answers every difficulty, and sets faith upon a rock from which it cannot be removed! "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

III. Having led you thus far I now would have you follow me in something practical, namely, APPLYING IT IN DETAIL.

The text saith, "Is anything too hard for me?" Apply this question to the justification of your obedience. When you know what is right it will happen, more often than not, that to do right will be costly or at least risky; and if you judge after the manner of worldly-wise men you will consider yourselves likely to be losers by obeying God. You may lose friends, reputation, assistance, and peace. This question of loss is answered at once by this fact, that if you do what God bids you, the responsibility of your conduct lies with him, and he will bear you through. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" As he justified the action of his servant Elijah at Carmel, and justified the purchase made by Jeremiah, so will he justify all the obedient actions of his people. He will bring forth our judgment as the light, and our righteousness as the noonday.

Apply this glorious truth to the sure fulfillment of all the divine promises. Consider a great one to begin with. This chapter evidently shows that the Jews are one day to be converted and restored. Do you believe it? "Oh," says one, "that would be a wonder"! It will be a wonder, and the text may

be read, "Is anything too wonderful for me?" He can call them off from money-hunting: can take away their unbelief concerning the Lord Jesus. He can cause the lips which now revile the name of the Crucified to sing praises to the Nazarene. Glory be to his name, he can cause the waters of Siloah, which flow softly, again to flow with blessing, and make the desolate land again to blossom as the rose. They that crucified the Lord of glory shall look on him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for him. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Apply this to any case of great sin. Select anyone whom you knew to be especially hard-hearted, and pray for him earnestly and hopefully. Choose out some glaring sinner, or special heretic, or fierce hater of religion, and pray for him. You say to yourself, "I will choose an easier case." Do not so. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Will you, in your judgment, set anyone beyond the reach of mercy, and out of the bounds of grace? Make an application of our text to the most desperate and loathsome sinner, and believe that nothing is too hard for the Lord. O chief of sinners, if thou art here this morning, blasphemer, swearer, thief, drunkard, whoremonger, harlot, take home this question to thyself-Thus saith the Lord, "Is anything too hard for me?" If you believe in the Lord Jesus, God has saved you, saved you now. He can and will wash every believing sinner from all his sins through the blood of Jesus, and he will graciously blot out all his iniquities. Remember how he forgave David, and Manasseh, and the dying thief, and Saul of Tarsus, and the woman that was a sinner. May the Holy Ghost make a personal application of omnipotent love to each of you who now feel your sins! Salvation is not too hard a thing for the Lord.

Apply this to difficult truths. I will put before you a problem. There is the truth of man's free agency. It is an easy cut, you know, to deny that there is such a thing as free-will; but it is not fair, for men are responsible, free agents, and God has endowed them with will. But the knotty question arises-If man acts freely in his sinful actions how can predestination be a fact? If every man acts after his own will, how, then, does God fore-ordain all things? I answer, "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" The solving of this great problem constrains me to worship the Lord; for he does solve it in actual history. I could understand God's executing his purposes upon material substances, such as stones and wood; but this is the grandeur of his power, that while he leaves men free agents, and does not in any case lead them to sin, yet they do act exactly as he foretold that they would do. The responsibility lies with them, for they do as they please; but yet his

divine purpose is effected. Peter said to the Jews concerning our Lord, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." They did their evil deed most willingly, and yet it was in the divine purpose from of old. They were eager to destroy Christ out of diabolical malice, and yet all the while they were the instruments of the death by which we are redeemed from destruction. Have faith enough to believe that Jehovah rules in the world of mind as well as in that of matter. He doeth as ho wills among the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world.

Consider another hard case-the hardest of all: human salvation. Sin must bring with it punishment. It is an inevitable law of moral government that, if you break the commandment, the command will be avenged upon you. Yet God is merciful, and he is willing to forgive sin. How can it be possible for God to exercise the fullness of his mercy, and yet discharge the necessities of his justice? All men and all angels put together would have made but one fool in trying to solve that difficulty. The Lord has answered it. He gave his Son to bear our sin. Jehovah Jesus died, and presented himself as the great sacrifice for our iniquities. On yonder cross the law is honored, and man is justly saved. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Bring hither your own little problems. You are always getting into tangles and snarls. Prudent friends try to help you, but the tangle grows worse. Bring your hard cases to one who is wiser than Solomon, and he will draw out a clear thread for you. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" After Calvary nothing is intricate or difficult. The atoning sacrifice is such a triumph of wisdom and grace as can never be paralleled. Love here wore the girdle of omnipotence. All things are possible since Jesus has died.

