

THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ORNAN

NO. 1808

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 9, 1884,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“At that time when David saw that the Lord had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed 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 Chronicles 22:1.*

DAVID was for many years searching for a site for the great temple which he purposed to build for Jehovah his God. It had been ordained that the sacrifices offered to the one God should be offered by all Israel upon one altar, but as yet the ark of the Lord was within curtains, near to David's palace, and the altar of burnt offering was situated at Gibeon. Where should the one altar, be erected? Where should the ark find its permanent dwelling place? David said, “Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” Yet for a long time he received no indication as to the exact spot whereon the Lord's altar should be reared, save only that he was told that the Lord had chosen Zion and desired it for His habitation.

David watched, and waited, and prayed, and in due time he received the sign. God knew the spot, and had consecrated it long before by His appearance unto Abraham. The other Sabbath day, you remember, our text was “Jehovah-jireh” [Volume 30, No. 1803], and we then learned that in the mountain the Lord would be seen. Upon Mount Moriah, on or near that particular spot which had been named Jehovah-jireh, was the temple to be built. Abraham had there unsheathed the knife to slay his son. Wondrous type of the great Father offering up His Only-begotten for the sins of men! The scene of that grand transaction was to be the center of worship for the chosen people. Where Abraham made the supreme sacrifice, there his descendants should present their offerings. Or if we look into the type and see God there presenting Jesus as a sacrifice for men, it was most suitable that man should forever sacrifice to God where God made a sacrifice for him. As yet it was not known to David that this was the chosen place. Now it is indicated by memorable signs, the angel of justice stands above the spot, and his sword is sheathed there in answer to the cries of the afflicted king, according to the long-suffering mercy of God. Then David clearly saw the mind of the Lord, and said, “This is the house of Jehovah my God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.” Then He commenced at once with double speed to prepare the materials for the temple. Though he knew that he might not build it, since his hands had been stained with blood, yet he would do all that he could to help his son Solomon in the great enterprise.

This problem which David had at last worked out, by the good hand of God upon him, is one which in a deep spiritual sense exercises our hearts often. Where is it that man may meet with God? How is it that man may speak with His offended Lord and be reconciled to Him? Is there not some meeting place where the sinner may express his repentance, and where mercy may grant full absolution? Many are saying, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” Hearts touched by the Spirit of God are still seeking after God if haply they may find Him. In what condition, and by what means may man be at peace with God, and dread no longer the sword of His justice?

For the heart of some of us that problem takes a further shape, we know where man may meet with God, but we want to know how the careless, proud, rebellious heart shall be induced to come to God in His appointed way. We know it is by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the word, and the uplifting of the all-attracting cross, but we would gladly know the state of mind which will lead up to reconciliation, for now we often have to go back to Him that sent us, and cry, “Who has believed

our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We would lead men to God by Jesus Christ if we could, we stretch out the finger, and we point the way, but they will not see; we stretch out both hands, and entreat them to come, but they will not yield; our heart breaks for the longing that it has to present every man in Christ reconciled unto the living God, but how shall it be? How shall the sinner come to God?

We may get some light from the type before us upon that question—where shall God's temple be? How shall men be brought to it? We speak not at this time upon natural things, but upon the things of the Spirit, therefore let us pray the Holy Spirit to enlighten and instruct us, for only by His aid shall spiritual truth enter our hearts!

And first, I remark that *externally there was, and there is nothing in any place why it should be the peculiar meeting place of God with man*, but, secondly, that *spiritually the place which God did choose was most suitable*, for in it we read the true ground upon which God does actually meet with men in a way of grace. When we have lingered over these two subjects, we shall then have to exhort you after this fashion—*heartily let us use the place which God has set apart to be our meeting place with Himself*. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

