

THE SECRET FOOD AND THE PUBLIC NAME

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A SERMON
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“Your words were found, and I did eat them; and Your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”
Jeremiah 15:16.

JEREMIAH had been greatly persecuted for his faithfulness in delivering the word of God. He tells us the reason for his continuance in a work which brought him so sorrowful a reward. He makes us understand that he had been faithful in delivering God’s word, because that word had been overpoweringly precious to his own soul. He could not do otherwise than speak the truth of God, because that truth had been his own daily food. He had met with nothing but ill-treatment from those whom he addressed; they had vilified him in every way; he had been put into the most disgusting dungeon; he had been denied even bread and water; everything short of actually putting him to death had been inflicted upon him by his ungrateful countrymen; but still he went on prophesying. He could not be silent. Though his prophesying brought him nothing but tears, yet he continued still to prophesy; for God’s word came with such sweetness to his own soul, and filled his heart with such ravishing joy and delight, that he could not do otherwise than go and tell his fellow men what had been so delightful to him. I believe this to be the secret of every living ministry. The ministry that is fed upon flattery, and flatters those who flatter it, is a poor feeble counterfeit and God will never bless it; but the ministry which under great difficulties and fierce opposition is still sustained because the preacher cannot help continuing in it, is that which God will bless. It was good advice of a venerable divine to a young man who aspired to be a preacher, when he said to him, “Don’t become a minister if you can help it.” The man who could very easily be a tradesman or a merchant had better not be a minister. A preacher of the gospel should always be a *volunteer*, and yet he should always be a pressed man, who serves his King because he is compelled to do so by God Himself. Only he is fit to preach who cannot avoid preaching, who feels that woe is upon him unless he preaches the gospel, and that the very stones would cry out against him if he should hold his peace.

I have said that Jeremiah lets us into a secret; his outer life, consisting in his perpetual faithful ministry, was to be accounted for by his inward love of the word which he preached; depend upon it, this secret reveals all true spiritual life. If ever you see anyone who walks in holiness, stands fast in temptation, and is upheld under affliction, you may rest assured there is a something about him that is not perceived by every eye; there is a secret which the world knows not of; a hidden fountain which sustains the stream of his life; there is an invisible spring of vitality which keeps him vigorous even in the midst of surrounding death. Bunyan’s metaphor was that he saw a fire which was burning under singular circumstances, for one stood before it who continually threw water upon it to quench it, and though he did so, yet the fire was not put out! Christian could not understand the marvel till the interpreter took him behind the wall, and there he saw one that cast oil upon the fire as perseveringly as the enemy cast the water, so that the fire, being secretly nourished, could not be extinguished. Every Christian’s life is of that sort; there is abundance to destroy it, but, if it is sustained, there is a secret something which keeps that soul alive unto God, and persevering to the end.

We shall, then, tonight speak about the *secret life of the believer*, and afterwards upon his *public life*. His secret life is described in this way: “Your words were found, and I did eat them; and Your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” That was for him alone. In the next sentence you have his public life, his manifestation before men—“For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”

I. Now observe that in the description of Jeremiah's SECRET LIFE which consists of his inward reception of the word of God, (which description will answer for ourselves), we have three points—the *finding of God's word, the eating of it, and the rejoicing in it with all his heart.*

First, you have *the finding of it*—"Your words were found." Now we have not to find God's word as Jeremiah had, by waiting until the Spirit of God reveals fresh truths of God, for the Spirit of God now reveals no fresh truth to us. He takes of the things of Christ—the things which are revealed in the Scriptures, and opens them and applies them to us. We are not to expect any addition to the sacred canon; the Bible is finished, and there shall be nothing added to it; we have not to find God's word, therefore, in that respect. If any man comes to me and says, "I have God's word for you"; if he speaks not according to this Bible, you may know at once that he is a liar, and that his utterance is a vain imagination. Yes, though he should come with pretended miracles, and should boast proudly of his visions, yet is he to be rejected, for Holy Scripture is the mind of God, and novelties are the fancies of men! And, therefore, when we use the term "finding" God's word, we must use it rightly, and our meaning will be mainly contained in the following senses—