We believe in the deep depravity of humanity, but Jehovah can change its nature. The Lord of love can make sinners into saints. We tremble lest some have lost the very capacity for virtue. We ask in despair, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" But with God such marvels are everyday things.

For the salvation of great multitudes we are also exercised. We look on wicked London, and despair of it. We look on China, and India, and Africa, and say, "Can these dry bones live." "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The tears are in our eyes as we think of the Congo, and the heroic ones who have perished by its pestilential waters. Will Africa ever stretch out its hands unto Christ? "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

We look upon the church at home in the present day. It is steeped in worldliness, and smothered with false doctrine. Lo! the many have turned aside from the gospel, and given themselves up to a thousand errors: how can the evil be cured? It is to be cured; it must be cured; it shall be cured, for thus saith Jehovah- "Is anything too hard for me?" If the Lord had left but one faithful man under heaven he would with that one man deliver Israel. But he has reserved for himself thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Let us have no fear about it, but let us exhibit a boundless confidence. God's truth will win the day who ever comes against it. "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" I have lived to see, and shall yet live to see, such marvels in this respect as fill my mouth with laughter and my tongue with singing; "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." If the Lord waiteth a little it is that he may gain the more glory. If he even seemeth to draw back doth not many a man draw back when he is about to take the longer leap? Have you never seen a man draw back his hand when he is about to strike a tremendous blow? God is never baffled; Jesus shall not fail, nor be discouraged. The living Christ hath died in weakness once; but now that he liveth he lives in all the power and majesty of the living God. To what may we not apply the text, when Jehovah asks us, "Is anything too hard for me"?

IV. Lastly, dear friends, I beg you to treat the text as USING IT WITH DELIGHT. Time allows but few words. Use the text as a preventive of unbelieving sin. You say you are in a nasty hobble. I know you are; and, therefore, the devil says, "Put forth your hand unto. iniquity." An evil transaction seems the sure way to get you out of your difficulty. What! do you wish to help the Lord? Do you dream that he needs your sin to aid him in delivering you? Flee from the rash action. Let not your hand reproach you, as Cranmer's did when at the stake: he held it in the fire, and cried, "That unworthy right hand," because it had once signed a recantation. Do not sin. Be poor, but be holy. Be straightforward and honest, come what may. God does .not need the help of your sin in order that he may give you your daily bread. When I think of a man supposing that sin is necessary to help God's providence, I am ashamed. Even in what is right our aid to God is like an emmet lending help to an elephant; but to do wrong to help the Lord to provide for us is a sort of acted blasphemy. And such a poor creature as you are, do you think that your foul finger is needful to God's divine work? Away with the idea of its over being needful to do wrong. Let all sins of haste, all tricks of policy, all compromises with error, all

silence through the fear of consequences, all doings or not doings which would involve a blot on your conscience, be put away for ever. That filthy thing-temporizing and parleying with evil, which men call prudence-let it be hanged upon the gallows of scorn. Do God's work thoroughly, heartily, intensely, and God will reward you in his grace.

Use it next for consolation in the time of trouble. You are now in a pit wherein there is no water: how can you ever get out? Listen: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" It is worse than a pit, say you: it seems like a living hell. The Lord can deliver you. Remember Jonah in the belly of the great fish, which went down deeper and deeper till it seemed to dive below the bottoms of the mountains. It seemed all over with Jonah. But it was not so. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Jonah owned that "salvation is of the Lord," and the fish was not able to imprison him any longer. Forth came Jonah to life and liberty. Jehovah hath delivered those who trust in him, and he will yet deliver us.

Next, use the text as a window through which you look with expectation. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Expect the unexpected to happen to you. He who whispers to himself- "God is going to do something for me that I have never looked for" is the brave man. "A storm is brewing," cries one. Is it? My way of putting it is-rain is being prepared for the earth. Brethren, the Lord's blessing is coming upon the churches: look for it!

Let this text be a stimulus to you to engage in great enterprises. Launch out into the deep. Do not always keep on fishing for shrimps along the shore. Attempt great things for God. Attempt something which as yet you cannot do. Any fool can do what he can do; it is only the believer who does what he cannot do. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Fall back upon omnipotence, and then go forward in the strength of it.

Let the text be a reason for adoration. O thou to whom nothing is hard, we adore thee! We worship thee with all our hearts, and this day we believingly link our weakness with thine omnipotence. We trust thee for life, for death, for eternity. Dear Savior, we trust thee now with all our sins and sorrows. Nothing is too hard for thee, therefore save thy poor servants according to the riches of thy grace.

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”*