

## THE WAITING EYE AND THE BOUNTIFUL HAND

A Sermon Preached on Thursday Evening, July 1, 1841, at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, Whitechapel

"The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Psalm 145:15, 16

The Scriptures are a perfect rule of doctrine, experience, and practice. This is a truth which most will admit in words; but what they allow in word they often deny in deed. Men may differ indeed as to the way in which they deny it; for we generally find it depends much on the natural bias of the individual; and that there is a tendency, according to the different constitution of men's minds, either to introduce doctrines which are not in the word of God, or to set up an experience which is not in the Scriptures of truth; or to enforce a line which is not contained in the precepts of the Gospel. Those, for instance, who are heady and high-minded, are fond of setting up some new doctrine, or bringing forward some novel idea, under the pretext of superior light in the Scriptures of truth; those who are of a visionary, and what is termed enthusiastic turn, are desirous of putting forward some wild dream, or airy flight, which is nothing but the fruit of their heated imagination or some delusion of Satan, as genuine experience; and those who have naturally a Pharisaical bias, and are leaning upon a covenant of works, are apt highly to value self-imposed rules of abstinence **"Touch not, taste not, handle not"**, and to enforce these self-devised rules as equivalent with the precepts of the Gospel. Now no doctrine, no experience, and no practice will stand, except that which is in perfect accordance with the Scriptures of truth; and God will bring all his people, sooner or later to discard every doctrine, which they do not receive

of the Spirit through the channel of God's word to look with suspicion upon, and utterly to reject every experience, which is not to be traced out in the Scriptures of truth; and to cast aside, as the working of self-righteous Pharisaic leaven, every ordinance of man, which is not to be found laid down by the Holy Ghost in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If our experience, then, such as it is, does not tally with the word of God, if it is not to be found in the Scriptures of truth, if it does not coincide and perfectly agree with the experience that God himself has left upon record as a pattern for ours to be conformed to, however high, however low, however wonderful in our own eyes, however marvellous it may appear in the eyes of others, it must all be set aside as delusion, and discarded as erroneous.

But it does not follow, because you cannot see your experience in all points traced out in the word of God, that it is not agreeable to the Scriptures. This often tries the living soul. He has temptations, and those temptations he cannot find in the word of God; and he has exercises, and he cannot see that any Bible saint was exercised in the same manner; and he has feelings, and he can find no feelings akin to them in the Scriptures; and he is tried and perplexed, because he cannot find anything in the word of God, which tallies and fits in with those things that are passing in his own bosom. But at times and seasons the Lord is pleased to cast a light upon some text of Scripture, the meaning of which we never saw before; or he condescends to show us that our temptation is included under general declaration—such, for instance, as "tempted in **all** points like as we are," or, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." The Lord opens our eyes to see, whatever have been the exercises of our mind, that there is some passage of Scripture, under which, when the Lord leads us into it, we may hide ourselves; and thus feel, that though the particular

exercise is not in the word of God or at least we cannot find it, it is contained in some comprehensive passage of Scripture, which includes that, because it includes all. But as distinct from peculiar exercises and peculiar temptations, there are certain features which are common to the whole family of God, certain feelings which every child of God is more or less acquainted with; and these stand out in more legible characters, in bolder relief, and are more visibly traced out in the word of God than the others. And therefore, it should be the aim of every minister who desires "rightly to divide the word of truth," to trace out such a way as the generality of God's people walk in, and so to open up the work of grace in the soul, that every living child, when the Spirit of the Lord enables him, may see his features reflected in the mirror which he holds up before them.

I think we find something of this kind in the words of the text. There is nothing very deep here,—so deep that some children of God cannot go into the depths; there is nothing very high here—so that the weak cannot raise up their heads to get at the enjoyment of it; but the experience traced out in these words seems level with the teachings of God's Spirit in the souls of God's family generally, the average experience of a child of God—that which meets most cases, and is suitable to the teachings of the Spirit in most quickened hearts. And therefore from these words, I hope, with God's blessing, to point out a little of the feelings of a living soul this evening.

"The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing."