First, we *read the word.* Here it is: God's word is all here, and if we would find it, we must read it earnestly. Let me commend to you the frequent reading of the word of God. Young people would do well to form the habit of reading a chapter every day, not as a form, but with a sincere desire to understand what they read. If they continue to do so till life's latest hour, they will not regret it; the lack of habitual reading of Holy Scripture by professedly Christian people is very much to be regretted. If you trust yourself to read the word only when it is convenient for you, it will very often happen that day after day will pass without a passage of Scripture having been read at all! But if you make it a point that such a time shall be set apart for the reading of a chapter, and keep to it, it will be well for you. Of course the habit of setting apart any time is not binding; none of us may say to his brother or sister, "You ought at such an hour to read the Scriptures," for we are not under legal bondage, neither are we to judge our brethren. But, though not binding, I believe it to be very profitable, and as proper a thing as appointing regular times for meals! As the habit of having a time for prayer is good, so also is the habit of reading the Scriptures; yet it is a mischievous practice to read a great deal of the Bible without time for thought—it flatters our conceit without benefiting our understanding. The practice of always reading the Bible in scraps is also to be avoided. I recommend the student of Scripture to read through a whole Bible carefully; as with a poem, we could not get the spirit and sense of the poet by reading a stanza here and there, so you cannot expect to discover the drift of Bible teaching by taking a verse or two here and there. The Bible is divided into many books, and I would recommend you all to read through a book carefully and prayerfully, and get the general run, and catch the drift of the author, and so endeavor to perceive the mind of God. But at the same time, remember that like every other valuable book, the Bible needs diligent and prayerful reading! Surface-skimming is of little use. Some go through the Bible just as a traveler may be whirled through a country in a railway carriage; he will know very little, indeed, about that country, though he may traverse it from end to end. He only sees a little of it out of the window, and the conclusions he may come to will be very poor ones, and utterly unreliable. And to go whirling through a chapter of Scripture, as it were, at railway speed, is of little or no service to the mind.

I recollect an Arminian brother telling me once that he had read the Scriptures through 20 or more times, and could never find the doctrine of election in them! He added he was sure he would have done so if it had been there, for he read them on his knees. I said to him, "I think you read them in a very uncomfortable posture, and if you had read them in your easy chair, you would have been more likely to understand them." Pray, by all means, and the more the better, but it is a piece of superstition to think there is anything in the *posture* in which a man puts himself in reading! And as to reading through the Bible 20 times without having found anything about the doctrine of election, I said, "The wonder is that you found anything at all! You must have galloped through them at such a rate that you were not likely to have any intelligible idea of what the meaning of the Scriptures was at all." If but once in that man's life he had taken the Scriptures and really desired to know their meaning, and had weighed them deliberately, and studied them verse by verse, and word by word, I think he would have been far more likely to find what was the true meaning of the words which the Holy Spirit has used.

But, to come back to our subject—we need more Bible reading. I shall not, tonight, speak of those who waste their time in reading works of fiction though there are innumerable hordes of time-destroying volumes that come pouring forth from the press. I fear that even our religious literature, the best of it, has in some measure kept men from the word of God itself. I should like to see all the good books themselves burnt, as well as the bad books of Ephesus, if they keep men from reading Holy Scripture for themselves! Here is the well of purest gospel undefiled; it springs up in this precious volume with unequalled freshness and sweetness. We, who write upon it, hand out that same sweet water to you in our own cups and goblets, but to some extent all our vessels are defiled! There is, in the purest intellect, some measure of error, and the living water which we hand out to the people must in some measure participate in our imperfection. Do not be content to drink from our small pots and our chalices, but come and put your lips right down to where the living water, with all the self-sufficient fullness of the eternal deeps, comes welling up from the very heart of God! This is the way to find the word of God—to read it yourselves, to read it from the Bible! If you can read it from the original books, so much the better, but if you cannot, be thankful that you have as good a translation as that which is to be found in every Englishman's house! Be sure you read it until you can say, "Your words were found."

