

against the other." This I take to be a very old form of an arch, if that term can be applied to it. The Queen's Chamber, in the great pyramid, is roofed with large stones placed exactly in this position, and above the lintels of the King's Chamber is a covering of the same kind. The entrance to the pyramid, although covered with flat stones, is protected by others above placed in the slanting position described by Herr Schick. In Stuart's "Athens" there is a representation of an old arch at Delos, which is similar. When I visited Solomon's Pools near Bethlehem, I was much interested in finding a rock-cut conduit, near to what is called the



Beth-el Channel,  
and Stone-roofed Conduit  
Solomon's Pools.  
W. Simpson  
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"Sealed Fountain," which was roofed in this manner. The entrance to this conduit was roofed with an arch, which I supposed was modern in comparison with the more primitive construction of slanting stones. Sir Charles Warren has pointed out from the Talmud that one of the gates of the Temple—the gate Tadi—was formed in this manner—"all the gates had lintels except Tadi; there two stones inclined one upon another."

It is impossible to assume any definite age from this peculiar form, but we may accept it as an indication of at least some antiquity; if even an approximate date could be formed, it might be of considerable value in some of the archæological questions connected with Jerusa-

lem. With this is a reproduction of my sketch of the Rock-cut Conduit at Solomon's Pools.

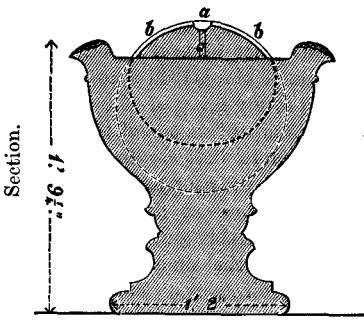
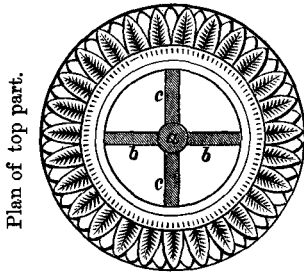
WILLIAM SIMPSON.

## THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD, IN THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

HERR SCHICK has sent home very careful drawings of the particular object which marks, in the Greek Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Middle of the World, or, as it is at times called, the Centre of the Earth. It stands on the mosaic floor under the dome of the Greek Church, a few paces to the east of the Holy Sepulchre, and is formed now of a vase, 1 foot 9½ inches high, with a stone ball placed on the top; this stone is round on the top, with stripes of another kind of stone inserted to mark the cardinal points.

Herr Schick describes the vase, or "cup," as he calls it, as being "of the reddish native Jerusalem stone; the ball is rather of a more white kind, and the stripes *a a b*, with the [pole] or small ball in centre, is of black stone."

The first reference which has been applied to the Middle of the



C. SCHICK.

- a.* Seems to be the pole.
- b b.* The Equator.
- c c.* The Meridian.

World is contained in Ps. lxxiv, 12 : "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth." This has been quoted by later writers in way of explanation ; but the words may have a sense of their own, and had no application to the Middle of the World as understood afterwards. The idea of Jerusalem being the Middle of the World is at least as old as the fourth century. In that quaint old book, "The Works of the Reverend and learned John Gregory," who was chaplain to the Bishop of Salisbury in the time of Charles I, there is a chapter on the subject of "Noah's Prayer," and the writer quotes St. Ephrem in regard to the preservation of Adam's body and its burial in "*the Middle of the Earth*, by a Priest of the most high God. For *Adam* prophesied this reason for it, that there should be the Redeemer of him and all his Posterity. The Priest who was to officiate at this Funeral they say was *Melchisedec*, and that he buried this body at *Salem* ; which might very well be the middle of the habitable world as then, and that

it was indeed so afterwards, it hath been told you before;" p. 118. The notion of the Middle of the World is somehow connected with the supposition that Adam was buried at the spot ; or at least near to it ; the tradition is that he was buried under the rock of Calvary. The Mohammedans have a similar tradition about Adam having been buried in the Middle of the Earth. El-Masudi, in his "Meadows of Gold, and Mines of Gems," says, "God said to Sám"—Shem—"I will preserve him for ever, whom I make the guardian of the body of Adam.' Sám buried the coffin of Adam in the Middle of the Earth, and appointed Lamech as guardian." In this case Jerusalem was not the middle, for the Mohammedans believe that Adam was buried in

Mosque of El-Khayf, near Mecca. These two traditions seem to point to the conclusion that it is the supposed presence of Adam's body which gives the character to the spot.

