

"EBB & FLO"

Ebb and Flo were simple country folk. Ebb ran a bait and tackle shop in their home town of Shallowsville; Flo worked part-time at the local diner down on the town square. They enjoyed a good life together, sharin' a common faith, and the typical experiences of the average Christian family.

Ebb and Flo were decent, clean livin', hard working, moral citizens...the kind of folks anyone would like to have as neighbors. Flo took every Saturday afternoon off to visit the sick and the shut-ins, while Ebb closed up the shop early on Monday evenings to meet with a men's group, in order to pray about the needs of the community. Both of them were outstandin' church members, even winnin' awards for perfect attendance in Sunday school. In fact, Ebb had taught the adult Bible class at their church for as long as anyone could remember. They did little odd jobs and repairs for the widows and the elderly in their area, and helped out the homeless as much as they could (not even a stray dog or cat was turned away)! On top of all that, they faithfully supported a missionary couple who had come through the church a number of years ago, whom God had specially placed on their hearts. They had a genuine burden for those who had never heard the Gospel, and wanted to do their part in spreadin' the "Good News."

Not only was this true, but they were civic-minded, as well, and actively involved in the issues of the day. Why, they'd volunteer for near 'bout anything, as long as it had a good cause! Ebb even ran for mayor once, because he wanted to make a difference in their community. He had some strong convictions, and felt that it was time to "put God back in government," as his campaign theme stated. They were thoughtful, charitable, wholesome individuals, always "on the go," who made it their business to help wherever they could, whenever a need arose (one of Ebb's favorite sayin's was, "I'd rather burn out for God than rust out for the Devil").

Despite everything they had goin', they still felt something was definitely missin' in their spiritual lives. For years, it seemed as if they had just about reached their limit in God. Whenever they would begin to press forward in their experience, and seemed to be gainin' a little ground, something would always pull them back. It was like there was an invisible barrier before them, which restricted them from going any further. They were sometimes up and sometimes down, sometimes in and sometimes out, but never feelin' like they'd gotten much ahead. Needless to say, this back and forth type of motion was extremely frustratin'. They couldn't quite put a finger on it, but they knew that there had to be more in God than what they'd obtained. (Part of the problem may have been in what they'd been led to believe. Since they'd received the baptism of the Spirit a number of years ago, they'd been taught that what they had was all they could expect "on this side of glory." According to their teachers, the next great event to take place in their lives would be the rapture. Not only was this preached to them on a regular basis, but this mentality was constantly driven into their heads by the lyrics of the songs they sang at church every service. The emphasis was almost always placed on things like goin' to see

Grandma, gettin' your "mansion in glory," and walkin' on streets of gold. There ain't much wonder why they felt disturbed, now, is there?)

One day Flo was lookin' through the Shallowsville Gazzette when an advertisement in the paper caught her eye. A brother by the name of Fuller A. Bundance, and his wife, Gloria, from Deeperville, were havin' a tent meetin' out on the edge of town. "How interesting," she thought to herself. "Non-denominational, all races welcome.' Maybe Ebb would like to go".

That night after supper, the Lord reminded Flo of the advertisement. "Ebb?" she said. "Yea, Flo". "I noticed there's a tent meetin' goin' on just outside the city limits." "Done heard about it," replied Ebb. "When Bro. Shore delivered the mail this mornin', Sister Tide came in right behind him. To hear them tell it, this preacher and his wife have been causin' quite a ruckus down there, disturbin' th' public peace." "Is that a fact?" asked Flo. "Don't know. Just repeatin' what I heard. One thing's for sure, though. They're preachin' things nobody 'round these parts ever heard before." "Well," she said, "I had a notion to go tomorrow night. Wondered what you thought about goin' with me." "HmMMM. Eh, might as well," said he. "Only one way to find out what's goin' on, and that 's to go see for yourself."

The next night was anything but ordinary. From the moment they drove onto the tent lot, it seemed like the very air was charged with an excitement and expectation. It was an electrifyin' experience, to say the very least! The preacher's wife, Gloria Bundance, led the congregation in a few lively choruses. Then she introduced them to a new song. The worship was free and spirited, without the limitations to which they were accustomed. Many even appeared to be caught up in the Spirit, havin' lost all consciousness of their natural surroundings. And yet, their voices seemed to harmonize like the sound of many waters. It was as if they were gonna go right through the roof! And talk about prophecy! Why, it just flowed like a river! Ebb and Flo had never experienced it on this wise before.

After awhile, a hush fell over the service. It was a sacred silence...an almost overwhelmin' moment of intensity and reverence, while the whole congregation waited on the Lord for direction and guidance. It was clear that no one man was in control of the services. Everyone wanted to hear from God that night, and it didn't matter through whom He spoke.

