

"One Interest ... One Subject"  
Review of These Phrases 1890-1911  
Fred Bischoff  
www.ScriptureFirst.net  
www.FredBischoff.com

Ellen White first addressed the subject of Christ as the center of our witness using these words in an article in 1890, framed in the context of the Laodicean Message, with the title, "Be Zealous, and Repent." This article described unstoppable victory resulting with "the new wine" of old truths uniting with new light, the intimate knowing of the Lord, the power of a united witness carrying the message rapidly, and the promise of the Spirit that would empower the whole, to "lift up Jesus." But the picture she painted was clearly future tense: "**One interest** will prevail, **one subject** will swallow up every other,--Christ our righteousness." (RH, December 23, 1890 par. 19; emphasis supplied).

As early as 1896 she described, in negative, heart-breaking terms, the failure of that happening to date, a failure extending back to 1888, which had to be contrasted with the success of a parallel experience earlier, tied to the first fulfillment of the promise of the Spirit.

An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth [of the law in the context of the righteousness of Christ], lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren Waggoner and Jones. By exciting that opposition, Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, **the special power of the Holy Spirit** that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining **that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost**. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world. {1888 1575.2} [Note: This is Letter 96, 1896, written June 6, 1896 to Uriah Smith. Emphasis is supplied. The qualifying phrases "in a great measure" and "in a great degree" must be noticed, as well as the collection of the verbs' tenses, moods, and voices. These include past active indicative ("lay," "manifested," "succeeded," "longed," "prevented"), past passive indicative "was resisted"), past active subjunctive ("might have been"), but especially the final present perfect active indicative ("has been"). The concluding verb means the action that "kept away" the Loud Cry arose in the past and *was still present*.]

An interesting pattern developed near the end of the 1890s, where Ellen White took the "one interest ..., one subject" theme, and specifically and repeatedly in the years following used it to describe the significance of the success when the promise of the Spirit was welcomed and experienced by the disciples at Pentecost. She then used that story of how God had led in the past to teach the current church the privilege, opportunities, and obligations facing it. *Undoubtedly, we still must face the same. We must see the call for us to confess the reasons why the realization of this promise is still future.*

There are 15 hits for the terms "one interest" with "one subject." In each use, the emphasis is supplied to highlight these terms. The numbering of each hit serves to show the completeness of the search, for the order of numbers only reflect the alphabetical order in which the writings are arranged in the collection. They are sorted chronologically, with the titles used for the various forms in which the terms were published. Some observations are made regarding the way in

which the theme was adapted through the years, with repeated application to the issue addressed by the first use, the challenge facing the current church.

**1890** [Article "Be Zealous and Repent"; this seminal article is framed more in the language of Revelation 2 and 3. Though there is clear reference to the Spirit, the explicit connection to Pentecost awaited the later uses of the terms being traced.]

There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. "Why," they say, "should not we know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?"--Because they did not respond to the warnings, the entreaties of the messages of God, but persistently said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Talent, long experience, will not make men channels of light, unless they place themselves under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and are called, and chosen, and prepared by the endowment of the Holy Spirit. When men who handle sacred things will humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, the Lord will lift them up. He will make them men of discernment--men rich in the grace of his Spirit. Their strong, selfish traits of character, their stubbornness, will be seen in the light shining from the Light of the world. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." If you seek the Lord with all your heart, he will be found of you. {RH, December 23, 1890 par. 18}

The end is near! We have not a moment to lose! Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. Our work is not to be restricted to those who already know the truth; our field is the world. The instrumentalities to be used are those souls who gladly receive the light of truth which God communicates to them. These are God's agencies for communicating the knowledge of truth to the world. If through the grace of Christ his people will become new bottles, he will fill them with the new wine. God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered, and replaced in the frame-work of truth; and wherever the laborers go, they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures, to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. **One interest** will prevail, **one subject** will swallow up every other,--Christ our righteousness. {RH, December 23, 1890 par. 19; emphasis supplied} [hit 10]; compilations: {SD 259.3} [hit 4]; {1888 765.6} [hit 14]; {PC 342.2} [hit 15, variant]

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." This is what needs to be brought into the experience of every worker, high or low, in all our institutions, in all our churches. God wants every soul to return to the first love. He wants all to have the gold of faith and love, so that they can draw from the treasure to impart to others who need it. {RH, December 23, 1890 par. 20}

Then the believers will be of one heart and of one mind, and the Lord will make his word

powerful in the earth. New cities and villages and territories will be entered; the church will arise and shine, because her light has come, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon her. New converts will be added to the churches, and those who now claim to be converted will feel in their own hearts the transforming power of the grace of Christ. Then Satan will be aroused, and will excite the bitterest persecution against God's people. But those not of our faith, who have not rejected light, will recognize the spirit of Christ in his true followers, and will take their stand with the people of God. {RH, December 23, 1890 par. 21}

Christ says, speaking of the Comforter, "He shall not speak of himself;" "he shall testify of me;" "he shall glorify me." How little has Christ been preached! The laborers have presented theories, plenty of them, but little of Christ and his love. As the Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of his love, so the Spirit came to glorify Christ by revealing to the world the riches of his love and grace. If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our work will testify to the fact, we shall lift up Jesus. Not one can afford to be silent now; the burden of the work is to present Christ to the world. All who venture to have their own way, who do not join the angels who are sent from heaven with a message to fill the whole earth with its glory, will be passed by. The work will go forward to victory without them, and they will have no part in its triumph. {RH, December 23, 1890 par. 22}

**1899** [Letter to "Dear Children"; as often happened, her inspiration to use phrases that would be repeated over the following years first occurred in the closeness of opening her heart to her family with what Jesus had testified to.]