1. We find the word "all," and the word "every," used in the text: "the eyes of **all** wait upon thee,"—"the desire of **every**

living thing." That word, then, "**all**" must include every quickened soul, the expression "**every** living thing" must comprehend every one that is under divine teaching; for though the words have no doubt a literal signification, expressive of the universality of God's providence and implying that the whole animate creation are looking up unto God for the daily provision that he gives unto them, yet they are doubtless to be explained in a far higher sense, and to be interpreted in a spiritual manner, so as to describe the effect of the teachings of God's Spirit in the soul. "The eyes of all wait upon thee:" all the living family, all the quickened children of God, all in whose hearts he has planted his fear, all whom he has brought to some knowledge of him, and to some knowledge of themselves.

2. These are said to have "**eyes**." "The eyes of all wait upon thee." Clearly, then, they are not dead in sin; clearly they are not dead in a form of godliness. They have "**eyes**," that is, they have a spiritual faculty, whereby they can see God. They are not buried in the grave of death; but possess a new and hidden life, whereby they are enabled to realize the things of God, they are made known to them by the Spirit of God. The expression, "The eyes of all wait upon thee," implies that these persons who thus wait upon God must have eyes whereby they see him, for had they no eyes to see him, they would not know where to wait upon him, they would not know where he was to be found, they would not know what it was that they were to receive from his hands. It implies, therefore, in the persons of whom it is spoken, that they have a spiritual knowledge of Jehovah; that the veil has been taken from off their carnal minds, and they have seen light in God's light; that the Lord has in a measure manifested himself unto them as he has not manifested himself to the world; that he has opened their eyes, "and turned them from darkness unto light, and from the power of

Satan unto God," and thus has given to them eyes to see him, whom to know "is life eternal." And not merely opened their eyes to see him, but opened their hearts to feel his presence, to recognise his power, and to fall down before his footstool.

3. For the posture assigned to them is one of "waiting:" "The eyes of all wait upon thee." No arrogant confidence, no rushing forward with daring boldness as though they would snatch the blessing from God, whether he means to give it or not—no standing upon the lofty mountains of presumption, those mountains of Gilboa where there is "no dew nor rain," do these words sanction; but the posture intimated in them is that of a suppliant, of a petitioner, of one who has a favour to receive, and has nothing in himself, which he can put forward, to draw forth that favour out of the bosom of Him who alone can bestow it. But the expression also implies, that the blessing is not communicated just when the suppliants want to have it, but that there is a time allotted for that blessing to be given. The way in which the Lord acts upon the souls of his children, is to raise up first a deep sense of their poverty, emptiness, destitution, and beggary and then to set before their eyes those blessings which are precisely suitable to that state into a which he brings them. And this he does by enlightening the eyes of their understanding, whereby they see certain blessings, revealed in the word of God as stored up in Christ. As the Lord presents these blessings before their eyes, He kindles certain desires, and longings, and thirstings and pantings, after them, that they may be individually realized, personally enjoyed, and spiritually and supernaturally manifested. I believe, that the Lord, before ever he communicate, a real blessing to the souls of his poor and needy children, not merely convinces them by his Spirit of the depth of their poverty, of their truly ruined and lost state by nature, of the

destitution of everything good in them; but he opens their eyes in a mysterious manner to see certain blessings which are stored up in Christ,—for instance, righteousness to cover their nakedness, blood to atone for their transgressions, grace to superabound over all the aboundings of sin, faith to be the evidence of things not seen, hope to anchor within the veil, and love to be a foretaste of eternal bliss. These and similar blessings the Lord presents before their eyes, and gives them a spiritual understanding that these mercies are stored up in Christ; and as he gives them this perception of what the blessing is, and shows them that these blessings are not in the creature, but in Christ, by the mysterious attractions of his

Spirit he draws forth the desires and sighs and ardent affections of their souls after these blessings, so that nothing but these special mercies can really satisfy them, ease their minds, assuage their troubles, bind up their wounds, and pour oil and wine into their consciences. And thus he brings them to be suppliants; he lays them at his feet as beggars. He will not allow any one to come into his presence, who rushes forward with bold presumption and daring familiarity. He will not suffer his children to make any claim upon him, as if they had a right to the blessings that are in Christ; but he brings them, as the vilest of the vile, and the basest of the base, and the neediest of the needy, into that posture, wherein they feel that there is not in their hearts a grain of that which they long to experience, not an atom of that which they want to enjoy, and that they have nothing in themselves whereby they can merit or draw down that favour from God's hands, which they long to receive. And yet, base though they feel themselves to be, black though they know that they are, there is that mysterious attraction of the Spirit, as well as that mysterious fitting together of their poverty and Christ's righteousness, their nakedness and

Christ's justifying robe, their helplessness and his almighty strength, that they never can be satisfied, unless an experienced and enjoyed union of the two takes place in their conscience. Thus the Lord makes them "wait upon him;" "the eyes of all wait upon thee." The Lord makes them "wait upon him with many sighs and groans, with many fervent petitions, with many wrestlings of spirit before the throne of grace."