Finally, it was Brother Bundance who stepped to the front. He was a plain man, with tender eyes and a broken voice. He wasn't much to look at in the natural, possessin' no beauty that would make folks desire him. But anyone could tell that the Lord had given him a special "something" that separated him from other men. It was an inward beauty, which radiated like beams of sunshine from his being!

He was not an eloquent speaker. His message was spontaneous and unrehearsed. And as far as his delivery was concerned, it was plain and nondescript (at least, accordin' to the world's standards). Ebb and Flo could certainly say they'd seen better performances. But there was an unction and an authority in his words that captivated their hearts, causin'

them to give him their undivided attention. It was as if the man just disappeared, and God was speakin' directly to them!

Accordin' to Bro. Bundance, the Lord is stirrin' up a divine discontentment among many of His people these days. The reason for this is because there's a third dimension in God, a place which is beyond the born-again experience, and beyond the baptism of the Holy Ghost, reserved for those who've determined to go all the way to perfection. A simple study in scripture shows that when God speaks of completion, He does so in threes. So, since it's obvious that the church as a whole is still in the "in part" realm (1 Cor. 13: 9-12), and in many ways immature, it's a place that the body of Christ has not yet seen before, though the Forerunner of us has already entered into it, and demonstrated it to us throughout the gospels (Heb. 6:20).

For the most part, he preached this message from the New Testament, where Jesus appeared for the third time in His human form (the first two times, of course, were

- 1) durin' His infancy, and

- 2) when He was entering into puberty, bein' found in the temple with the teachers of the law).

- 3) The third experience was the place where, at the river Jordan, the heavens were opened to Jesus, and the voice of the Father declared, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21-22).

Just as His first appearance was durin' the time of His circumcision, and His second appearance was around the time of His Bar-Mitzvah, this event corresponded to the third major event celebrated by ceremony in the life of a young Israelite male, the ancient Hebrew adoption ceremony. Unlike our modern concept of adoption, where a child born to one set of parents is simply placed under the legal custody of another (perhaps receivin' full rights to possessions, but never able to bear the image of his adoptive parents), the adoption in biblical times carried a different meanin' altogether. It was that time when a Jewish father would publicly recognize his son as havin' come to full maturity (bein' 30 years of age), ready to go forth in his father's name, and assume the responsibilities of the family business. This New Testament illustration made for a very strong presentation by Brother Bundance, and was very convincin'. But he also confirmed it in several ways from the Old Testament. For example, there were the three places the Israelites sojourned, in order that they might possess their promised inheritance:

- 1) Egypt, where the process of their salvation experience began;

- 2) the wilderness, where they received the earnest, or guarantee of their inheritance; and ultimately

- 3) Canaan, where they received the fullness of it.

Also, there were the three annual feast days which they were required to keep, and during which the Lord had promised to meet with them;

1) First, Passover (where they were originally required to partake of the slain lamb);

2) Secondly, Pentecost (the Feast of Firstfruits) where they experienced the beginning of the harvest cycle, and the assurance that there was more to come; and finally,

3) climaxin' the harvest season with the feast to end all feasts, the Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Booths, or Ingathering. Brother Bundance had lots to say about that!)

Then, there were the three divisions in the Tabernacle of Moses, based upon the pattern shown to him in the holy mount:

1) The court of the tabernacle (where the sacrifice for sin was offered upon the brazen altar);

2) the Holy Place (where the priests ministered before the Lord in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks); and last but not least,

3) the Holy of Holies.

The Holy of Holies was the place where once, in the end of the year (during the Feast of Tabernacles, we might add), the high priest was privileged to pass beyond the veil, and meet with God face to face before the mercy seat. There are many other places which could be cited. But within these three examples, there are countless scores of types and shadows depictin' this singular truth. There's a place in God, the likes of which the church and the world have never even witnessed, apart from the life that Jesus manifested in the days of His flesh! It's that place where Jesus went away to prepare for us (John 14:2), that realm of glory reserved for a firstfruits company at the end of the age, the place from whence the saints shall rule and reign with Christ in the age to come (Rev. 20:6)! It's what Jesus meant when He spoke in His parables of "the hundredfold" blessing (Matt. 13:23), and "the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28). And it's what's referred to in scripture by the apostle Paul as "perfection" (1 Cor. 13: 9-10; Heb. 6:1), "the third heaven" (11 Cor. 12: 3-4), "Mount Zion" (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1), or "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13)! The thing that excited Ebb and Flo the most, though, was that it's not an experience that's simply reserved for God's people after they die, "in the sweet bye-and-bye," on some far-removed planet called "heaven," but that there'll be a people who are alive and remain when the appointed time of it's fulfillment is come, and will manifest it here on earth. This is the hope planted deep within the hearts of all men, whether they are aware of it or not; and this is the hope for which all creation groans (yea, even the true fulfillment and embodiment of the greatly anticipated Year of Jubilee!) As the Phillips translation puts it, the whole creation is standin' on tiptoe to see

the wonderful sight of the sons of God comin' into their own (Rom. 8: 18)! It's very deliverance from the bondage of corruption and decay depends on it! Hallelujah!