But we have not found God's word when we have read it unless *we add to it an understanding of the word*. The mere words of Scripture are no better than any other words, only as far as they contain a holier and nobler sense. It is man's superstition to think a text is more because it is in the Bible than anywhere else—I mean the words of the text; the mere *sound*. Yet I have known a great many who, when they have just repeated a text of Scripture, or read a text of Scripture, think that something good is done! Why, dear friend, you need to get the *meaning*—the inner sense. Nuts must be cracked, so must Scripture—you must get out the meaning, or you have got nothing! Marrow bones, who can feed on them? Split them, take out the marrow, and *then* you have luscious food! Merely verbal utterances, even though they are the utterance of the Holy Spirit, cannot feed the soul; it is the *inward* meaning, the truth that is revealed which we should labor after. Too often we stick in the letter, and advance not to the soul of divine truth. Pray, dear friends, as you read the Scriptures, that God may illuminate you; ask that you may not read in the dark as many do, who therefore stumble at the words in disobedience. The best interpreter of a book is generally the man who wrote it; the Holy Spirit wrote the Scriptures, so go to Him to get their meaning, and you will not be misled! Oh, when shall the time come when every Christian shall say, "By the grace of God I read the Scripture, and I am enabled by the Holy Spirit to mark it, to learn it, and to understand it; I earnestly labor to know what God means by what He has said, as far as the human intellect can understand His meaning"?

To find God's word, however, means more than this. I think it means sometimes *the discovery of select and appropriate words to suit our case*. "Your words were found." You know when you have lost your key, and your cupboard or your drawer cannot be opened? What do you do? You send for a locksmith, and he comes in with a whole bunch of keys. First he tries one; that does not fit. Then he tries another—that will not do; and the good man perseveres, perhaps with 20 keys—it may be with 50, but at last he gets the proper key which springs the lock, and he opens your treasure for you! Now Scripture to us is much of the same nature; we have many promises in the time of trouble, and it is a great blessing to find the promise that suits our case. We turn them all over and say, "Well, that is a precious promise, but then I am not exactly in that condition; that is a choice word, but then I do not think I can lay claim to it; and then again, this third passage is very cheering, but it is evidently not spoken to a person in my position." At last you find one, and you say, "Ah, this is the word spoken to a person of my character—in my condition of soul. My God, now apply this to my heart with Your power, and make this truth be to my soul comforting and cheering; Your words are found; I have found the divine utterance which emphatically pertains to me." And truly, dear brothers and sisters, if we desire to find a word of God that would suit us, we need never be long in searching if we seek sacred direction. We have come to a point, perhaps, in life, where two roads meet, and neither of them seems to diverge from the straight path. And yet we feel solemnly that in a moment we may change the whole current of our life from peace to sorrow by making a mistake. Kneel down at the crossroads, and cry, "Lord lead me," and then go to the Bible, and ask that the proper guidance for this condition may be indicated by the written word, and you

shall often find a text leap out of Scripture to you, seizing your soul with loving violence, and drawing you into the appointed path! I do not mean by this the idle and wicked practice of opening upon texts as a sort of lottery, but a far higher and more spiritual matter by far! The Holy Spirit still remains for us, and is the Urim and Thummim of the Christian Church, even as Providence is the pillar of cloud and fire. “‘Your words were found’—I went to You and to Your Bible for them, that I might be guided and comforted by them; and I was guided to, and guided by the appropriate text for the occasion.”

