

THE GATHERING CALL



"The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice." John 10:4

VOL. IX

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, SEPT.-OCT., 1921.

NO. 4-5

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE



My Anchor Holds

By A. F. Ballenger.

Once I was drifting away with the tide,
The sport of the wind and the wave;
The storms of temptation were driving my
bark,
To find in the breakers a grave.
"Lengthen your cable, the anchor will
hold,"
I heard 'bove the roar of the blast;
I lengthened my cable, O praise ye the
Lord!
My anchor is holding at last.

Since I was rescued from drifting and
death,
I've breasted the wind and the wave;
And given my life with a joy that is new,
Poor perishing sinners to save.
"Lengthen your cable, the anchor will
hold,"
I've cried to the wrecks as they passed;
Some lengthened their cables, O praise ye
the Lord;
And anchored with me from the blast.

Thousands of church-men are drifting to-
day,
As wrecks in the storm and the cold;
By drifting, my brother, you say to the
lost,
The anchor of God will not hold.
"Lengthen your cable, the anchor will
hold,"
The word of the Lord cannot fail;
Yes, lengthen your cable, O glory to God;
I've anchored at last from the gale.

O, who is driven all helpless tonight,
By tempests of passion and pride,
A wreck rushing on to the breakers of
death?
Quick! anchor your bark by my side.
Lengthen your cable, the anchor will hold,
I know, for my anchor is fast;
Yes, lengthen your cable, O praise ye the
Lord;
My anchor is holding at last.

It holds, hallelujah! it holds, it holds!
My anchor's holding fast;
The Rock of the Ages unmovable stands,
My anchor holds at last.
It holds, hallelujah! it holds, it holds!
The cable bears the shock.
The waves of temptation dash harmlessly
by,
I'm anchored to the Rock.



"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 Tim. 4:7-8.

ANOTHER VETERAN FALLEN

On the eighth of September we gathered at Glendale to celebrate the eighty-seventh birthday of our father. The first vacant chair in fourteen years was most keenly felt at this gathering. This was particularly true of the aged father. The death of his elder son was a sad blow, and had a marked effect on his usually bright and sunny cheerfulness; and this in turn was making inroads on his vitality.

A few days after our reunion, he was taken with an acute attack of indigestion from which he suffered intensely for forty-eight hours. After the intense suffering subsided he slept almost continuously, complaining of pain only occasionally, but frequently saying, "I am so tired." He retained consciousness almost to the last, and talked freely and confidently of the coming end. He went to sleep as restfully as a child, without the slightest struggle, at noon, Tuesday, September 20. Thus the Gathering Call has lost one of its warmest friends and supporters.

John Fox Ballenger was born on a farm, where the city of Columbus, Ohio, now stands, September 8, 1834. Two years later the family journeyed with ox teams to Northern Illinois, locating at Winslow, twenty miles north-west of Freeport.

His father, Asa Ballenger, came not to the frontier for adventure, nor for wealth, but to carry the "good news" to the neglected outposts. For thirty years he rode the Methodist circuit of Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin, calling sinners to repentance, burying their dead, marrying their youth, and christening their babies. Upon John, the youngest but one, fell the mantle of this "white-haired saint" of pioneer days.

Raised in a log-cabin, warmed only by a stone fireplace, and lighted by the blazing hearth or the dipped tallow candle; clothed in the homespun from the sheep of their own pastures, or the flax of their own fields; educated in a schoolhouse of unhewn logs, the furniture of which was a product of ax and adz, taught by an unlicensed teacher who could read and cypher; the subject of this text was truly a child of the simple life.

His childhood was a life of diligence and simplicity, but was not without interest or diversion of the keenest nature. A trip to the village of Chicago with the produce of the farm, furnished a week of ever varying experiences. The narrow escapes of the scattered settlers from Black Hawk and his warriors were prominent among his childhood adventures.

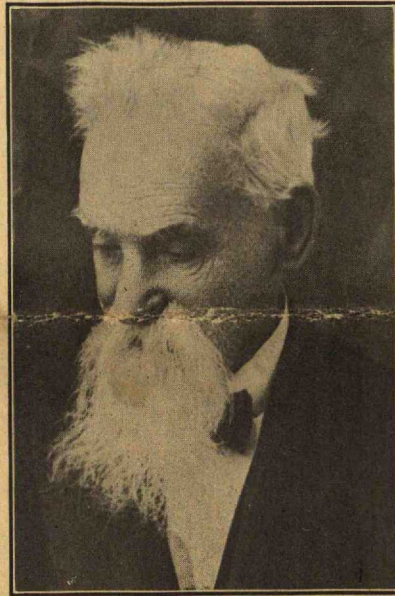
His religious experience began in his earliest childhood. While playing with a neighbor boy the little companion innocently said, "Johnny, do you know your mother is going to die pretty soon?" She was then quite feeble with what they thought was "quick consumption." This called forth a flood of tears, and he hastened homeward. On the way he knelt in the corner of the rail fence, and for the first time, talked with God. He pleaded for the life of his mother, and offered himself to God in return for the coveted favor. Heaven heard and answered that simple prayer, and accepted the offering.