But the object of the Lord is to keep them there. He does not bring his poor and needy children to a throne of grace, and send them away immediately that they have come. But his purpose is, to show them deeply what they are, to make them value his favours, to sink them lower and lower in self, that they may rise higher and higher in Christ, to "teach them to profit" **as the Scripture speaks**, to write his laws upon their hearts in lines of the Spirit's drawing, in deep lines, "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever;" not characters traced out in the sand, to be washed out by the rising tide, or effaced by the wind, but in characters as permanent as the soul itself. The work of the Spirit in the hearts of the redeemed, is radical work, work that goes to the very bottom; nothing flimsy, nothing superficial, nothing which can be effaced and obliterated springs from Him, but that which shall have an abiding effect, that which shall last for eternity. The Lord is fitting his people for eternity, and therefore his work in them is thorough work; it goes right through them; it leaves nothing covered up and masked over, but turns all up from the very bottom, "discovering the foundation to the neck" **Hab 3:13**, and doing in a man spiritually what the Lord threatened to do in Jerusalem literally, "I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and **turning it upside down**" **2Ki 21:13**. Therefore he does not answer the prayers of his children immediately when they come to his throne of mercy and

grace, but rather he deepens those convictions that he has implanted; he makes the burdens heavier, that he has put upon their back; he hides himself instead of discovering himself, and draws back further instead of coming nearer. Now, this is intended to make them wait with greater earnestness, with more unreserved simplicity, with more absolute dependence upon him and him alone to communicate the blessing, with greater separation of heart from all the strength of the creature, with a firmer resolution in the soul to cast away all its own righteousness, and to hang solely and wholly upon the Spirit's teachings, and Jesus' sweet revelation of himself.

But there are many difficulties and exercises, that attend the soul when it is in this waiting posture. Sometimes the length of season before the Lord manifests himself, daunts and baffles the living soul, that is sighing after Gospel blessings. He reasons thus with himself: "Surely if I were a child of God, I should have had the blessing sooner; my prayers cannot be acceptable in his eyes; I must be a hypocrite; I fear I have only the feelings of one, who has a conscience in some measure naturally more susceptible of impressions than others; but not one which has been spiritually touched with the finger of God. It cannot be a real work of the Spirit, for I find others have been delivered before me; I know several who have received deliverances, and manifestations, and here I am, as poor and needy and naked and empty, as the very first day I came." Satan, too, will often set in upon the soul when it is in this posture, and say, "It is all true; the work never was real; the fear of God never was in your soul; if it had been, you would not have been entangled in such and such sins. See what a base wretch you were on that occasion; recollect how you have backslidden from God on the other occasion; is it not evident that you are a hypocrite!" Under these accusations, which so dovetail in



with conscience, the soul is ready to sink into despair. But the Lord makes use of these very buffetings of Satan, and these sore exercises of the soul, to bring about his own intentions; that is, he implants a sigh and a cry, that we may not be hypocrites, that there may be reality in us, that he would make our hearts all that he would have them to be, and would himself work in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, would give us that simplicity of heart and tenderness of conscience and godly fear, which are his own divine workmanship. And thus the Lord often baffles Satan, and as it were outwits him by the very things which Satan employs to harass and distress the soul. The Lord will keep the soul "waiting" upon him. Sometimes these sore exercises and temptations are made the means of driving us nearer to the throne. Sometimes the Lord himself bestows a "spirit of grace and of supplications;" and that enables us to wrestle more fervently with him. Sometimes he lays upon the conscience pangs and convictions of distress; and that makes the soul cry more earnestly for the blessing. And sometimes he draws forth the unutterable desires and affections of the renewed spirit after the blessing, and after himself who gives the blessing; as though nothing else would satisfy the soul but he must come, and come immediately,—he must bless, and bless immediately—he must even now reveal himself to the soul, and fill it with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Again: the Lord keeps the soul waiting upon him, sometimes by allowing us a little to depart; by suffering us to go to the utmost length of the tether, and then making us feel the bitterness of departing from him. He allows us, in his secret and mysterious purposes, to get into a carnal, dark, stupid, careless, unfeeling frame; he allows us to backslide inwardly from him, and to depart in heart and affection from the fountain of living waters; and then he takes occasion from this very inward departure to bring troubles into the soul,