At the same time, in opposition, or in favor of this remark, let me say it looks to me as if Jeremiah made no selection at all in another sense—“Your words were found.” They were Your words, all of them, and I did eat them; no matter what the words were; were they bitter words? I did eat them; they were my medicine. Were they sweet words? I did eat them; they were my consolation. Were they words of instruction? I did eat them; they were my daily bread. I did not find fault with doctrinal truth, for I found it among Your words. On the other hand, were they words of precept? I did not say, “I do not need to be legal; I hate the very word *duty*. No, but when I found Your words, if they were precept words, I did eat them. There were some of Your words, that in the face of them, threatened me; they rebuked me; they humbled me; they spoiled my beauty; they laid me in the dust, but these very words I loved, because, “I felt that faithful were the wounds of a friend.” I laid bare my breast to these lances; I asked the good physician to use these sharp texts upon me. Now this ought to be our constant spirit—searching for the text appropriate to the occasion, and yet willing that any Scripture and every Scripture should have its due effect upon our souls. Beware of picking and choosing in God’s word! It is a very dangerous symptom when there is any portion of Scripture that we are afraid to read; if there is one single chapter in the Bible that I do not like, it must be because I feel it accuses and condemns me! My duty ought to be to face that chapter at once, and answer its accusation, and endeavor, as far as possible, to purify myself by God’s help from that which the passage of Scripture condemns. Brothers and sisters read that passage most which stings you most! When I go to visit the aged or the sick, I generally know whereabouts the Bible will be marked with dog-ears, and thumbed, and rubbed. Of course one of the favorites is the chapter, “Let not your heart be troubled,” and another—the 8th of Romans—“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” And then, again, they are sure to read again and again the precious Book of Psalms; we are sure to find that the Saints have been there. And I cannot blame them; I think so many of the ripest saints would not have fallen into the habit if it had been a wrong one, but, at the same time, I pray you all to not be *afraid* to read, or *hesitate* to read, or be *slow* to read portions which are not comfortable—passages which are full of *rebuke*. We all need rebuke, and need it continually, and as soon as we find the word of God, whether we like it or not for the time, it is ours to receive it, and feed upon it by God’s gracious help.

“Your words were found”; that is, *I felt I had got a hold of them*; I knew I had got them; I had discovered them—they were Your words to my inmost soul. Do you know there is a habit springing up in these times, when a passage of Scripture is quoted, to put the name of the author at the bottom, as, for instance, Isaiah, Paul, and Christ? Now I think the habit is a very absurd one, for the moment you read a verse of Scripture, you do not need to know who wrote it—you feel quite sure it is a Scriptural text. When a man quotes a text of Scripture, and puts the name of Christ at the bottom, you feel it to be a superfluity. You know Christ’s words; there is a particular ring about them; there is a something golden in them that cannot be imitated by the utterances of other men. So it is with the whole of the word of God—we perceive by instinct that the words are the Lord’s own! Perhaps we could not tell others why we know, but there is a peculiar majesty, a remarkable fullness, a singular potency, a sweetness in any word of God which is not discoverable, nor anything like it, in the word of man except that word of man is itself drawn directly from the word of God! Now we hear of some who try to take away from us God’s word. “This book is not inspired,” they say, “And that particular book is not authentic—this chapter; there is a dispute about it.” And as for the whole of it, the gentry of these days tell us that there may be a *sort* of inspiration in it, and so on. Well sirs, the Bible shall be to you what you like. You shall treat it as you please, and you shall look upon it as a mere commonplace book if you will. But know this, that to us it is God’s inspired teaching, infallible and infinitely pure! We accept it as the very word of the living God, every jot and tittle, not so much because there are external evidences which go to show its au-

thenticity—a great many of us do not know anything about those evidences, and probably never shall, but because we discern inward evidences in the words themselves! They have come to us with a power that no other words ever had in them, and we cannot be argued out of our conviction of their superlative excellence and divine authority! We have found the words of our heavenly Father—we know we have, for children know their own father's voice! When we speak God's truth, we speak what we know, what we have tasted and handled, and tested and proved!

Dear brothers and sisters, I have been rather lengthy upon this first and most important matter of finding God's word, and I will tell you why. I have dwelt thus fully upon it because it is just this which is the secret of the thorough Christian life in all its departments. Jeremiah would not have been so bold a preacher if he had not thus found God's word. If you hold God's word with a loose hand; if you are an inattentive reader; if you are a superficial believer; if you have loose views about the authority of divine revelation, you will be lax in everything else—you will be loose in your obedience to the precept, in your love to the doctrine, and in your hope in the promises. It stands to reason if the word of God is not God's word to you, it will not comfort you to the same extent as it did Jeremiah, and neither will you obey it with the same reverence, or teach it with like perseverance. If you do not attach reverence and divinity and inspiration to the word of God, it will not yield to you the force and power which it ought to yield, and your whole life will suffer. Thus much upon the finding of God's word.

