

# Northern Messenger

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'The "Northern Messenger" is a marvel for the price.'—Archibald Lee, Grenville, Que.

## The Call of the Soul.

(The Rev. F. B. Meyer, M.A., in the 'Christian World'.)

There is a time in every truly religious life when the traditional passes into the personal, and the soul awakes to appreciate the need of direct fellowship with God. That moment may come suddenly or gradually, as the result of a growth or of a direct divine interposition; but whenever it comes it is like a rebirth; old things pass away and all things become new.

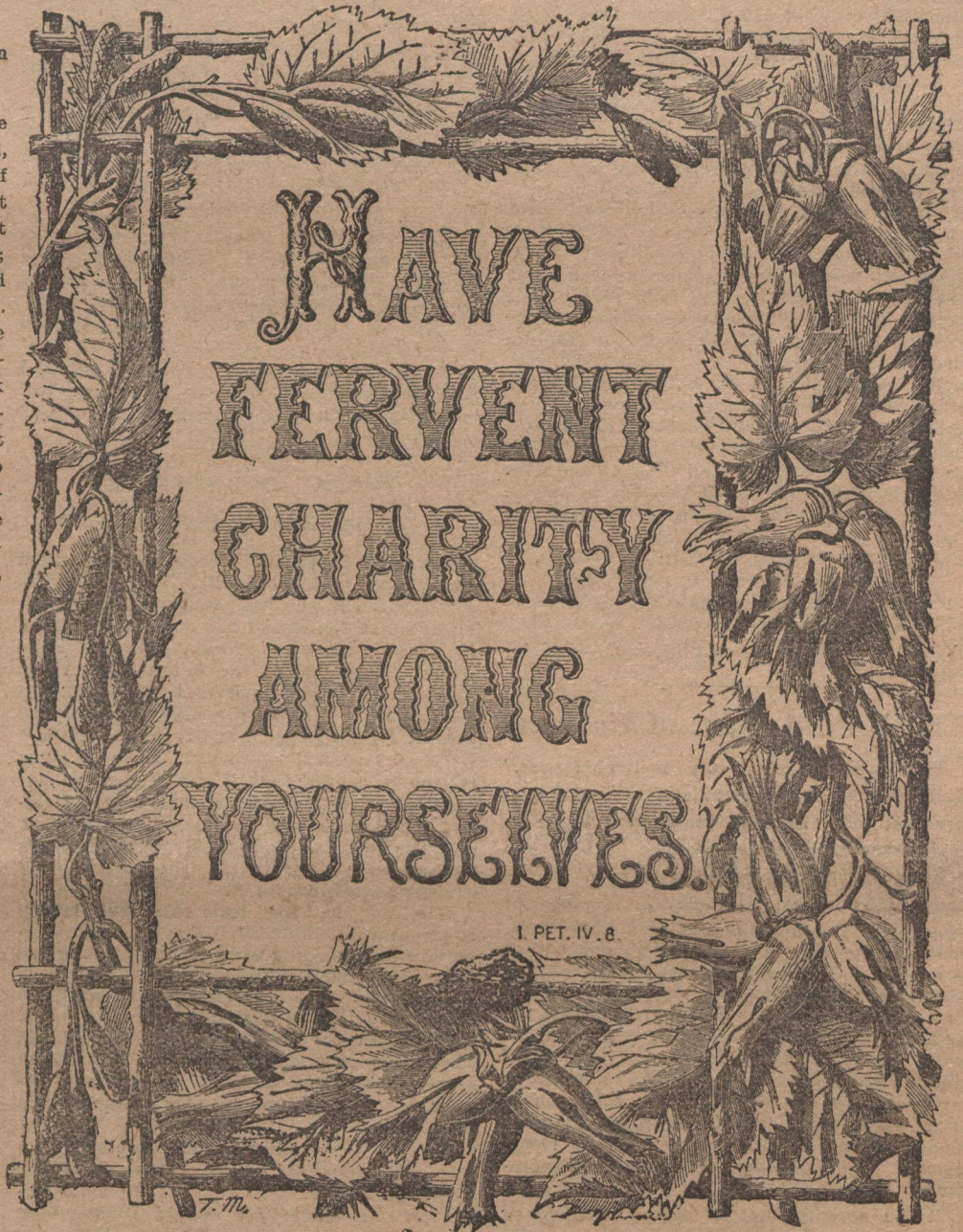
God is eager to awaken each soul that He has made to this personal and direct fellowship with Himself, in which He may speak His profoundest thoughts, and have unhindered and direct access to the soul's most secret shrine. He is unwilling that we should be so dependent on the rites of a church, the institutions of a religious society, or the example and teaching of others. He is intensely desirous of accustoming us to deal with Himself, as though there were none else in the universe but Him and the Son Whom He desires to bring to glory.