that "the backslider in heart may be filled with his own ways." He makes use of this very truant-playing to inflict chastisement; and the very means that Satan has been employing to drive the soul from him, he uses as means to bring the soul near unto him. By dark and trying ways, too, in providence does the Lord sometimes teach his people to wait upon him. They shall often be beggars for their daily bread literally, as well as spiritually, and their eyes shall wait upon the Lord for every supply in temporals as much as in spirituals. But whether so or not, the Lord will take care that all his children, without exception, shall be beggars in spiritual things. Now, this often much tries their minds. We are for being independent in grace, as we are for being independent in providence. It is a mortifying position to be always a beggar; that a man should never have any strength of his own—that he should never have any store in hand—that he should never have any power to draw upon the bank—that he should be always a poor, needy, naked, helpless wretch—that he should never have anything, upon which he can look with satisfaction, and say, "It is mine;" but, day after day, be dependent upon the Lord for every prayer to put up, for every sigh, for every groan, for every promise, for every chapter of the Bible, for everything to be given to him, just as the Lord sees fit, from time to time—this dependent position so mortifies man's pride, and so baffles his reason, that he cannot, and will not submit to it, until God brings him to it by soul necessity. And, therefore, some of God's children, upon whom he does not see fit to keep a tight hand, break the tether; and instead of being poor, needy, dependent, broken-hearted suppliants at the foot of the cross, like the wild ass they "snuff up the wind at their pleasure" **Jer 2:24**, taking "the range of the mountains as their pasture, and searching after every green thing" **Job 39:8**. Or, they encircle themselves within the doctrines of grace, and rest at ease within these entrenchments, standing

in their own strength, and resting upon the letter of truth, without any feeling application or savoury unction of it in their souls.

But the Lord will bring all his children, sooner or later, each in their measure, to "wait upon him." Whatever trouble they are in, "the eyes of all wait upon thee;" whatever temptations they have to pass through, "the eyes of all wait upon thee" whatever difficulty in temporal things, whatever conflict in spiritual things whatever strait in providence, whatever exercise in grace be their lot the Lord will bring all his children at one time or another into this experience, "the eyes of all wait upon thee." "Wait upon thee" for deliverance; "wait upon thee" for a manifestation; "wait upon thee" for the lifting up the light of thy countenance; "wait upon thee" for one soft word spoken by thy mouth to the soul; "wait upon thee" for one smile of thine approving countenance; "wait upon thee" for one testimony of thine everlasting favour. And he that knows not what it is to wait upon God in this manner—wait upon him by night and by day as the Lord works it in him, wait upon him on his bed, wait upon him behind his counter, wait upon him in the solitary fields, wait upon him in the crowded streets—he lacks that evidence, he wants that divine feature, which the Holy Ghost has stamped here upon all the living family.

4. "And thou givest them their meat in due season." There is "meat," then, that they are waiting upon God for, to receive at his hands. And it is called "their meat." It belongs to them. All the elect of God have provision laid up for them in Christ; for "it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." "I will abundantly bless her provision" **Ps 132:15**. Though none of God's quickened family ever dare to **claim** the blessing at God's hands, yet the Lord has so stored up blessings in Christ, that they are actually and eternally