I. First, then, 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 openly celebrated according to the outward ceremonies of a typical dispensation. There the Temple was built, and for a thousand years it stood as the center of Divine worship, so far as it was visibly presented according to His ordinance. What that mountain may yet become we will not at this time consider. Prophets give us bright hints of what shall yet be even on Mount Zion, which has so long been trod under foot of the adversary. 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, unadorned, 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 threshing floor. "Meet God in a barn!" says 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. God has met with man in a dungeon, in a cave, in a whale's belly. When you have displayed all your skill in architecture, can you secure any more of the Divine presence than the disciples had in the upper room? Can you get as much of it? A tasteful building may be a way of showing your pious regard for the Lord, and so far it may be justifiable and acceptable, but take care that you do not regard it as essential, or even important, or you will make an idol of it. If the church or chapel is esteemed for its form or tastefulness, it will become a mere exhibition of skill and industry, and so be no more sacred than the house of a greedy merchant, or the palace of a degenerate prince. No chisel of mason or hammer of carpenter can build a holy place. Without either of these a spot may be none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. God chose a threshing floor for His audience with David, just as before He had chosen to reveal Himself in a bush to Moses. His presence had been glorious on the sandy floor of the wilderness, in the midst of the curtains of goats' hair, and now it was gracious among the sheaves and the oxen. How can He that fills all things care about a house which is made with hands? You know how curtly Stephen dismisses even Solomon's Temple with a word—"But Solomon built Him a house. Howbeit, the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands." What was that golden shrine to the Infinite Majesty? Is not His own Creation far more sublime? No arch can compare with the azure of heaven, no lamps can rival the sun and moon, and no masonry can equal that city whose twelve foundations are of precious stones. Thus says the Lord by the prophet, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that you build unto Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things have My hands made." Wherefore, then, should He not choose the hill whereon Ornan had made a hardened floor whereon to thresh his corn? At any rate that was the Lord's meeting place with David, His audience

chamber with the suppliant king, as if to show that He cares not for tabernacles or temples, but by His own presence makes that place glorious wherein He reveals Himself.

Moreover, it was a *place of ordinary toil*—not merely a floor, but a threshing floor in present use, with oxen present, and all the implements of husbandry ready at 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 gladden 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 Sabbath assemblies of God’s house, yet—

*“Wherever you seek Him, He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground.”*

On the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite God did meet with David, and in your workroom, 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 much unadorned place, and one that was given up to common uses, but it was also *in the possession of a Jebusite*. The Jebusites 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 shows 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 threshing 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. Moreover, Gentile blood flowed in the veins of that very king who established their empire, and who was now prostrate before his God, interceding for Jerusalem. Remember Ruth and from where she came. She put her trust under the wings of Jehovah, God of Israel, and became the great-grandmother of David. David never seemed to forget that fact; for his psalms are full of far-reaching desires and good wishes for all the peoples of the earth. Remember his words, “Let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” He looks back upon his birth, as the son of Jesse and the great-grandson of Ruth, and a large heart beats within his breast, desiring that Jehovah may be the God of the whole earth. Let us, therefore, not consider our own peculiar nationality or condition, or rank among men, as if salvation came by natural descent. The blood of fallen Adam is in the veins of every man, and there is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ Jesus. If you happen to have been born of parents who did not train you in the fear of God, yet do not despond, for as the Temple was built upon the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, so shall the great God dwell in your heart though your fathers knew Him not. Say in your soul, “The Lord shall have a dwelling within my heart, Jebusite though I am.”

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 grates upon their sublime feelings. The mention of money in connection with the worship of God is more dreadful to them than it is to God Himself, for He says, “You have bought Me no sweet cane with money,” and again, “None shall appear before Me empty.” To these pious persons, money saved and hoarded 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 hundred shekels of gold by weight. Before he would 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 does 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 method? In connection with all true worship of God in the olden times, there was always the offertory, and frequently the sound of gold or silver. Beneath the drawn sword of the avenging angel money is given, and land is bought. The solemnity of the transaction is not marred thereby. Yet there was no absolute need for money, since Ornan said, “Take it to you, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes:

