

nated mountain. It was a sharp hill, full of prominences, of caves and of ravines, and made chiefly by the hands of men what we now see it.

Tradition informs us that the Architect Hiram only yielded his judgment to that of his royal master Solomon in adopting this as the site of the Temple; his choice lay in the noble elevation East, now called *Olivet*, and second to that the fine eminence North, since termed *Scopus*. Either of these, without so great an amount of preparatory labor would have afforded a firmer site. But the will of King Solomon prevailed.

When this point was yielded, the next question involved the preparation of the hill. Viewed from the summit of *Olivet* on the East it descended rapidly from North to South, exhibiting knobs or protuberances every little ways. Hiram was preparing his directions to have these all levelled so that the top of the ridge might present a smooth incline, on which the quarry stone could be closely and firmly laid, when he was surprised to receive from his royal master special directions in relation to the largest and most southerly of these knobs.

The two were viewing the whole work from their favorite point eastward, two-thirds the way up the slope of *Olivet* when King Solomon thus addressed his skillful companion.

"Upon the crown of that hill, where the descent from each side is the steepest, there once occurred one of the most remarkable instances of trust in God that human history affords us. More than nine centuries ago, there came across those hills to the southward, an aged man leading an only son. Three days before the pair had left their homes near Beersheba to visit this place upon a divine mission. Leaving the servants and beasts in yonder deep ravine, the father and son clumb up to that steep detached rock, to which I have called your attention, the son bearing a load of fuel, the father a knife, a firebrand and a cord.

Arrived at the summit, the two united to build an altar of unhewn stone, from the loose material which lay around. This being done, the wood was laid in order upon the altar. Then the son was bound and laid on the altar upon the wood, and the father stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. At this supreme moment a voice from Heaven stayed the strong hand, a victim was provided and the human life spared. Those men were my ancestors.

"Only a few years since, the God whom we worship, had laid a destroying hand upon yonder entire city, and for the sins of our people had threatened to destroy it. But at the earnest prayer of David my father, and for the great mercy wherewith God had ever viewed us; he commanded the destroying Angel to stay his hand. Upon that isolated rock which was the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite stood the Angel of the Lord when the command came to him to stay his hand. For this reason, King David bought the land of Araunah and built there an altar unto the Lord and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

"A rock thus consecrated by two of the most important events in our national history, must not be hewn away, but rather honored as the central spot of our constructions. Build you, then, your surrounding walls, and lay down your hewn stone in such a manner that this great rock shall form part of our foundations. So when the dark days shall come in the latter ages of the world, that our Temple shall be destroyed, this great creation of Jehovah himself, this Divine Ashlar upon which Abraham stood and where the destroying Angel turned the curse into the blessing, will point out to future ages, our care for the preservation of divine landmarks."