And the New Testament gives just another version of the same when it says in the words of Jesus, 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.'

What a beautiful encamping around Peter was the thoughtful love of Christ! 'The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' Shortly thereafter, at the time of his fall, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; yes, and Peter turned and looked upon the Lord, for to whom else can we go even in our guilt? By and by came the 'Feed My sheep' and 'Feed My lambs,' and still later, 'Lo, I am with you alway.' Christ, the Angel of the Lord, encampeth round about them that love and fear Him.

Surely the peace of God would garrison our hearts, could we go in and out, journey and rest, live and die, in the faith that the Everlasting Arms are around us!

Ezekiel's Temple.

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IV.

Along with these changes there is a certain alteration in the regulations for the priesthood, as is brought out in the first half of chap. 44. This is in agreement with the principle laid down in He 7^{12}, 'For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' In Ezekiel's vision there is an important though by no means a total or even a violent change of the law around the new central principle, and there is a corresponding change in the law for the priesthood. In neither of these changes is there a subversion or abolition of the original law; but there is important modification. The priests are to be 'the Levites, the sons of Zadok' (v.^{15}; also at chap. 40^{46}, 43^{19}, 48^{11}). The priests are to have a portion of land assigned to them, separate from that assigned to the Levites (chap. 45^{3-5}, 48^{10-14}). But nothing else is said of the priests apart from the Levites, except what is unavoidable, about the different services at the altar and in the house. Nay, even as to their respective portions of land, these are slumped together at chap. 48^{22}, as 'the possession of the Levites.'[1] The law of the priesthood is brought in here in connexion with the daring sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, often described as he that made Israel to sin; especially

[1] The verses, chap. 44^{9-16}, are often represented as the first step from the alleged Deuteronomic equality among the Levites, who were indiscriminately either actual or possible priests, to the teaching of the so-called priestly code, which made an impassable distinction between 'the priests the sons of Aaron,' and the other Levites. This exposition attributes the supposed degradation of the Levites to their having gone astray and become priests of the high places hitherto lawful, which the Deuteronomic legislation is said to have aimed at suppressing. I fail to understand the reasoning involved in this exposition. For (1) what Ezekiel speaks of is never *these high places* scattered up and down the country, at which it imagines the Levites ministering. He speaks throughout of '*My sanctuary*,' that is, the temple at Jerusalem (vv.$^{5.\,7.\,8.\,9.\,11.\,15.\,16}$), which is also called 'My house' (v.^{7}), and 'the house' (v.$^{11.\,14}$). It is at this sanctuary (v.^{8}) that the house of Israel sinned, by not themselves keeping the charge of His holy things 'but ye have set keepers of My charge in My sanctuary for yourselves.' (2) This exposition assumes that these high places had been places of lawful worship for Israel, according to what I believe to be a misunderstanding of Ex 20^{24}. Even if that were no misunderstanding, the decisive fact remains unquestionable that it is not any worship of *Jehovah*, whether in accordance with the law or otherwise, of which Ezekiel speaks: it is a worship of *idols* (v.$^{10.\,12}$), and the emphatic word for idols is used by him throughout his book more than by all the other sacred writers. (3) The new priesthood of which Ezekiel speaks is *for the whole twelve tribes of Israel*, as is evident all through his description, yet is most directly asserted in chap. 48. The miraculous reunion of all Israel, already prophesied in chap. 37^{15-28}, stands contrasted with their sad condition at the time 'when the *children of Israel* went astray from Me' (v.^{15}), that is, when the ten tribes, at the instigation of Jeroboam, cast off the priests of the house of Aaron. (4) No reason is assigned, in this exposition, for the returned exiles making a literal change from a priesthood of the whole house of Levi, to a priesthood restricted to the family of Zadok, in obedience to Ezekiel's vision, at the same time that they refrained from taking the rest of the vision literally, as if it had laid down a rule which they were to obey. (5) The history of the Jews knows nothing of this priesthood restricted to the sons of Zadok. The true historical and grammatical exposition of the passage is given in the text of this article.