lo, I give you the oxen also for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all.” David cannot endure to worship at another man’s expense, and he answers, “No; but I will verily buy it for the full price.” That religion which costs a man nothing is usually worth nothing. Under the old dispensation, when men went up to worship God, it was with a bull-ox or with a lamb; even the poorest brought at least a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. Do you think that this bringing of cattle and birds into the sanctuary would spoil your spirituality? It would do so if you had no spirituality, but if you have grace in your heart your spirituality will choose just such a practical way in which to show itself. Some men’s godliness is a thin, misty, ghostly, ghastly nothing. True adoration is a thing of substance, and of truth. The highest act of adoration that was ever paid on earth was when that woman, whose name is to be mentioned 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 entered 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. Some people would sneeringly allude to the two dirty half-farthings, and condemn the collection as spoiled by Alexander the coppersmith, but the Lord is not as dainty as His servants, for He accepts the poor gifts of His people. The rattle of the coins did not take away 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 built, saw the weighing out of gold and silver, and was fitter for Divine communion because of it.

From the whole, learn that it is not necessary for meeting with God that you should be aided by persons arrayed in special robes, oxen will do as well. Neither do you require a holy pavement, a threshing floor may be holiness unto the Lord; neither do you need stained glass and vaulted roofs, the open air is better still. Do not believe for a moment that visible grandeur is necessary to the place where God will meet with you. Go to your threshing floor and pray. Yes, 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 near to God in these streets, but consecrate all space to the Lord your God. Study simplicity and plainness of worship. Remember how the Lord hated altars of brick, and how He would have His people build an altar of earth or of unhewn stone, to keep His worship simple and natural. “If you lift up your tools upon it, you have polluted it.”

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—where did this corn come from? From Him who opens His hands and supplies the need 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 can we better adore than in the midst of His rich gifts by which He sustains my life? Why, I think if I had gone out to gather manna every morning with my omer, I would have kept on praising God every moment as I collected the heavenly bread. Never could a spot be more propitious than where the gracious Preserver of men spread out necessary food for His children. We cannot do better than praise God when we are in our daily service earning our daily bread, or gathered at our meals refreshing our bodies. At the gate of God’s almonry let us wait with worship. 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 gathered? 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 Your name, Your kingdom come, Your 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 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 affliction. I do not thrust forward this observation as though it was of great weight, but even if it is 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 manifested*. Above Ornan's threshing floor, in mid-air, stood a dreadful apparition. A bright and terrible figure, a mysterious servant of God, was beheld with a drawn sword in his hand, which he brandished over the guilty city of Jerusalem. Deaths were constant. The people fell as forest leaves in autumn. Then was it that David went out to meet with his God, and make confession 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. God is angry with the sinner every day. Men do not fly to God till fear puts wings on their feet. Take away the dread of the wrath to come, and you have removed the great impulse which makes men seek mercy. Men will not meet God till they see the angel with the 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 exceedingly evil and bitter thing. Conviction of sin worked by the Spirit of God is more powerful than argument. I had religiousness, but I never drew near to God in spirit and in truth till I had seen and almost felt that drawn sword. 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. To feel that sword as it were with its point at your own breast, its edge ready to descend upon your own being, this it is that makes the guilty plead for pardon in real earnest. Men cry not "Lord save" till they are forced to add "or I perish." I could wish for certain preachers that I hear of, that they were made more vividly to realize the terror of the Lord in their own souls. He, who has felt the hot drops of despair scald his throat, has had it cleared for the utterance of free grace doctrine. If some men had more fully felt that they were sinners, they would have made better saints. David meets with God at the place where he sees that sin necessitates deserved punishment, and I do not believe that any man can be in fellowship with God and be blind to that truth. David saw the result of his own sin, and dreaded what would further come if, day after day, the Lord should visit him and his people with judgment. He had grown proud of the number of his subjects, and had begun to act the independent potentate, instead of loyally remaining the viceroy of Jehovah, but now he sees that he has been guilty of high treason, and beholds the sword at his neck. 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 deadly effect of his sin upon others. Seventy thousand people had already died of the Black Death through his sin, and still the pestilence raged, this brought the matter home to David's heart. Every ungodly man ought to reflect upon the mischief which he has caused others by his evil life, his wife has been hindered from good things, his children have grown up without the fear of God, his companions with whom he has worked and traded are hardened in their wickedness 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. O men, you know not what you do. You let fly sparks, but what the conflagration may have already been none of you can tell. Carelessly, O man, have you cast the thistle down to the wind, but what harvests of the ill weed have come, and may yet come, from your single handful, who can tell? Are there not some in hell through your influence? Are not others going there through your unhallowed teaching? O you whose hair is snow-white with sixty or seventy winters, how much ruin have you worked already! How much more is still to come! 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 stopped.