An illustration of this occurs in the story of Samuel. We are all familiar with the fascinating description of his mother's sorrow and travail of heart, her prayers and tears, her solemn vow, her ecstasy of rapture as she pressed the child to her heart, and her solicitude to train him with her own motherly hand for the great life to which he was destined. Her song shows how familiar she was with the grand old Hebrew literature, with the noblest traditions of her people, and with the many chords that sound in all human lives. And as the child stood at her knee and drank in her words, what wonder that his young nature became inspired with something of her spirit. The little Levite coat, which she made for him year by year, was a visible embodiment of those habits and clothing of the inner life which she made for her rapt pupil, to whom she represented God and Truth and Duty.

But it is clear that both at that time and afterwards, when, as a growing lad, he was put under the care of Eli, his religious life was rather a reflection of the light that shone on their faces, than a fire which was kindled on his own inner altar. What his mother said about God was his highest conception of God. What Eli taught was his supreme code. He did not know God for himself; and when the accents of the Divine Voice fell on his ears, instead of an instant recognition they only excited a vague wonder.

All this required to be altered before Samuel could fulfil the high purpose of his being. He must be weaned from the breast of the human mother that he might feed on the bread of God. He must see the lights of childhood pale before the radiance of the coming day. Stars are well enough, when the gray dawn lingers on the hills, but they must make way for the sunrise, into whose opal and yellow they fade.

So it befell that God stood and called, 'Samuel, Samuel!' Probably there is no soul of man to which in some form or other, at some time or other, that call does not come. We must always believe that the work of Jesus is for the whole world; that the true Light lighteth every man who comes into the



—'Children's Friend.'

world; and that the swathing bands of God gird all men, even though they do not know Him. Every holy inspiration which visits the sons of men is a call from those lips that in the stillness of the shrine, as the light from the great lampstand was burning low on the margin of twilight, uttered in tones of flute like sweetness the name of Samuel.

Has that call come to you? The direct speech of God! The personal communication of the divine will! The breathing in of the unexpected and unconventional on the ordinary and commonplace! It comes not once nor twice. It lingers as though loath to take a negative. He stands at the door and knocks. The Lord stood and called. Oh, can you not recall moments when something within you suggested that you should be sweeter and tenderer to those near you, that you should abandon evil habits which clung to you, and arise to the new life which beckoned you, that you should enter into the life of prayer and fellowship? Have you hitherto refused, as though Samuel had hidden his head under his counterpane and sought to go back to sleep?

## In the Ice.

Not in miracles alone, but daily, God in nature, takes side with the right. Some years ago a ship captain, whose employees were ambitious to have their ship first out of Buffalo on the breaking up of ice in spring, started his vessel as soon as the harbor was cleared of ice, supposing that the wind would, as often before, carry the ice up the lake, break it up, and disperse it, and so prevent all trouble from it. But when the ship neared the upper end of the lake the captain found himself between two great fields of ice, that on the right extending to the Canada side; that on the left, slowly but surely moving down upon them. The ship was not prepared for an Arctic encounter like this, and how to escape from their perilous position was an anxious question. But two courses presented themselves. The first was to land on the ice, and so make their way to Canada shore. The mate volunteered the attempt. It was fraught with danger, but he succeeded in making the exploration, and in returning