

True!

BY FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

Master, I set my seal that thou art true;
Of thy good promise not one thing hath
failed,
And I would send a ringing challenge
forth,
To all who know thy name, to tell it out,
Thy faithfulness to every written word,
Thy loving-kindness crowning all the
days,
To say and sing with me: "The Lord is
good;
His mercy is forever, and his truth
Is written on each page of all my life."
Yes! there is tribulation, but thy power
Can blend it with rejoicing. There are
thorns,
But they have kept us in the narrow way,
The king's highway of holiness and
peace!
And there is chastening, but the Father's
love
Flows through it, and would any trusting
heart
Forego the chastening and forego the
love?
And every step leads on to "more and
more."
From strength to strength thy pilgrims
pass to sing
The praise of Him who leads them on and
on,
From glory unto glory even here!

Visitor Pulpit.

THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF ORNAN.

A New Sermon by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

"At that time when David saw that the
Lord had answered him in the threshing-
floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacri-
ficed there."—1 Chronicles 21: 28.

"Then David said, This is the house of
the Lord God, and this is the altar of the
burnt offering for Israel."—1 Chronicle
22: 1.

I. First, this truth is believed by
you, though, alas! not by all men,
that externally there is nothing in any
place why God should there meet
with men. The Lord chose the
threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite
as the spot whereupon for many a
day His holy worship should be open-
ly celebrated according to the out-
ward ceremonies of a typical dispen-
sation. There the Temple was built,
and for a thousand years it stood as
the centre of Divine worship, so far
as it was visibly presented according
to His ordinance. What that mount
may yet become we will not at this
time consider. Prophets gives us
bright hints of what shall yet be even
on Mount Zion, which has so long
been trodden under foot of the adver-
sary. But why was the threshing-
floor of Ornan to be the meeting place
of David with his God, and the spot
where prayer was to be heard?

Certainly it was a very simple and
unadorned, an uneclesiastical place.
The threshing-floor of Ornan boasted
no magnificence of size, or beauty of
construction. There was just the
rock, and I suppose a composition
spread upon it of hard clay or cement,
that the feet of the oxen might the
better tread out the corn. That was
all it was; yet when the Temple with
all its glory crowned the spot, God
was never more conspicuously present
than on that bare, unadorned thresh-
ing floor. "Meet God in a barn!"
saith one. Why not? Does that
astonish you? God met Adam in a
garden, Abraham under a tree, and
Noah in an ark. There is less of man
in the open field than in the cathedral,
and where there is least of man there
is at least an opportunity to find most
of God. "Meet God on a threshing-
floor!" Why not? It may be a
thousand times more sacred than
many a chancel; for there simple
minds are likely to pay their homage
in hearty truthfulness, while in the
other the artificialness of the place
may foster formality. A tasteful
building may be a way of showing
your pious regard for the Lord, and
so far it may be justifiable and accept-
able; but take care that you do not
regard it as essential, or even import-
ant, or you will make an idol of it.
No chisel of mason or hammer of car-
penter can build a holy place. With-
out either of these a spot may be none
other than the house of God and the
gate of heaven.

Moreover, it was a place or ordinary
toil—not merely a floor, but a thresh-
ing-floor in present use, with oxen
present, and all the implements of
husbandry ready to hand. It was so
ordinary and so every-day a place,
that none could have been more so;
as if the Lord would say to us, "I
will meet you anywhere; I will be
with you in the house and in the field;

I will speak with you when you till
the ground, when you thresh your
corn, when you eat your bread." Every
place is holy where a holy
heart is found. This ought to glad-
den the solitude of godly men. God
is with you, therefore be of good
cheer. If you are on board ship, or
if you are wandering in the woods,
or are banished to the ends of the
earth, or are shut out from the Sab-
bath assemblies of God's house, yet

"Where'er you seek Him He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

On the threshing-floor of Ornan the
Jebusite did God meet with David,
and in your work-room, at your bench,
or upon your bed, or behind the
hedge, or in the corner of a railway
carriage, the Lord will hear you, and
commune with you.