Thus, you see, when the deadly fruit of sin is clearly perceived, then the soul turns to God, and the Lord meets that soul. The cross is the place of doom, under its shadow we admit our guilt, and vividly see it, and thus put ourselves into a truthful position, where the God of truth will meet with us. God will meet with sinners when they come to Him as sinners, but He will not listen to them while they refuse to see their sin, and will not believe in the vengeance due to it.

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 you, sinner, to the Lord with your own personal confession. Shut your eye to your fellow man, and say, "Father, I have sinned." Cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Make private personal confession, without comparing yourself with your fellow men, and the Lord has promised to forgive you, and all those who confess their transgressions.

Set forth in your confession the aggravated nature of your sin. David said, “I it is that have sinned and done evil *indeed*.” He emphasizes the evil, “I have done evil *indeed*.” You will not find God in a way of grace till you begin to put an “indeed” at the end of the evil which you confess. Have you not sinned against light, sinned against knowledge, sinned against love, sinned against warnings, sinned against entreaties? Then go and tell the Lord that you have sinned with grievous aggravations. “Father,” said the prodigal, “I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son.” Where such a confession as this is offered, God will meet the sinner.

That confession also had within itself an admission of the justice of the punishment, for he says, “Let Your hand be on me, and on my father’s house.” He does not quibble against the sword of the Lord and its deadly blows. That sinner truly repents, who feels—

*“My lips, with shame, my sins confess
Against Your law, against Your grace:
Lord, should Your judgment grow severe,
I am condemned, but You are clear.
Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce You just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Your righteous law approves it well.”*

That repentance which questions the justice of God in the punishment of sin is a repentance that needs to be repented of, but when the penitent does, 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. As long as a man quarrels with justice he cannot be at peace with mercy. We must accept God as king, even though He bears not the sword in vain, or else He will never put that sword into its sheath. Condemn yourself, and God will acquit you. Come penitently and submissively, and the just God will be a Savior unto you.

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 between 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 built up in three days. The person of the Lord Jesus, crucified and raised from the dead, is that place where God meets guilty, confessing man, and shakes hands with him, yes, eats and drinks with him in peace, as was indicated by the peace offering which David presented, and the Lord accepted. Oh, souls, you need to see this, for if you do not see it you will never see God. A reconciled God is only to be seen through the smoke of the great sacrifice. The wounds of Christ are the windows of the heart of God. If you can believe in Jesus Christ, by faith presenting Him again to God as your sacrifice, then God will meet with you.

But what did David see before long when he had laid his bullock on the altar? A flame descended from the Lord. Like a flash of lightning it came, and the sacrifice was consumed, sure token that the Lord had accepted it, and was well-pleased because of it. Even thus the Lord has accepted the one great sacrifice for sin. When our Lord Jesus offered Himself He came under the judicial sentence, and cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He was consumed with sorrow. “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” The Lord Himself put Him to grief, and made His soul a sacrifice for sin. “He was made a curse for us, as it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.’” And now the Lord has placed His mercy seat where the blood is sprinkled. He accepts us in the Beloved whose sacrifice He accepted long ago when He raised Him from the dead. We have access by the blood of Jesus. Come, poor trembling sinner, come with your eyes on Jesus crucified and you shall be welcomed of the Lord.

