

(1) *The Divine Call.* THE LORD SPAKE. Not to sanction some human plan, but to proclaim his own call to a holy ministry. (2) *The tribe indicated.* LEVI. One of Jacob's sons. Gen. xxix. 34. Moses and Aaron were from this TRIBE. The rank of Moses was not hereditary; his sons not being called to the priesthood, as were those of Aaron. Vers. 2-4; Exod. xxviii. 1. THE LEVITES had manifested great zeal for God's cause when Israel worshipped the Golden Calf at Sinai; and for this zeal (and perhaps also because they were least in number of all the tribes) Jehovah selected them to be his special ministers, and to have the Lord as "their inheritance." Exod. xxxii. 26-29; Duet. x. 8, 9; xviii. 12; xxxiii. 8-11; comp. xxxviii. 21. (3) *The Divine Claim.* INSTEAD OF . . . FIRST-BORN. Egypt's first-born being all slain, immediately God claimed Israel's first-born, both of man and beast, as his own. Exod. xiii. 2, 12-15. At the first census of the tribes there were 22,273 of Israel's FIRST-BORN. The whole tribe of Levi numbered 22,000; and God took this entire tribe "instead" of the first-born of all the other tribes. The former number exceeded the Levites by 273, and for these "redemption money" was paid "unto Aaron and his sons." Num. iii. 45-51. The Levites' cattle were also taken. Num. iii. 45. The tribes also "redeemed" the first-born of their cattle. Num. xviii. 15-17; Deut. xv. 19. Of the Levites, with emphasis, God says, MINE THEY SHALL BE. But Christ has "redeemed" "every man," not with "silver and gold," but with his own "precious blood." 1 Peter i. 18-19. Yet, alas! some have "counted the blood of the covenant" an "unholy thing." Heb. x. 29.

It is generally believed by Protestant Christians, though not with entire unanimity, that the designation of men for the ministry is the peculiar prerogative of the Almighty. . . . This high prerogative seems to have been claimed by God in every age of the Church. . . . With what jealousy this prerogative was guarded against the presumptuous impiety and forward zeal of men, we may learn from the history of Korah, Dothan, and Abiram, and of Uzzah. The same principle prevails under the Gospel dispensation. . . . Our Saviour refers to it as the perpetual resource of the Church. . . . A call to the ministry is still Divine, but it is no longer miraculous. A call to the ministry may be defined a persuasion wrought by the Holy Spirit in the

mind of an individual that it is his duty to become a preacher of the Gospel.—*Dr. Olin.*

2. THE SERVICE APPOINTED, vers. 7, 8. (1) *Servants—not lords.* KEEP HIS CHARGE. Aaron's helpers, "servants." The priests are God's servants; not "lordsover God's heritage." 1 Peter v. 3. The Levites were servants to the priests. While the WHOLE CONGREGATIONS are called to be worshippers, the sons of Levi shall do the SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE—that is, put up, take down, and carry the tabernacle and its sacred vessels. Num. i. 50, 51. INSTRUMENTS. The ark, altar, candlestick, laver, etc. (See Lesson IV.) (2) *The service honorable.* This tribe was set apart with impressive ceremonies. Num. viii. 7-14. WHOLLY GIVEN to Aaron for special work for the King of kings and Lord of lords. No toil so noble as this. Christ himself came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Matt. xx. 26-28; xxiii. 11. Under the Gospel all believers are called into holy service, and are raised to the dignity of "sons," "kings," and "priests," 1 John iii. 1; Rev. i. 6; v. 10; comp. Exod. xix. 6.

We should aim to be too active to stagnate, too busy to freeze. We should endeavor to be like . . . the missionary who said, "If there be happiness on earth, it is in laboring in the service of Christ;" like the blessed Redeemer, "whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God." The vineyard must be cultivated, and the command is that we enter it and work.—*Christian Treasury.*

3. THE SUPERIOR OFFICE, ver. 10. (1) *Invested with Divine authority.* Moses as God's representative, appoints AARON to the most important office on the earth—High-Priest of the Almighty. (2) *With heavenly sanctity.* The LEVITES were solemnly set apart; sprinkled with "water of purifying," literally "sin water," Num. viii. 7. But for AARON there were still more significant ceremonies. He was (a) washed with water; (b) robed in new and beautiful garments; (c) invested with breastplate containing the wordous Urim and Thummim (through which came council from God.) Num. xxvii. 2; Ezra ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65; (d) crowned with the "mitre" and the "holy crown;" (e) anointed with holy oil. Lev. viii. 6-12; Exod. xxviii. Symbolical of the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost and the blood of Jesus; of the beautiful robes of Christ's righteousness in which true believers are clothed; of the crown of glory reserved in heaven for all God's children.