My heart rejoices when I think that
this was not only a very unadorned
place, and one that was given up to
common uses, but it was also in the
possession of a Jebusite. The Jebu-
sites were among the nations doomed
for their iniquities; they were aliens
from the commonwealth of Israel,
and strangers to the covenants of
promise; and this vast rock on which
the Temple is to stand, beautiful for
situation, the joy of the whole earth,
belongs at first to one of the accursed
seed of Canaan. Herein the Lord
showeth that He is no respecter of
persons; He would meet the king, not
on the land of an Israelite, but on the
threshing-floor of a Jebusite. The
Jews wrapped themselves up within
themselves and said, "The temple of
the Lord; the temple of the Lord are
we;" but the Lord seemed to rebuke
their national pride by saying, "And
your Temple is built upon the thresh-
ing-floor of a Jebusite." If they
would but have remembered this, the
Jews might in our Lord's day have
been more tolerant of the conversion
of the Gentiles to God.

Once more, there was one matter
in reference to Ornan's threshing-floor
which it would be well to mention:
before it could be used it had to be
bought with money. I frequently
meet with impossibly spiritual people
who hate the mention of money in
connection with the worship of God.
The clatter of a collection jars upon
their sublime feelings. The men-
tion of money in connection with
the worship of God is more dread-
ful to them than it is to God Him-
self; for He saith, "Thou hast
bought me no sweet cane with
money;" and again, "None shall ap-
pear before me empty." To these
pious persons money saved and hoard-
ed is abundantly pleasant; their only
objection is to giving it. In this they
somewhat differ from David, who
paid to Ornan for the place six hun-
dred shekels of gold by weight. Be-
fore he could offer a sacrifice he paid
down fifty shekels of earnest money;
for he said, "I will not offer burnt
offerings unto Jehovah my God of
that which doth cost me nothing." It
is a very curious thing, is it not? that
one man should show his spirituality
by his liberality, and another should
pretend to do it by the reverse meth-
od.

The highest act of adoration that
was ever paid on earth was when that
woman, whose name is to be mention-
ed wherever this Gospel is preached,
emptied upon the head of our blessed
Lord an alabaster box of precious
nard. That gift was known to have
cost her at least five hundred pence.
It might have been sold for much,
but the costliness of the perfume en-
tered into the very essence of the act
in the mind of the holy and grateful
woman. The Lord Jesus Christ when
He sat over against the treasury not
only read the hearts of the givers, but
He noticed the actual offering of the
woman who dropped into the box two
mites that made a farthing, which
were all her living.

The rattle of the coins did not take
away anything from the heavenliness
and the spirituality of that woman's
worship. Far otherwise. The top
of Moriah, where God appoints that
His Temple should be builded, saw
the weighing out of gold and silver,
and was all the fitter for divine com-
munion because thereof. Do not be-
lieve for a moment that visible grand-
eur is necessary to the place where
God will meet with you. Go to your
threshing-floor and pray; ay, while
the unmuzzled oxen take their rest,

bow your knee and cry to the Lord
of the harvest, and you shall meet
with God there among the straw and
the grain. Fear not to draw nigh to
God in these streets, but consecrate
all space to the Lord your God.
Study simplicity and plainness of
worship.

II. But now, secondly, spiritually
this threshing-floor of Ornan was an
admirable type of how God meets
with men.

I think, first, its extreme simplicity
enters into the essence of the type.
So far from thinking that a threshing-
floor was a bad place to pray in, if I
look a little beneath the surface I
think I can see the reason for it.
Golden grain is being separated from
the straw by the corn drag—whence
came this corn? From Him who
openeth His hand and supplieth the
want of every living thing. Here,
then, God meets me in the kindest
way. Where can I meet Him better
than where He gives me food? Where
better a temple out of which
the bread of eternal life shall come,
than on a threshing-floor where the
bread of the first life is to be gather-
ed? The two things seem to meet
right well together. The temporal
and the eternal join hands in common
consecration. That same prayer
which teaches us to say, "Our Father
which art in heaven, hallowed be thy
name, thy kingdom come, thy will be
done on earth as it is in heaven,"
leads us on to cry, "Give us day by
day our daily bread." There is a
spiritual significance in the type.