A *second view of the inner life* must now be considered. "Your word was found, and I did eat it." The surest way to preserve the truth of God is to put it into the casket of the soul—to enclose it in one's inner man. "I did eat it." By that term is signified, first, the *prizing* of God's word. When Jeremiah received a sentence which he knew came from God's mouth, he prized it; he loved it so that he ate it. He could not lay it aside; he did not merely think of it; he loved it so that he put it into his very self! Oh, when we get God's truth, do not let us love it so little as to shelve it by saying, "I accept it formally as belonging to the Articles of the Church of which I am a member." No! Let us prize it so that we may say, "I must carry it about me, no, better than that, I must carry it *in* me; it is meat and drink to me." "I did eat it."

The term eating implies, moreover, that *he derived nourishment from it*. The food we eat, if it is fit for eating, nourishes and supports us. So when a man reads God's word as he ought to do, he feeds upon it, and finds in it a something that makes him a better man, a stronger man, more bold in holy service, and more patient in submission to God's will. It is delightful to sit down and suck the soul out of a text, to take it and feel that not the letter, only, but the inner vitals of the text are our own, and are to be received into the very nature of our spirit to become assimilated with it! Many foolish persons, when they come to the Lord's Table, imagine that in eating the bread, and drinking the wine there is some eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood of Christ in a corporeal manner. But those who understand the mysteries know that eating the flesh of Christ signifies *considering, meditating, and feeding* upon the truth of God that Christ was incarnate, was of our nature, and is *still* partaker of the nature of man! The Humanity of Christ becomes food for our souls, and *that* is the meaning of eating His flesh! So, when we drink the wine, the atonement, the sufferings of Christ are thought upon, weighed and considered—and these become food for our *faith, our gratitude, our love, our confidence, and holiness*. So, too, with every truth of God—we are to feed upon it; we are not merely to accept the statement as being true, but we are to get out of it that abolishment for our inner man which God intended it should render. "Your word was found, and I did eat it." It is a very different thing from saying, "Your word was found, and I did admire it," or, "Your word was found, and I did criticize it," or, "Your word was found, and I did divide it, and make a sermon of it." That is a minister's temptation; but, "Your word was found, and I did eat it"; I said to my soul, 'Here is something to make you better, to make you more Christ-like, something to help you in your struggle against sin.'" Brothers and sisters let us use the word for that purpose! By the help of God's blessed Spirit, let us eat it as our everyday food, the bread and the salt, the wine and the water of our life!

But the figure of eating means more, *it sets forth an intimate union*. That which a man eats gets intertwined with his own self, his own personality. The body is built up from the elements which are received in the form of food. So the man, the real man—the *soul* is made up of the truth which he lives

upon. Some feed on error, and their whole manhood, their hope, their confidence—everything is built up on error, and their religion is deceitful throughout. But he that feeds upon God’s word gets God’s word to be a part of himself, and his faith and hope are all based upon the truth of God! I sometimes hear of a person giving up a certain doctrine; well, I am certain if a man gives up any doctrine of God’s word, he never knew it, for he who knows God’s truth knows that it has a clinging power, and will not be separated from us! The diligent believer, when he knows the word, learns it so well that he assimilates it into his own being. Let me illustrate this by a fact which is notable, in a lower sense, in certain natural persuasions. When Galileo was convinced that the world moved, they put him in prison for it. In his weakness he recanted, and said he believed it stood still, and that the sun moved. But the moment he got away from his persecutors, he stamped his foot and said, “But it *does* move!” And so he who knows the truth of God as it is in Jesus, has even a higher persuasion than that which ruled Galileo; he cannot belie the truth—he has got it so *into* himself, that he cannot give it up! Sirs, if you can run from Christ, you have not yet become His disciple; if you can leave Him, you never knew Him; if you can deny the truth of God, and utterly give it up, you have never known it savingly! But he who can say, “Your word was found, and I did eat it,” may confront the foe, and when his enemy cries, “Give it up!” his reply will be, “How can I give it up? I have eaten it.”