Just before the civil war, Eld. Ingraham held a series of tent-meetings in the little village of Oneco, Stephenson County, Ill. John, the Methodist class-leader, was convinced and immediately obeyed, though bit-

terly opposed by friends and relatives. Brother Ingraham, recognizing the abilities of the young man, urged him to enter the ministry. He accepted the call and, planting his rented fields to small grain, he joined Eld. Ingraham in a tent effort at St. Cloud, Minn., the beginning of the work in that state.

His first labors were given without financial returns from any source. For over fifty years he continued to proclaim the message in Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Canada, and California. During this long service he had many promising invitations to engage in business. One of these came in the prime of life from one of the early presidents of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a man of unlimited means, who took a special liking to him. It came at a time when when he was at the bottom of the ladder financially, but he declined the offer that he might be free to preach the message.

For many years his salary was not sufficient to meet his own personal expenses, yet by the most rigid economy father and mother managed to contribute to the begin-



FATHER BALLENGER

ning of the publishing work, the Sanitarium, the College, and the opening of the work in Europe, Australia, and other pioneer fields. He, together with mother, attended the first camp-meeting held by the denomination at Wright, Mich. It was the custom of their lives to attend these gatherings every year.

This sketch would not be complete, and especially to the readers of The Gathering Call, if one very sad experience in the life of our father were omitted. After spending over fifty years in preaching the message, during which time he was separated from his family from three to eleven months of every year; after raising up churches by the score in many states, for he gave his entire time to pioneer work; after denying himself all the luxuries and many of the necessities of life that he might promote the kingdom; after dedicating his whole family to the cause that was dearer to him than life; after he had passed the "threescore and ten" by many years, and was too silvered to press the battle any longer; while the loss of his faithful companion was still a bleeding wound, his own familiar friends, his companions in labor, refused to renew

his credentials which he had held uninterruptedly for half a century.

And why this denial? Had he brought disgrace upon the church by some heinous sin or crime? Had he denied the faith or forsaken the law? Had he wronged the brethren or repudiated the Word? None of these. Then why should he spend his declining years a cast out from his brethren? Not for any public teaching, but because he came to believe that Christ entered the holy of holies of the heavenly sanctuary at His ascension, instead of waiting until 1844, as the church infallibly taught. Well do I remember the tears that flowed from a wounded heart when he came from that camp-meeting, a cast out from his brethren. He cherished no resentment, but carried a wounded heart till the end.*

Father Ballenger was united in marriage to Eliza Stroud in 1854. She was laid to rest in 1907. To them were born six children, two of whom died in infancy. The first born, Mrs. Ida Hibben, and the youngest, Mrs. Nellie Simpson, both of Glendale, and the writer, survive him.

We are not like the wicked that David envied; who "have no pangs in their death." The fountain of our tears has broken forth afresh. With thankful and grateful remembrances we lay him to rest to await the call of the archangel at the first resurrection.

*Note: The denomination continued his monthly allowance, after refusing him credentials.

ARE ALL THE CHILDREN HERE?

Mrs. D. J. Hibben

We children stood with bended head
Around our father's dying bed,
Eager to catch his parting words.
"Are all the children here?" he said.

"Yes, all are here," each made reply,
"And will stay by you till the last."
Assured of this he fell asleep,
So like one resting from a task.

'Mid blinding tears by faith I hear
The Archangel's voice that burst the tomb,
And calls again that sleeping form
To life and full immortal bloom.

And when he rises this I know
Into that shining throng he'll peer
And to his blessed Saviour say:
"Tell me, are all the children here?"

Oh, that his Lord can make reply:
"Yes, faithful child, thy 'flock' I see;
They all are here, safe in the fold
With thee to spend eternity."

O God, Thy grace sufficient is,
To make faith's dream reality,
And fit us in that morn to stand
Complete in Thee, complete in Thee.

This issue of the Gathering Call has been gotten out under very trying circumstances. Editorial work is a new calling to which we never felt called. As the last of the material was being turned in, the temporary editor was called to the bedside of his father, where he spent a week of strenuous watching. We have labored in sorrow to do the work we felt must be done. We beg you to be charitable toward our mistakes and shortcomings.

So many expressions of sympathy and tributes of praise have been received which would have been so appropriate for this issue, but our limited space compels us to omit them. As much of the material as we can find room for will appear in the next number.