

## OUR SONS.

4. The fourth thing demanded by God is that we should give him the best of our Sons for the service of His house. It was so from the beginning. God gave His own Son for the redemption of the world. His people must be conformed to their heavenly Father in this sacrifice also. To the eldest son, therefore, belonged the *birth-right*, by which was implied not only certain privileges but also certain duties of priestly service, and priestly suffering, and priestly sacrifice. In the first family Cain abandoned his office, which fell on the shoulders of Abel, in the offering of sacrifice and suffering of death for the truth. The fact that the first-born belongs to God (of man as well as beast), is dimly shadowed in God calling upon Abraham to offer up in sacrifice his son Isaac; in Jacob, who inherited the blessing, being in God's work and for His purposes a wanderer, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" in the first-born of Egypt being demanded by God as the price of sparing the nation; in the Paschal lamb being slain to save from death the first-born of Israel; in the injunction given in Num. iii. 40-51, with regard to the redemption of the first-born: "Thou shalt take the Levites for me instead of the first-born of the males of the children of Israel."

## EVERY CHRISTIAN A PRIEST.

Instead of the New Testament abrogating God's claim of propriety in the first-born, it asserts that every Christian is bought with a price; that he is, therefore, a priest to God, and is called, as far as opportunities and gifts permit, to priestly work, priestly service, and priestly suffering for the Master. As in every free State every citizen capable of bearing arms is in theory a soldier to defend the State,

and in any great emergency should be ready to leap at the command of the State into the post of glory and danger, so every Christian capable of ruling, teaching, or preaching, should be ready at the call of God and the Church to do work where work needs to be done, and also to give the best of his sons for that work. We read of a certain king, "that when among the people he saw any strong or any valiant man he took him unto him" for the service of the country. The time is fast coming on us when Christian parents and the Church of God must do likewise. In ordinary circumstances the Church might wait for volunteers to offer themselves, but in times like these it ought to lay hold of the best talents and deepest piety among its young men, to give these the best education in the land, and to consecrate them to the service of God in the ministry of the gospel, at home or abroad, according as God in his sovereign will shall order it. Indeed if the tenth of the increase of God's Israel to-day were flowing thus spontaneously into the treasury of the Lord, then some measures of this kind must need be adopted for securing ministers and missionaries, or else again, as in the days of Moses, the cry must be raised to ask the people to cease from bringing because there is more money on hand than there are men willing and qualified to go on the Lord's work. But with hearts full of love to God, with Sabbaths of heavenly communion, with a treasury overflowing with the free-will offerings of a holy people, the brightest and best of our sons would press into our colleges and out into the field, till at length the vision of the song would be realized in our own time: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Then indeed would the Church be on the eve of its millennial glory.