You remember the faithful servant who was sent by his master with a very valuable diamond, and who, when he was attacked on the road, swallowed the diamond? Well, but even then it might have been taken from him had the robbers killed him. But if the diamond had been of such a nature that the man, in eating it, could dissolve it, and assimilate it into him, all the thieves that ever attacked him could not take away from him that which he had eaten! And so, when a soul feeds upon the precious truth of God, all the devils in hell multiplied 50,000 times could not take the truth away from him! It is most important for this very reason that we should get such a grip of the truth of God that it should be, as it were, *burnt* into our souls—interwoven into the warp and woof of our very being to run like a silver thread right through our entire existence, so that you would tear that existence to pieces, and destroy it before you could destroy the truth that is worked in it. “Your word was found, and I did eat it.”

See here then the secret power that will support a Christian’s life, my beloved—the eating of God’s word, the getting it thoroughly into one’s soul. This is it which will make you speak and act as a Christian. There is a great deal of error in many Christians, and a great deal of sin; many try to correct the error and remove the sin, and they do well. But have you never heard a doctor say, when a person has been covered with some eruption, “I shall not deal with these eruptions at all; I shall apply no ointment. They are caused by the poorness of the patient’s blood; I shall recommend to him a generous diet. I shall give him a strengthening medicine which will invigorate the system, and these blotches will disappear as a natural consequence”? Depend upon it, very many of the faults which are to be condemned in Christians are the result of their not leaning upon God’s word; not knowing the whole of it, especially the strong meaty parts of it as they ought to. And if they did come to find God’s word, and to eat it, their spiritual constitution would be stronger, and then they would throw off many of the ailments that are now such an injury to them; and they would become healthy, vigorous, mighty in the service of God!

Notice, now, *the third glimpse into the inner life*. “Your word was found, and I did eat it, and it was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Nothing makes a man as happy as the word of God; nothing makes him as full of delight, and gives his soul such peace as feeding upon the word of God! I preached the gospel on a certain occasion in a certain place of worship, and I preached the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, and it was not believed in by the minister. However, many of his people who heard the doctrine, and never would have believed it if I had mentioned the words, “final perseverance,” drank it in, and it made them so very happy that the minister declared I had done a world of mischief by it, for he believed the good souls would never give up the doctrine! Truly, when God’s word comes with the power that makes you joy and rejoice in it, your inward delight becomes to your heart a main reason for holding it tenaciously! I would cheerfully give up many doctrines if I believed that they were only party watchwords, and were merely employed for the maintenance of a sect—but those doctrines of grace, those precious doctrines of grace against which so many contend, I could not renounce or hate a jot of them because they are the joy and rejoicing of my heart! When one is full of health and vigor, and

has everything going well, you might, perhaps, live on the elementary truths of Christianity very comfortably; but in times of stern pressure of spirit, when the soul is much cast down, you need the marrow and the fatness! In times of inward conflict, salvation must be all of grace from first to last! Then it must not be according to the will of the flesh, but according to the will of God! Then you need an “everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.” Then, “The sure mercies of David are precious,” and then it is that you come to understand how those glorious truths of God which have been called Calvinistic, but which are really the truth of God’s own word, are so much prized by old and advanced believers. Aged and tried saints, having had their senses exercised to discern good and evil, have also come to a period of life in which they need consolation; to a time in which deep experience calls for solid sustenance, and therefore they fall back on the *eternal truths of God* and rejoice in them! Beloved, may you know every truth of God’s word by rejoicing in it! May you know its power to console you and uplift you in the time of distress, for, when you know the joy that flows from the truth of God into the regenerate heart, you will say—

*“Should all the forms which men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I’ll call then vanities and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart.”*

These three things are the secret of a strong spiritual life—to find, to eat, and to rejoice in God’s word!

II. Now, very briefly, we shall describe THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS OUTWARD LIFE, as he is mentioned here—“I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” Now I think these words may be used in three ways.