St. Ephrem's words would show that the tradition in the Christian Church is as old at least as the fourth century. At a later period the references are numerous. Arculf visited Jerusalem about 700 A.D., and he "observed a lofty column in the holy places to the north, in the middle of the city, which, at mid-day at the summer Solstice, casts no shadow, which shows that this is the centre of the earth." One would suppose from the words that this column was somewhere in the town, and not in the Sepulchre; but the descriptions of the mediæval writers are very difficult to reconcile with each other. Compare the above with what Bernard the Wise says, who writes about a century and a half later; he describes four churches at the Holy Sepulchre, and between "is a parvis without roof, the walls of which shine with gold, and the pavement is laid with precious stone; and in the middle four chains, coming from each of the four churches, join in a point which is said to be the Middle of the World."

Sæwulf, date A.D. 1102, says, "At the head of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the wall outside, not far from the place of Calvary, is the place called Compas, which our Lord Jesus Christ himself signified and measured with his own hand as the Middle of the World;" to this he adds the words of Ps. lxxiv, 12: "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth." The "Compas" is one of the names the spot is known by, as if it merely served to indicate the cardinal points, like a compass on a map. Herr Schick's drawing and description shows that it preserves this character to the present day. Sir John Maundevile, it need scarcely be stated, is not a reliable authority, still his book is full of what were current traditions of the time. His date is 1322 A.D., he says, "And in myddes of that Chirche is a Compas, in the whiche Joseph of Aramathie leyde the Body of our Lord, whan he had taken him down of the Croys; and there he wassched the Woundes of oure Lord: and that Compas, seye men, is the Myddes of the World." Chap. vii.

Another title which it had was the "Navel of the World;" in the maps of the middle ages this term is often given. The Abbot Daniel gives it this name; his date is A.D. 1106-1107. "Behind the altar, outside of the wall, is the 'Navel of the Earth,' which is covered by a small building on [the vault of] which Christ is represented in mosaic, with the inscription, 'The sole of My foot serves as a measure for the heaven and for the earth.'" (*Palestine Pilgrim's Texts; The Abbot Daniel*, p. 13.) Sandys, who was in Jerusalem in 1611, says, "Towards the west end from each side equally distant, there is a little pit in the pavement [which they say] is the Navell of the World, and endeavour to confirm it with that saying in Scripture, 'God wrought his salvation in the midst of the earth,' the which they fill with holy water." This "little pit" of Sandys' is very different from the "lofty column" of Arculf's description. At

present it is a vase with a curved stone projecting, but Herr Schick's section shows that holy water might still be poured on it, and find a receptacle.

WILLIAM SIMPSON.

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### THE SITE OF EBENEZER.

MANY years ago, after considerable study of the subject and repeated examination of the ground, I formed the opinion that the place of Ebenezer is now occupied by the village of Beit Ikša, and, notwithstanding that another site has been advocated by distinguished investigators, I still venture to think that this is the only spot which satisfactorily meets all the requirements of the case.

1. The spot should be "between Mizpah and Shen," and, as we may suppose, be a prominent and conspicuous spot. Such a spot is Beit Ikša. Taking Neby Samwīl to be Mizpah, and Deir Yesin to represent Shen, an examination of the map will show that a line drawn from one to the other would intersect this village. It is also remarkable that owing to an opening in the hills a person standing at Deir Yesin and looking towards Neby Samwīl has Beit Ikša in full view, although at a short distance the right or left it is not visible at all. From many other points it is very conspicuous, owing to its position near the summit of a hill abutting on the great valley of Beit Hannīna, which is there very open.

2. The locality should be adapted for the camping ground of a large army (1 Sam. iv, 1), have a supply of water, be easily defensible, so situated as to render communications with the interior of the Israelite territory easy, and afford a ready means of retreat in the event of an unsuccessful battle with the Philistine invaders. All these characterise the position of Beit Ikša. The hill on which it is built is nearly surrounded by deep valleys, whose steep, and in some parts precipitous, sides render the place almost impregnable in that direction, whilst a narrow ridge connects it with the only road along which the Philistines could march to the attack, which road, moreover, would expose the flank of the attacking force to an assault from the side of Mizpah. There is some water at the place itself, still more at Neby Samwīl, and an unlimited supply at the neighbouring fountain of Lifta, which must have been well within the Israelite lines.

3. There should be in the near neighbourhood some spot meriting the name of Aphek, the stronghold, in which the Philistines could securely encamp, and from which they could make their attack on the Israelite position. Such a spot is Kūstūl, *castellum*, which commands the modern road between Jerusalem and Jaffa. To the north of the miserable hamlet called by this name there is a broad plateau which affords evidence of having been used for a camping ground in ancient times, being still