As you might imagine, this caused quite a stirrin' in the hearts of Ebb and Flo! It was as if "the deep calleth unto the deep at the noise of (God's) waterspouts" (Psa. 42:7). The deep things of God were beckoning to the depths of their spirits (1 Cor. 2:10), confirmin' the things which they'd felt for so long, and enlightenin' them to the hope of this calling. *Now* they understood why they were so dissatisfied with their present experience! They were to set their sights beyond the usual mark, and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). A lesser hope would never suffice.

Few words were spoken between them on their way home that night. There was just too much to think about, and feelings which words could never express. Besides, they didn't have to say a word to each other...the look in their eyes said it all. The breath of God, as it moved upon the face of their "deep," had taken on the force of a hurricane. And by this time, they were caught right in the midst of the storm (boy, were they ever seasick)! Talk about turbulence!

That night, a very strange and unexplainable thing happened. As if this sea-tossed couple had not been through enough already, the Lord saw fit to drive them right on over the edge. And how did he do this? Why, He gave them both the same dream! In it, they were wrestlin' with the angel of the Lord by the brook Jabok (a name which means, "to empty, or make void"), just as Jacob did in the book of Genesis (chapter 32). The angel desperately sought to escape their grasp, but they refused to turn him loose. Finally, after strugglin' 'til the break of day, and havin' exhausted all of their energies, the messenger turned to them and said, "What is thy name?" Lookin' at one another, and realizin' the obvious implications of his query, they said in unison, "Ebb and Flo. For as God has set bounds upon the waves of the sea, sayin', 'thus far, and no more' (Job 38:11), even so has He limited us." "Thou shalt no longer be known as Ebb and Flo," the angel said, "but spiritually, thou shalt become known as Brother and Sister Cascade. For thus saith the Lord, as living waters cascade down the mountainside, ever moving, and ever increasing in strength and velocity, so shall it be for thee. Thou shalt go forward, and shall not go back; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." With that, the night vision ended.

The next mornin', they told each other the dream. There was little doubt in either of their minds that the Lord was speakin' to them through it...and there was little doubt to either of them as to what He was sayin'! However, it was Ebb who first had the courage to actually verbalize it. "Flo, I feel the Lord is sayin' that it's time for us to break free from all that's held us back in the past. We've gotta move from Shallowville, and go on with Brother and Sister Bundance to Deeperville. There's things that the Lord has ordained to reveal to us there, things that we'll never be able to see from here." The sound of those words had a most soberin' effect on Flo. "Ebb," she said, "Do ya realize what that would mean? We'd have to give up everything we have here. And besides, we have no idea what we'd find once we got to Deeperville. We've never been there before. After all, the only thing we've got to go on is what the Bundances have told us about it." After a long

pause, Ebb answered her. "Yea, that's true. There's a whole lot to consider. But, the way I see it, why should we sit here 'til we die? If we don't go now, we may never find any sense of spiritual satisfaction again."

That settled it. Right after breakfast, they went down to the tent, and told the Bundances of their decision. They were delighted to hear it! They said they were just about ready to head back home, anyway, so they would enjoy the company. Besides that, they could sure use some help in gettin' the message out along the way. So the timin' was perfect! Now, tellin' the Bundances was the easy part. It was the next part, however, that they were dreadin'. How would they ever break the news to the townsfolk?

As it turned out, they didn't have to. Word had already gotten around even before they had time to announce it. Seems that the town busybody, Sister Ima Speculator, had noticed their strange behavior. So she called Iva Hunch. Iva's English cousin, Sir Mizer, just happened to be there visitin' when she called, and so they told him about it, too. Between the three of them, they put two and two together (Ima said she didn't want to say "I told you so," but knew all along it would come to this). Now, you would think that since these sisters had such a bad reputation for spreadin' rumors in the past, no one would pay any mind to them. But it just so happened that their suspicions were right this time! They had the whole town in an uproar!