theirs; for, as the apostle says, "all things are yours." It is **their** meat then; that is the meat peculiar to the elect. Blood shed for their sins, and for their sins only; righteousness brought in for them, and for them only; love bestowed upon them, and upon them only; promises revealed for their comfort, and for their comfort only; an eternal inheritance, "incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them," and for them only. It is "their meat," because it is theirs in Christ, being lodged in Christ for their benefit. But it is theirs in another sense; and that is, they are the only people who hunger after it, who have an appetite for it, who have a mouth to feed upon it, who have a stomach to digest it. They are the only people whose eyes are really open to see what "meat" is. Others feed upon shadows; they know nothing of the savoury food of the Gospel. As the Lord said to his disciples, "I have meat to eat which ye know not of." His meat was the hidden communications of God's love, the visitations of his Father's presence, the divine communion that he enjoyed with his Father while the disciples were gone away, "to do the will of him that sent him and to finish his work." So, for the children of God, there is meat in Christ; and this meat the Lord gives them a hunger after. He not only sets before their eyes what the meat is but he kindles inexpressible longings in their soul to be fed therewith. God's people cannot feed upon husks, nor upon ashes, nor upon chaff, nor upon the east wind, nor upon grapes of gall and the bitter clusters of Gomorrah **De 32:32** . They must have "meat" "savoury meat, such as their soul loveth"—that which God himself communicates, and which his hand alone can bring down, and give unto them, so that they may receive it from him as their soul-satisfying portion.

The "meat" which God's children long after, is to have "the truth as it is in Jesus" in its various branches, revealed with

power to their heart. Not merely to see a certain truth in God's word; that is, like a hungry beggar, looking at savoury provision through a window, from which he is barred out: such a sight whets his appetite rather than satisfies it. The meat that God's people are longing after and the only thing which can assuage their spiritual hunger, is "the truth as it is in Jesus" manifested, revealed, discovered, and applied with power to their souls: dew, unction, savour, sweetness, life, light, liberty accompanying the word so that truth falls as heavenly manna into their hearts. It is not sufficient that the Holy Ghost should create the appetite, but he must overshadow the soul with his divine influences, breathe abroad a heavenly savour, and fill it with some sensations of his presence, with some meltings of heart at the feet of Christ, with some drawing forth of affection to God; and thus communicate an inward reception of the truth, and an enjoyment of its sweetness and savour. A child of God never can be deceived long together. He may get under presumptuous ministers, drink for a while into their spirit, and feed his fleshly mind at their table; but there is a something in his heart that keeps him from being satisfied with their light and airy food. He may store his head with knowledge and doctrines, but still there is a voice in him, an honest irrepressible tongue which bears from time to time a solemn testimony that he is not in a right spot, that he is not living under heavenly teaching, that he has no sweet communion of soul with the Three-one Jehovah; but that he is lifted up out of his real standing in the divine life, and that his knowledge is but a shadowy dream, confused, indistinct, vague, destitute of vitality and power. And though he may struggle against such a self-condemning monitor, he still, in spite of himself, carries in his bosom an internal evidence, a testimony not to be denied, a witness which will make itself heard, that he is not living under the anointings of the Holy Ghost, and that the Heavenly Comforter does not put his seal

upon his religion. I believe, there are children of God, who sit under presumptuous ministers; but God will never let them live and die in resumption. He will bring them out sooner or later; he will cut them up with piercing convictions, and lay them at the feet of Christ, hating themselves as the vilest of transgressors, for being drawn aside into that worst of sins. Oh! when the Lord lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, it will make a living conscience bleed; it will cut a man with such convictions, that he will hardly know how to stand before God. If anything can sink a living soul **except it is being ensnared by the flesh**, it is being entangled in presumption, intruding into the things of God, without the Lord the Spirit leading him into them. The Lord's people are seeking after meat; but that meat is never given to one in presumption; it is never given but to a poor broken-down and contrite sinner. The Lord never bestowed meat upon a self-satisfied soul; he never gave a broken-hearted Christ to a whole-hearted sinner; he never sprinkled atoning blood on a reckless conscience. The Lord never throws away his blessings. He bestows them upon a heart which he has prepared to receive them,—a heart made soft, tender, and contrite, so as to feel itself utterly unworthy of the blessing, and yet unable to take anything short of it, dissatisfied with everything else, and yet feeling itself unworthy of one glimpse of love or one token of favour. Still it is "**their** meat;" and nothing but that meat ever will satisfy them.

5. "Thou **givest** them." It is not to be taken out of the Bible, because it may be read; not to be caught up, as the minister throws it forth, because it may be heard; not to be got out of books; but to be bestowed by the holy hand of Jehovah himself, and received in the posture of a penitent, in the attitude of a suppliant, a sinner prostrate at the foot of the

cross, without anything in self but wounds, condemnation, and guilt.