by setting up his rival sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan, and by casting off the priests, the sons of Aaron, while he threw the priesthood open to all. Ezekiel says (v.[15]), 'The priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me'; these were the persons whom Jeroboam had cast off. The cities of the priests, however, lay within the kingdom of Judah (see Jos $21^{4.\ 9\text{-}19}$): their interest therefore coincided with their duty to keep faithful to the temple at Jerusalem. Yet the changes made by Jeroboam may have led to laxity and corruption in Judah also. Now, when Ezekiel sees the twelve tribes reunited, under the prince of the house of David (chap. $37^{15\text{-}28}$), whose position in the service of the house of God is mentioned here (chap. $44^{1\text{-}3}$), it is natural that he should also see the priesthood of Aaron's house re-established and everywhere acknowledged.

But why do we read here of 'the priests, the sons of *Zadok*,' and not of 'the priests, the sons of *Aaron*,' as always elsewhere? Naturally we seek the explanation in the past history. A singular state of matters had subsisted while the people of Israel were divided between Saul and David as claimants of the throne. It is not necessary to enter into details; a very brief statement is enough. David in his wanderings had been accompanied by Abiathar, the son of the high priest, Ahimelech, whom Saul had put to death as a traitor: Abiathar alone seems to have escaped at the time of the general massacre of his kindred. Now he was a descendant of Aaron's younger son, Ithamar, whose family had, for some reason unknown to us, obtained the high priesthood, which had therefore been lost at that critical moment by the family of Aaron's elder son, Eleazar. We must suppose that Saul had set up, or had recognized, one of Eleazar's family as the rightful high priest, namely, Zadok, in place of the alleged traitor. When David came to be acknowledged as king by the whole twelve tribes, he recognized both Abiathar and Zadok as high priests, and there were two neighbouring sanctuaries, between which the public worship of Israel was distributed, with a high priest in each. When Solomon succeeded David on the throne, he removed Abiathar on account of complicity in treason; and the sacred historian points out that this was in accordance with the Divine threatening to Abiathar's ancestor, the high priest Eli (compare 1 K $2^{26.\ 27}$ with 1 S $2^{31.\ 35}$). Now since Zadok held the office of high priest in Solomon's temple, he alone and without any competitor, the sons of Zadok should alone hold the *priesthood* in Ezekiel's temple, though the law of the house was so altered that a *high priest* no longer existed. And the point and value of this promise to them becomes the more emphatic, if their family had not held the office of high priest very smoothly or continuously in the temple of Solomon. On this obscure subject one must study the high-priestly succession as recorded in 1 Ch $6^{1\text{-}15}$; on which Professor Murphy's remarks, in his handbook on Chronicles in Clark's series, may with advantage be consulted.

There had repeatedly been such critical times in the history of religion and of the priesthood in Israel; and we read of corresponding promises to those who at these critical times were in charge of the house and the worship of Jehovah. In Ex. $32^{25\text{-}29}$ it is recorded that the faithfulness of the tribe of Levi, on the occasion of the apostasy to the golden calf, secured for them a promise which transformed Jacob's curse into a blessing. In Nu $25^{11\text{-}13}$ the faithfulness and courage of Phinehas, at the time of the falling away after Baal Peor, secured to him the promise of an everlasting priesthood. And there must have been similar crises, met more or less worthily by the high priests, and the other priests too, when Athaliah usurped the throne of David, and set up the worship of Baal in Judah (2 K chaps. 11, 12); and when King Ahaz admired an altar at Damascus, and induced the high priest to substitute an altar on the pattern of it for the lawful altar in the temple at Jerusalem (2 K $16^{10\text{-}16}$); and when Manasseh reared up idolatrous altars, some of them in the house of Jehovah itself (2 K $21^{1\text{-}9}$). The description of the purifying of the temple by King Josiah, in 2 K ch. 23, not to speak of what he accomplished elsewhere, shows how many and severe the struggles had been, and how the cause of truth and purity had suffered. The same thing is apparent from Ezekiel's own vision of the abominations in the temple (ch. 8), such as could not have been without more or less of guilty connivance on the part of the priests.