As soon as David had seen the sacrifice he had only one more sight to see, and that made the threshing floor of Ornan more glorious than ever. *He beheld the sign of peace*. Above the threshing floor stood the angel of the Lord, but what a change! The drawn sword, which threatened death to the city and to the nation, was suddenly thrust into its scabbard, and all was still. Not another soul in Jerusalem would die of the pestilence. The sword of the Lord rested and was quiet. Oh, the joy of David’s spirit when he saw this! What a solemn but joyous melting of heart he felt as his soul gushed forth in streams of gratitude. Learn from this that the point of full communion with God today is the place where we see the angel

with the sheathed sword. Oh, how sweet to know that God has nothing against us! He has blotted out our transgressions, and will never remember them. He cannot smite us, for He has justified us in His Son. How shall He destroy those for whom Christ has shed His blood? He has a sword, but it is for those who are the adversaries of our souls, even for the arch-fiend who would destroy us. Its edge is not for us who are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. Many of you cannot draw near to God, and I do not wonder at it, because you have not yet seen that sin was in very deed put away by the sacrifice of Jesus. You have seen the drawn sword, and that is something, but you have not yet beheld that sword sheathed, nor heard the voice of Jehovah saying, "It is enough." The place where love meets love, where your little tiny stream melts into the great river of God's love, is where we sing, "O Lord, I will praise You; for though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comforted me." Henceforth our life flows with the life of Jesus in one deep, peaceful stream, onward and onward forever. You cannot rest in the Lord and live in Him till you have seen the Sacrifice and its eternal results in peace with God. May God bring you there! Atonement is the basis of worship. The sacrifice of Christ and His righteousness, these are the Jachin and the Boaz, the two sublime pillars of the temple gate. God communes with men where Jesus becomes man's rest. You cannot pass to the mercy seat to speak with God except through the veil of the Savior's body which was torn on our behalf.

Thus I think I have made you familiar with the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and showed you wherein it was felt to be a place of divine manifestation and a fit site for the permanent temple of God.

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 continually. 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 sackcloth. I mean not literally, but while there is any guilt upon you come to God with lowliest penitence, mourning for sin, as David did, and the elders that were with him did. You may not come now in the silken garments of your luxury, or 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 transgressions, 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 a while. 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 Your hand be on me, and on my father's house." But now David is dead and buried, and his sepulcher 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 repentance, you may hear Him cry, "As for these sheep, let them live. You have awakened the sword against Me, their shepherd, therefore let My sheep be spared! Your 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 uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." Oh it is blessed to come to God that way—with the sackcloth on your loins, but with the prevalent intercession in your ears, confidently believing that Jesus makes intercession for the transgressors, and that He must and will so prevail that by His knowledge He shall justify many.

Further, when you are coming to God, dear hearts, always take care that you come to the sacrifice. We frequently miss communion with God, I am persuaded, because we do not remember enough that precious blood which gives us access to God. When you go upstairs to pray, and you cannot get near to God, then do not speak, but sit in silence, and muse upon the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion of the Lord, and all the circumstances of His wondrous death, and say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." There is a matchless power in the Lord's sacrifice to remove the stone out of the heart, and pluck away selfishness from the affections. Come, come, come; come to the sacrifice! There shall you dwell with God in sweet delight.

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. I have already set forth this truth, now I entreat you to turn it to practical use by enjoying it—

*"Oh how sweet to view the flowing
Of my Savior's precious blood,
With divine assurance knowing*

He has made my peace with God.”

Do not say, “I hope that the sword is sheathed”; it either is so, or it is not so. Do not be content with questionable hopes, but aim at certainties. Rest not till you obtain a solid assurance of your peace with God. If Jesus Christ was punished for your sin you cannot be punished for it; if He bore your sin He bore it, and that is the end of it; and if you have believed on Him you have the full proof in 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. Do not continue to mutter, “Well, I hope I may yet realize it.” Why these debates? It is so, “He that believes in Him is justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” God has turned away His wrath from the believer, and the sword is sheathed, therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And lastly, if this is 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 living 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 mountain 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 “inhabits 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 Spirit, and your spirits the priests that sacrifice therein. Spend all your days in acts of holiness, piety, charity, and love. 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 incense, 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 becomes you to be. “You are not your own, for you are bought with a price,” and from this day forward your motto should be—“Yours entirely. Yours entirely, O 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 finished 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. So may the Lord bless you, beloved, now and forever. Amen and amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 CHRONICLES 21; 22:1-5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—302, 553, 551.**

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