6. But there is a due season: "Thou givest them their meat in due season." There are many living souls, who are hungering after divine blessings, but the "due season" has not come. "The times and the seasons the Father hath put in his own power." You are not yet fit for it; the Lord has to bring you lower; you will have to travel through darker paths, to pass through sorer exercises.—There is a "due season" for the manifestation of Gospel blessings; there is a fitting time, which the Searcher of hearts knows. And that Searcher of hearts knows that many of the true Church of God are at this present time in that state, that he will not manifest to them his greatest and richest blessings. There is a "due season," in which they are revealed and manifested to the soul; and that season will be as suitable to all its wants, as it will be most glorious to God. That "due season" will most probably be when the soul will least expect to receive it. The promise having been so long delayed, it seems as though it would never come; the blessing having been so long withheld, it appears as though the Lord would never bestow it; having denied his countenance so long, it seems as though he had drawn a black cloud over the throne, and through that cloud the rays of the sun would never shine. But it is a "due season;" it will surely come; "though the vision tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." There is a "set time to favour Zion," and when that set time arrives, the Lord will build up Zion and appear in his glory, for he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer **Ps 102:16,17**.

7. "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." There is something very sweet in this expression, "Thou openest thine hand;" implying that the

Lord holds the blessing in his own hand, and that it is the opening of the hand, the unclosing of the heavenly palm, whereby the blessing is communicated. I have thought sometimes from the words, that there is some intimation of the way in which the Lord communicates his blessings. It is something like an earthly father, when he comes home at night. Perhaps he has purchased something for his child, some toy or sweetmeat, during the day, which he holds in his hand, and just opens it for a few moments, and lets the child see what he has brought him; this is to kindle the desire of the child after the thing which the father intends him to have. But no sooner has the father opened his hand for a few moments, than he closes it again, in order to whet still more the desire of the child, and make it run to him, to try to obtain possession of it. So, the heavenly Father often for a moment uncloses his hand, displays the blessing before the eyes of his children, holds forth the atonement, and discovers the beauty, the grace, the loveliness of Jesus; and as he for a few moments opens his hand, he kindles all the burning desires and breathing affections of the soul after the blessing. The living child then runs to the Father to procure it; but the hand is closed, the blessing is withheld. But to pursue our comparison, the child, having once seen what is in the father's hand, knows that it is there, and its object is to get possession of it; and therefore it will try to thrust its tiny finger into the father's palm, and thus force it open. Does not this resemble the child of God, who when he has seen the blessings that God holds in his hands, and the affections of his heart are kindled after those blessings, seeks by fervent prayer and earnest cries and holy wrestlings to prevail upon the Lord to give him possession of that blessing which he longs to obtain? Do I speak irreverently or unscripturally when I say that thus to seek the blessing is to thrust our finger into the closed palm of the Lord, and endeavour to force it open? for "the kingdom of heaven



suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." "Let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me. But as the child seeks to uncloset its earthly parent's hand, the father will often hold it tighter; and so when a living soul is seeking to get a blessing from the Lord, it often seems as though the hand of the Lord was clasped more firmly than before. But after a time the earthly parent suffers the little fingers of the child to prevail. What is the child's strength against the father's? But he is overcome by love; it was always his intention that the child should have the blessing, and his purpose was to give it in that way; and therefore he suffers his strong hand to be overcome by the tiny finger of a little child; he unlocks his fingers, unclasps his palm and lets his child draw out the blessing. So it is spiritually with the family of God. He suffers himself to be prevailed upon; he unclasps his fingers and unlocks his palm, and so gives that blessing which he always meant to bestow. This seems clearly set forth in Jacob's wrestling with the angel. There was a blessing which the Lord always meant to give him—that Esau should not prevail against him, but was to wrestle for it. He must put forth his human hands and wrestle with the Lord and the Lord himself, the God of all power and might, allowed himself to be overcome, suffered himself to be prevailed upon, permitted weak lame Jacob to "have power with God and prevail," to show that our weakness is no barrier against our receiving blessings, for the Lord suffers our weakness to prevail over his strength. Then he "opens his hand," and not only displays the blessing, but allows the hand of faith to grasp the blessing, strengthens the hand of faith to lay hold upon Jesus' righteousness, the eye of faith to look upon Jesus' beauty, and the ear of faith to hear his voice and live."