When high places came to be set up in the various cities of Judah (Jer 2^{28}) it is a conjecture, yet a natural one, that this infraction of the Divine law was accompanied by another, the Levites being tempted to act as priests in these high places, as one did in very early times at Dan (Jg $18^{18\text{-}31}$).

Yet in the history there is nothing known to us which would lead us to contrast the behaviour of the house of Zadok and that of the rest of the priests, or of the Levites. All that we know is that, in the reformations by Hezekiah and Josiah, the Levites acted side by side with the priests. Both classes had reason enough to be ashamed of the past (2 Ch 30^{15}); yet perhaps the evidence is in favour of the Levites taking the lead in reformation (2 Ch 29^{34} 35^{3}). Compare the language in Zeph 1^{4}, 'The name of the Chemarim with the priests,' which seems to put on them the guilt of the corruptions.

The exposition of Ezekiel's words which I have rejected in the footnote does not stand the test of the subsequent history any more than the test of the history of the past. 'The priests, the sons of Zadok,' had not the entire priesthood in their hands in the times of the second temple, any more than in the times of the first temple. One of the ablest advocates of that exposition, Professor Driver (*Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 147), writes, putting it very mildly: 'As it proved, however, the event did not altogether accord with Ezekiel's declaration: the descendants of Ithamar succeeded in maintaining their right to officiate as priests by the side of the sons of Zadok (1 Ch 24^{4}), etc.' Nor can a shadow of proof be alleged in favour of the hypothesis that the whole descendants of Eleazar, Aaron's elder son, except those who were of Zadok's family, had their right to the priesthood effaced.

It is to be observed, whatever inference may be drawn from the fact in connexion with the subject under consideration, that after the return from Babylon, the claim to a right to minister as priests in the second temple was carefully scrutinized; and that those whose genealogy was doubtful, and whose claims were defective in consequence of this, were set aside (Neh $7^{63\text{-}65}$, the same as Ezr $2^{61\text{-}63}$).

The truth no doubt is that Ezekiel's vision is ideal in this rule for the priesthood, as in every other respect; in the sense that he never meant it to be a new legislation which should be carried out in the practice of the temple, so far almost subverting the Mosaic law. While Ezekiel makes use of *Zadok's name*, which had become prominent in history, the real point of importance was the *character* of the new priesthood. Zadok means 'righteous.' The Epistle to the Hebrews calls attention to the meaning of the names in the case of Melchizedek being of Salem. So it seems to be here. At 40^{46} Ezekiel speaks of the priests as 'the sons of Zadok, which from among the sons of Levi come near to Jehovah to minister unto him.' 43^{19} is much the same, but shorter. At 48^{11} he speaks of the oblation of land for the priests, 'it shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok, which have kept My charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray,' much as 44^{15}. It is thus that we read in Ps 132^{9}, 'Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy.' Similarly, the name Israel was modified into Jeshurun, if this means 'the upright people.' Such selected and altered names occur often in Scripture, from Abraham downwards. Ezekiel himself repeatedly makes use of symbolical names: Oholah and Oholibah, Jehovah Shammah, Harel and Ariel. And to him the priests of the future, the sons of Zadok (that is, the righteous one), stand contrasted with the aliens ('strangers' in the A.V.) of the past time (vv.$^{7.9}$). These may have been aliens by natural descent. Yet the chief thing is their spiritual condition, 'aliens, uncircumcized in heart and uncircumcized in flesh,' as they are described in each of these verses (compare Eph $2^{11.12}$). In short, the holy people, to whom new hearts had been given (chap. 36^{26}), needed to have also priests renewed in nature and accepted as righteous before God. The fulness of this blessing, however, can be found only in Christ Himself (He $7^{27.28}$).