As might be expected, a committee immediately assembled from the church, and came by to pay Ebb and Flo one of them "special" visits. When they arrived, everyone was awkward to begin with. This was natural, since it was obvious why they were there. But it was their pastor, Brother Seymour O. D'Formerthings, who finally broke the ice. Now, Brother Seymour was a fine man. He had helped them greatly in the past; and for this, they had a great respect for him. But he was vehemently opposed to this "new" doctrine, sayin' that it didn't matter how much Bible Brother Bundance quoted, if it didn't line up with the traditional teachin's of their church, it had to be of the devil. Brother Deadletter agreed, and said they were twistin' the scriptures to say what they wanted. According to him, they were spiritualizin' away things that were meant to be taken in a natural sense. Brother Explainaway said that they were overreactin' to the message. His opinion was that they'd been under a lot of stress lately, and were sufferin' from a form of temporary insanity. They just needed to come in for some counselin' sessions, that's all. And poor old Bro. Pessa Mystic, bless his soul, why, he yelled 'til he was plumb blue in the face! He just kept sayin' that everyone knew that deception would be on the rise 'in the last days.' He feared they'd done gone and gotten themselves mixed up with some weird New-Age cult group that thought they were God! Meanwhile, Sister Spookendyke was steadily walkin' around the house, rebukin' the devil in a loud voice, with Sister Lotta E. Motion followin' right behind her. She just jerked and cried the whole night long! (They had every dog in the neighborhood howlin'!) They all tried to persuade them otherwise, and they were all just as sincere as they could be; but it was to no avail. Ebb and Flo were thoroughly convinced that what they were doin' was the right thing to do, and that it was the right time to do it. So they just went on to bed, and left their company to fuss among themselves.

Havin' put that behind them, they were faced with the next heart-wrenchin' experience, and that was, packin' for the journey. They'd already considered the fact that they only had enough room to take what was of absolute necessity with them. Everything else had to be discarded. But that's easier said than done! Things that no longer fit them, things they no longer used, and things they'd just saved for sentimental reasons had to be left by the wayside, as they downsized for the move. You can't imagine what this is like, unless you've experienced it for yourself. It's a painfully difficult task.

Finally, the truck was loaded, and they were on their way. As they were drivin' past the city limits, and crossin' over the Bridge of Transition, they were determined not to look back. While they would certainly miss the fellowship of their long-time friends and neighbors, they had no regrets. New adventures awaited them in a new land, and they were thrilled with the opportunity to move forward in God.

Meanwhile, life went back to normal in Shallowsville.

...At least, for the time bein'.

WHOSO HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR

We trust that our little story has served it's purpose, which is, to convey spiritual truth through what seems to be foolishness (I Cor. 1:21, 27). There's much to be considered in these few words!

Saints of God, even as it was in the days of Noah, when he and his family were privileged to cross over into a new world where never a man had trod; just as it was in Abraham's days, when he was called out into a land which he would afterward receive as an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, "not knowing whither he went"; and just as it was in Joshua's day, when he was privileged to lead God's people across the Jordan, and into their promised land, saying, "ye have not passed this way before"; even so are we living at the transition point of one of the most important times in all of recorded history. What an extraordinary opportunity this is! The voice of a fuller and more glorious abundance in God is speaking to the hearts of men and women in this hour, awakening them to the marvelous hope of sonship. Hear ye the word of the Lord!

Let it be clearly understood that this call to the third dimension is not just to inform God's people of another "revival of old-time Pentecost." Nor is it one of the many "times of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19), as wonderful as those can be. As different as the Feast of Passover was from the Feast of Pentecost, and

as separate as the Feast of Pentecost was from the Feast of Tabernacles, this that we speak of is an entirely different experience altogether! Now, this is not to put down Passover or Pentecost in any way. We're certainly not suggesting that the born-again experience (which Passover typifies) is any less important, or that the Pentecostal experience is already obsolete. But while some can only see more in our future of what has already been in our past (being limited in their vision by traditional theology), and while others have no hope or expectation of anything but to "fly away" at any moment (that they might escape this present evil world), the Lord is preparing to do a new thing in the earth, the likes of which has never been done before. "The former things have come to pass, and new things do I declare. Before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isa. 42:9). Therefore, to as many as have been ordained of old for "such a time as this," the trumpet-call is sounding, charging them before God to excel beyond the nominal church experience, to come out from among the divisive spirit of "Babylon," and to prepare to break through into a brand-new dimension in the Spirit. The time is upon us, and the spiritual Feast of Tabernacles is at hand!

We know that not everyone will be able to hear this. Some folks are satisfied right where they are, and have no ambition to reach their full potential in Christ. But if you happen to be one of those who have grown weary of the "ebb and flow" of their present Christian experience, if there is a deep longing in your inner man to leave the shallow places of the past, and if you feel that the Lord has been "breaking up the fountains of the great deep" within you for a purpose, we would encourage you to go on to deeper waters in the Spirit. You'll never find any real peace or contentment in your walk until you launch out into the deep, as our Lord Jesus commanded, and apprehend that for which you were apprehended in Christ. There are uncharted and unexplored realms of spiritual reality awaiting you, which have not been mapped out by the minds of men! Let Christ in you, the hope of glory be the Anchor of your soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters within the veil (Heb. 6:19). He'll surely bring you into that desired haven, and ultimately make you a part of His "River of Life" company. Those who do so are destined to flow out into all the world, and to restore everything in it's path! Hallelujah!

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