First, the condition of Jeremiah was one which *he had attained by his conduct*. He was so continually preaching about Jehovah, so constantly insisting upon Jehovah’s will, and going upon Jehovah’s errands, that they came to call him, “Jehovah’s man,” and he was known by Jehovah’s name. Now the man who loves God’s word, and feeds on it, and rejoices in it, will so act that he will come to be called a Christian. He will not only *be* so, but he will be *called* so! Men will take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. If they do not give him the name in the sense of honoring him, they will give it as a nickname, but they will be sure to call him, in their hearts, at least, by such a title. An esteemed city missionary, who for years frequented public houses to preach the gospel there, was known as, “The man with the Bible,” because he always carried his Bible with him. Oh, I wish many of us were known as, “The man with the Bible.” Among the heathen it has frequently happened that earnest missionaries have been known as, “Jesus Christ’s men,” or the heathen have said, “Here comes God’s man.” We don’t expect them to give us that title by word of mouth, but I could earnestly pray that every one of us may have it in some shape or other. You know generally the world will pick out some religious leader, and then they will abuse those who listen to him by calling them by his name. They need not blush at that, since it is often only the world’s way of acknowledging that they are Christians—their acknowledging that they are the followers of that which is right and true. Years ago, when a man spoke of the things of God with great emotion, so that he quaked with holy trembling, they called him a “Quaker.” It was but acknowledging that a power was influencing the man which the world did not understand. And when other persons were methodical and precise in their lives, they called them “Methodists”—persons who lived by method and rule. They needed not to be ashamed of that, and they were not; it was only another way of the world’s pointing them out, and saying, “These are God’s people.” They thought it a sneer and meant it for a sneer, but it was an *honor!* To be called, “Jehovah’s man,” was an honor to Jeremiah, and to be called by any of these nicknames which signify that we belong to God, is an honor to aspire after, and not to be regretted! May we all win some opprobrious name, and wear it as our title of holy chivalry!

But this is a name, in the second place, which is *involved in the profession of every Christian*. “I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” Of course you are called so, if your profession is true! You were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and you then and there accepted that name! You are a believer in Christ, and therefore you are rightly called a Christian—you cannot escape from it. By being a believer in Christ’s name, you have Christ’s name named upon

you. Oh, friend, consider what your obligations are! There was a soldier in the Macedonian army who was named Alexander—a coward. And he was called before the king, and asked, “What is your name?” He said, “Alexander”; “Then,” said the king, “You must give up your name, or you must cease to be a coward.” So we call before us those who are Christians, and we say, “What is your name? You are named with the name of Christ; therefore you must give up being covetous. You must give up being bad-tempered, worldly, slothful, and lustful; or else you must give up Christ’s name, for we cannot have Christ’s name dishonored any more than Alexander would have his name dishonored!” You were spitting fire just now against that person who had irritated you. Suppose I had stepped in at that moment, and said, “You are called by the name of Christ!” What a color would have risen in your face! Perhaps today you were talking idle stuff with vain persons, and supposing someone whom you honored and loved had laid his hand on you, and whispered, “What? You, a Christian, and talk like that?” How would you have felt? Oh, that we remembered always we are Christians, and therefore must always act up to the name that is named upon us! God grant you, friends that in the power of the eating of God’s word you may be compelled to always act as becomes those upon whom the name of Christ is named!

Once more—this word may be used in *the sense which arises out of the gospel itself*. “I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts: I belong to You. When they gather up the nations, and they say, ‘This man belongs to Babylon, and that man to Assyria, and that man to Egypt,’ I belong to You, and am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” What a comfort this is—we who believe in Christ belong to God! We are His portion, and He will never lose us. “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord, “when I make up My jewels.” We see the broad arrow put here and there upon royal property—upon government property; let us remember that we have the broad arrow of the King of Kings set upon us as believers in Christ! The Lord will take care of us because His name is named upon us, and we belong to Him. “You are not your own: you are bought with a price.” “All things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” You are poor but you are Christ’s! Does not that mitigate your poverty? You are sick, but you are God’s; does not that comfort you? The poor lamb lies in the cold field, but if it belongs to a good shepherd, it shall not die. The sheep is sick, or it has wandered, but if it belongs to an Omnipotent shepherd, it shall be healed, and it shall be brought back! The name of Christ being named upon us is the guarantee of our present comfort and of our future security!

Oh, brothers and sisters, I come back to the point I began with—find God’s word, eat God’s word, rejoice in God’s word, and then go and live as those who are alive from the dead, who wear not the name of the first Adam, but the name of the second Adam—who are not known any longer as the servants of sin, but known as the servants; the *sons of God*, forever and ever! God bless you, and if you have not believed, may you be led to trust in Jesus crucified this very night, that you may be called by His name; we pray it for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JEREMIAH 15.

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