The A.V. has not been happy in its renderings of the conjunctions with which several of these verses begin; nor is the R.V. altogether satisfactory. In v.^{10} 'But' is certainly an improvement on 'And': however, the Hebrew uses a very emphatic conjunction. The 'Yet' of both versions, in v.^{11}, is in the Hebrew a simple 'And'; or if we try to express *vav conversive*, 'And so.' It is the same Hebrew at v.^{14}; the 'Yet' in the R.V. is little better than the 'But' in the A.V. When we do justice to these conjunctions, we shall the more easily follow the prophet's train of thought. He tells how the Levites who had gone astray received chastisement from Jehovah. The aliens are not to enter My sanctuary (v.^{9}). But the Levites shall bear their iniquity (v.^{10}). *And* they shall minister in My sanctuary (v.^{11}) (made to do their work in the presence of those

children of Israel in whose sinning they had taken a prominent part, they might be expected to be patterns of gracious humility and broken-heartedness). V.[12] repeats v.[10] with additional force. V.[13], 'And they shall not come near unto Me, to execute the office of priest unto Me . . . and (as in v.[11], not "but") they shall bear their shame . . . .' '*And* I will make them keepers of the charge of the house,' etc. (v.[14]). When the Levites are bearing their iniquity and their shame, as a gracious dealing with them on God's part, this dealing will be the more obvious and impressive; just because they are not turned off and put out of sight, like the aliens, but are summoned and commanded to continue in the discharge of the humbler services of the sanctuary. To these they had been appointed from the first; but in those evil times now past and gone, there had been Levites, perhaps very many, who had not been content with their position, but had usurped the priesthood with the connivance of those children of Israel whom they had helped in going astray.[1]

What, then, was to come of the priesthood? It was to be in the hands of those who had had the right to it all along, namely, the sons of Aaron. Yet not to the whole of these. As I understand v.[15], Zadok, the righteous one, had occupied such a pre-eminent position in the temple of Solomon, that his sons, who in this new time of unexampled grace are heirs to his character (comp. Ro 4^{12}), 'shall come near to Me to minister unto Me.' In these teachings there is a nicety of language which only a reader of the Hebrew observes. For there are two quite unconnected verbs often in use, known indiscriminately to the English reader as 'approach,' 'draw near,' 'draw nigh,' etc. But the one verb is stronger than the other, as we may see in the use of both in Jer 30^{21}, 'I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto Me'; we might almost paraphrase, 'and he shall come so near as to touch Me.' Now it is this stronger word which is used of the Levites in v.[13], 'they shall not come near unto Me to execute the office of a priest.' On the other hand, it is the other verb, of feebler or more general meaning, which is used of the priests, the sons of Zadok, in vv.[15. 16], 'They shall come near to Me to minister unto Me'; 'They shall come near to My table.' And so always.

It is a consequence of the rule as laid down by Ezekiel, that there is no formal installation of the priests, or consecration of them, as it is less happily rendered. A full account of the ceremony at the installation of Aaron and his sons is given in Lv 8 and 9. Had Ezekiel instituted a priesthood instead of Aaron's, a new installation of the new priesthood would have been appropriate, not to say, necessary. Thus we find an elaborate service for the altar in 43^{18-27}, for this altar was entirely new; in the preceding paragraph (vv.[13-17]) we have the detailed instructions for making it. Besides its own great size, there was another peculiarity which called attention to its unique importance: it was the only altar in Ezekiel's temple. It was so, even if the view be right, as is probable, that the table of showbread in some sense included or represented also the altar of incense. At the dedication of Solomon's temple, also, there was no installation of the priests; for they exercised the same functions as before, only in a new and more glorious house of God. Yet there were certain services connected with the ark as it took possession of its new home, where henceforth it was to be associated with the worship offered by Israel, for whose commencement certain special arrangements were made by Solomon (1 K $8^{1-11. 62-66}$). The only apparent peculiarity in Ezekiel's service at the installation of the altar is the command to cast salt upon the two animals for a burnt-offering (43^{24}). This might have some connexion with its symbolical character, as an emblem of the power which works against corruption, 'The salt of the covenant of thy God' (Lv 2^{13}).

[1] This language of Ezekiel does not proceed from the 'Deuteronomic' standpoint of Josiah's reformation.