Would it be fanciful if with a
glance I indicated that the threshing-
floor is the exact type of affliction? Tribulation signifies threshing in the
Latin, and the saints through much
tribulation enter the kingdom. One
of the titles of the people of God is
"my threshing and the corn of my
floor." Now it is well known that
the Lord is with His people in their
trials. When He smites with one
hand He holds with the other. In the
lion of trial we find the honey of
communion. The temple of glory is
built on the threshing-floor of afflic-
tion. I do not thrust forward this
observation as though it were of great
weight; but even if it be a fancy so
far as the type is concerned, the
thought conveys a truth in a pleasing
manner.

But much more, this was the place
where justice was most clearly mani-
fested. Above Ornan's threshing floor,
in mid-air, stood a dreadful apparition.
A bright and terrible figure, a
mysterious servant of God, was be-
held with a drawn sword in his hand,
which he brandished over the guilty
city of Jerusalem. Deaths were con-
stant. The people fell as forest leaves
in autumn. Then was it that David
went out to meet with his God, and
make confessions before Him. Oh,
sirs, the lack of many of you is that
you have never yet beheld sin in its
consequences, sin in its guilt, sin in
its doom. Men will not meet God
till they see the angel with a drawn
sword. They will trifle and play with
sin, and neglect the invitation of God,
and even doubt His existence, till
conviction comes home to them, and
they are made to feel that sin is an
exceeding evil and bitter thing. Con-
viction of sin wrought by the Spirit
of God is more powerful than argu-
ment. To feel that God must punish
sin, that God will by no means clear
the guilty, is the best thing to drive
a man Godward. David saw the re-
sult of his own sin, and dreaded what
would further come if, day after day,
the Lord should visit him and his
people with judgment. There he
bows himself, and there the God of
all grace meets with him.

Perhaps the point which brought
David out into complete brokenness
of heart was a clear view of the dead-
ly effect of his sin upon others.
Seventy thousand people had died of
the black death already through his
sin, and still the pestilence raged;
this brought the matter home to his
heart. Every ungodly man ought to
reflect upon the mischief which he has
caused to others by his evil life; his
wife has been hindered from good
things, his children have grown up
without the fear of God, his compan-
ions with whom he has worked and
traded are hardened in their wicked-
ness by a sight of his wickedness; youthful
minds have been seduced

from virtue by his vice, simple hearts
have been led into infidelity by his
unbelief. Oh men, you know not
what you do! You let fly sparks, but
what the conflagration may have al-
ready been none of you can tell. This
came home to David, and he stood
aghast at it, crying to God about it,
and pleading as for his life that the
evil might be stayed.

Furthermore, that place where God
met with David and made it to be
His temple forever, was the place
where sin was confessed. David's
confession is very frank and full.
David says, "Is it not I? Even I it is
that have sinned." Go thou, sinner,
to the Lord with thine own personal
confession. Shut thine eye to thy
fellowman, and say, "Father, I have
sinned." Cry with the publican,
"God be merciful to me a sinner." Make
private personal confession,
without comparing thyself with thy
fellow-men, and the Lord has promis-
ed to forgive thee, and all those who
confess their transgressions.

That confession also had within it-
self an admission of the justice of the
punishment; for he says, "Let thine
hand be on me, and on my father's
house." He does not cavil against
the sword of the Lord and its deadly
blows. That repentance which ques-
tions the justice of God in the punish-
ment of sin is a repentance that
needs to be repeated of; but when
the penitent doth, as it were, lay his
head upon the block, yield his neck to
the rope, and give himself up to God,
saying, "I have sinned," then mercy
feels free to display itself.

But this is only the beginning of it;
for Ornan's threshing-floor was then
the place where sacrifice was offered
and accepted. Hastily they piled
the altar of unhewn stones; they
brought up to it ox after ox that had
been lately threshing out the corn;
the blood flowed in plentiful streams,
and the sacrifice was laid upon the
wood. God meets with men not
where the blood of bulls and of goats
flows in rivers, but where the glorious
person of His own dear incarnate Son
is offered up once for all for guilty
men.

Calvary is the trysting place be-
tween God and penitents. Now we
have reached it. This is the site of
the temple; this is the temple "not
made with hands," once destroyed,
but banded up in three days.