8. "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing." That word has been sweet to me sometimes—"every living thing!"

How comprehensive it is! And how low it descends! How it comes down to the weakest and meanest and least of God's family, if he is only "a thing" only "a living thing!"—if he cannot see himself "a man in Christ,"—no, nor see himself a child of God, no, nor see himself a new born babe! If he cannot see in himself the features of a child even, yet to be "a living thing!" As one said of old, "I am a worm, and no man." He could not rise to the dignity of a man—a man "in Christ;" no, he was "a worm." So here; even to be "a thing" "a living thing," such a "creeping thing" as was seen among the unclean beasts in the sheet let down from heaven by the four corners in Peter's vision, with this mark upon it, and no other, **life**; for the words to him were, "**kill** and eat" implying life in all the contents of the sheet. Or like the early foetus in the womb, possessed of life but no distinct features visible, no limbs apparent, no human form, no human face; only a shapeless thing; but still having life. Now, perhaps, if you cannot trace the features of a grown up man as stamped upon you, and are exercised with distressing doubts whether your experience even amounts to the newborn babe, you may yet come in here, as being "a living thing," a **nondescript**; a sort of person that cannot make yourself out, having an experience which you think nobody can fathom, having exercises which nobody else seems to be harassed with, and walking in a path where no other child of God seems ever to have walked before you. Did not one say of old, **and have not you and I echoed his words?** "a beast before thee;" not a man, for "surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man" **Pr 30:2**; but possessed of life still, breathing after God still,

with that in the soul which cannot rest satisfied short of the manifestation and the presence of God.

But here is the mark of the "living thing"—**the desire**; "Thou satisfiest **the desire** of every living thing." Not natural desires; not "the desire of the sluggard, which hath nothing" **Pr 13:4**, that is, nothing spiritual in the want, or in the answer; but the spiritual desires which the Holy Ghost himself has kindled, desires after God, "as the hart panteth after the water brooks," desires to know Christ by some sweet revelation of his glory, desires to be brought to the foot of the cross and to have his image stamped upon our soul, desires to be led into the length and breadth and depth and height of that love of his which passeth knowledge, desires to walk before God accepted in the Beloved, desires to feel that in our souls which shall sweetly satisfy us that we are eternally His. This "living thing," though a nondescript in his own feelings, has that which marks the existence of life in him; and that is, living desires towards the living God,—breathing affections after Jesus, a restless dissatisfied heart, discontented with the things of time and sense, feeling no pleasure in what the world presents, and sighing to the Lord for the discoveries of his grace and his love.

"Thou openest thine hand, and **satisfiest** the desire of every living thing." Every child of God, then, that has spiritual life, every one who is really seeking the Lord, through the Blessed Spirit's working in him, every "living thing" that is possessed of living desires towards Jehovah, "Thou **satisfieth**." Here is the mark of having spiritual desires,—that they cannot be **satisfied** without God. Many a person will say, "I have desires," but what are those desires? Are they a lingering and thirsting after righteousness? Are they a panting after God's favour? Are they a solemn cry in the soul after the manifestations of Christ's love? And do they issue in

**satisfaction?** "Thou **satisfiest** the desires of every living thing." There will be a "satisfaction" when the desire is granted. "The desire of the slothful killeth him" **Pr 21:25**, for it never issues in eternal life; but when "the desire of the righteous cometh, it is a tree of life," which yields new fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for meat and the leaf thereof for medicine.

This, then, is to be the path that the Lord leads his children in. He convinces them of their misery and guilt; he opens their eyes to see Jesus; he kindles in their hearts desires after him; he brings them to wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob and to look for him; he shows them his hand full of blessings; he allows himself to be prevailed upon, through their intercession at his throne, to open his band, when the due season comes, to give them their meat, and to satisfy their desires. And now, I think, I have gone as low as is consistent with the Scriptures of truth. If there be any soul, in this chapel, exercised as I have described, and the Lord should please to bless what has been spoken by my feeble lips, it will take in every child of God, in whose heart God has planted his fear; it will comprehend every one, whose eyes are upon the Lord, expecting and hoping to receive blessings at his hands.