III. And now I am going to close
by heartily exhorting you to use this
place. Brethren and sisters, if we
have found out where to meet with
God, then let us meet with Him con-
tinually. Do you feel guilty this
morning? Is your sin heavy upon
you? Do you see the sworded angel?
Well, you have to meet God even
there! Therefore, gird up your loins!
"What garments shall I put on?"
Put on sack-cloth. I mean not liter-
ally; but while there is any guilt upon
you come to God with lowliest peni-
tence, mourning for sin, as David did,
and the elders that were with him.
You may not come now in the silken
garments of your luxury, nor in the
purple robes of your pride, nor in the
mail of your hate. Put these away
from you, and come with sackcloth
and ashes, weeping for your trans-
gressions, and God will meet with
you; for He will meet with sinners
who come to Him mourning because
of their sin.

When you thus come, I want you
to be quiet awhile. Stand still!
Listen! Suppose you had been with
those elders of Israel; what would you
have heard? You would have heard
your Shepherd-king pleading for His
flock: "These sheep, what have they
done? Let thine hand be on me, and
on my father's house." But now Da-
vid is dead and buried, and his sepul-
chre is in his own land; but another
King of the house of David, one
Jesus, is standing before the Lord
pleading for mercy. While you are
clothed in the sackcloth of your re-
pentance, you may hear Him cry, "As
for these sheep, let them live. Thou
hast awakened the sword against me,
thine shepherd, therefore let my sheep
be spared! Thine hand has been on
me, therefore let these go their way!"
Do you hear that intercession? Jesus
is pleading in that fashion now. He
is "able to save them to the utter-
most that come unto God by Him,"
seeing He ever liveth to make inter-
cession for them."

If you would come still nearer to
God, do not forget the effect of the
sacrifice and intercession in the
sheathing of the sword of justice. Do
not say, "I hope that the sword is
sheathed;" it either is so, or it is not
so. Do not be content with unques-
tionable hopes, but aim at certainties.
Rest not till you obtain a solid assur-
ance of your peace with God. If
Jesus Christ was punished for your
sin you cannot be punished for it; if
He did bear your sin He did bear it,
and there is an end of it; and if you
have believed on Him you have the
full proof of the word of God that
you are justified before God. What
more do you want than God's own
word for it? and that word declares
that you, as a believer, have eternal
life and shall never perish, neither
shall you come into condemnation.

And lastly, if this be so, and you
realize it, go away and begin to build
a temple. You say, "Do you want
us to build a new place of worship?"
No, I speak only of a spiritual house.
Of course, build as many meeting
places as you can where people may
come together to hear the word, for
many are needed in this growing city,
but the peculiar sort of building which
I urge upon you is of the heart and
spirit. Make your entire being a liv-
ing temple for the living God. Begin
now; the foundations are laid, you
would not dream of building on any
other; for "other foundation can no
man lay than that which is laid." The
divine Moriah of Christ's person, the
sacred place of His sacrifice is the
mount wherein God shall be seen.
Jesus Christ has Himself become the
foundation of your hope; go and build
on Him. Set up the pillars of earnest
supplication, and arch them over
with lofty praises. Remember, your
God "inhabith the praises of Israel."
Build Him a house of praise, that He
may dwell in you, make your bodies
to be the temples of the Holy Ghost,
and your spirits the priests that sacri-
fice therein. In acts of holiness,
piety, charity, and love spend all
your days. Let your houses be
churches dedicated to His fear and
love; and let their chambers be holy
as the courts of the tabernacle in the
wilderness.

Let each morning and evening
have its sacrifice. Be yourself a
priest at the altar. Let the garments
of your daily toil be as vestments,
your meals as sacraments; let your
thoughts be psalms, your prayers in-
cense, and your breath praise. Let
every action be a priestly function,
bringing glory unto the Lord from
this day forth and forever. He that
died for you reckons you to be dead
to all things but Himself; and so it
becometh you to be. "Ye are not
your own, for ye are bought with a
price," and from this day forward
your motto should be—"Thine entire-
ly. Thine entirely, oh my God, I
am!" Begin to build this living
temple, and the Lord help you to
complete it to His praise. A poor
edifice it will be when you have fin-
ished it, compared with the Lord
your God; but yet if you have labored
sincerely and earnestly it will turn out
to be compacted of gold and silver
and precious stones, and it will be
found in the day of Christ to honor
and glory. Amen.

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