Christ ascended on high, to take His position as our Advocate in the heavenly courts. Having reached His throne, He sent His Holy Spirit, as He had promised, in response to the prayers of His disciples. . . . {10MR 98.1}

The Holy Spirit is to be prayed for, trusted in, believed in. . . . After Christ's ascension the disciples were gathered together of one accord in one place. As they made humble supplication to God their differences were swept away. They became of one mind, and after ten days of heart-searching and self-examination, each taking his own case in hand, for it had to be an individual work, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul-temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, which came with a copiousness and power, as though it had been held in restraint for ages, ready to be poured out upon the people who asked for it, as if God desired to show His people that it was His prerogative to bless them with the choicest of heaven's blessings. {10MR 98.2}

What was the result? Thousands were converted in a day. The sword of the Spirit flashed right and left. It seemed newly edged with power, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow. The idolatry which had been mingled with the worship of the people was overthrown. New territory was added to the church of God. Places which had been barren and desolate sounded forth the praise of God. The church became a vitalizing power. Believers, themselves reconverted, born again, were a living power for God and for His kingdom. A new song was put into their mouth, even praise to our God. Every soul controlled by the Holy Spirit saw in their brethren and sisters the faces of angels. **One interest prevailed, one subject** of emulation swallowed up all others--to be like Christ, to do the works of Christ. The earnest zeal felt was expressed by kindly helpfulness, by kindly looks and brotherly love. All strove to see who could do the most for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one mind. Every spiritual pulse beat in harmony. . . . {10MR 98.3} [hit 13]

Christ's great object in sending His Spirit was to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. "Of sin," He said, "because they believe not on Me; Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:9-11). Standing as He was in the very shadow of the cross, He longed to say many things to His disciples, but He declared, "Ye cannot bear them now" (verse 12).--Letter 133, 1899, pp. 5a-8. (To "Dear Children," September 10, 1899.) {10MR 99.1}

**1900** [Article "The Love of God. How Manifested"; clearly adapted from the 1899 letter; note the pivotal question, "What was the result?" in paragraph 25. Observe paragraph 27, applying to the current church.]

To those who in faith claimed this promise it was speedily fulfilled. After Christ's ascension the disciples were gathered together of one accord in one place. Ten days they spent in heart-searching and self-examination, each taking his own case in hand; for it had to be an individual work. As the disciples made humble supplication to God, their differences were swept away. They became of one mind. Then the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul-temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, whose influence came with copiousness and power, as if it had been held in restraint for ages. What was the result? Thousands were converted in a day. The sword of the Spirit seemed new-edged with power, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. The idolatry that had been mingled with the worship of the people was overthrown. New territory was added to the church of God. Places that had been barren and desolate sounded forth His praise. {AUCR, June 1, 1900 par. 25}

The church became a vitalizing power. Believers, themselves re-converted, were a living power for God and for His kingdom. A new song was put into their mouth, even praise to our God. Every one converted saw in his brethren and sisters the faces of angels. **One interest** prevailed, **one subject** of emulation swallowed up all others,--to be like Christ, to do the works of Christ. The earnest zeal felt was expressed in kindly helpfulness, in kindly looks, and brotherly love. All strove to see who could do the most for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom. {AUCR, June 1, 1900 par. 26} [hit 8]

This ministry is the great need of the church today. And in Christ's promise we are included. To us is offered the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with the Spirit. When God's people will believe, when they will turn their attention to that which is true, and living, and real, the Holy Spirit, in strong, heavenly currents, will be poured upon the church. {AUCR, June 1, 1900 par. 27}

**1902** [Article "The Promise of the Spirit"; this is also adapted from the 1899 letter, and ends with application to the current need]

After Christ's ascension, the disciples were gathered together in one place to make humble supplication to God. And after ten days of heart searching and self-examination, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, as though God desired to show his people that it was his prerogative to bless them with the choicest of heaven's blessings. What was the result?--Thousands were converted in a day. The sword of the Spirit flashed right and left. Newly edged with power, it pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. The idolatry that had been mingled with the worship of the people was overthrown. New territory was added

to the kingdom of God. Places that had been barren and desolate sounded forth his praises. Believers, reconverted, born again, were a living power for God. A new song was put in their mouths, even praise to the Most High. Controlled by the Spirit, they saw Christ in their brethren. **One interest** prevailed. **One subject** of emulation swallowed up all others,--to be like Christ, to do the works of Christ. The earnest zeal felt was expressed by loving helpfulness, by kindly words and unselfish deeds. All strove to see who could do the most for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." {RH, June 10, 1902 par. 12}; compilation: {YRP 286.3&4} [hit 6]

In the twelve disciples the leaven of truth was hidden by the Great Teacher. These disciples were to be the instruments in God's hands for revealing truth to the world. Divine power was given them; for a risen Saviour breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Imbued with this Spirit, they went forth to witness for the truth. And so God desires his servants to go forth today with the message he has given them. But till they receive the Holy Spirit, they cannot bear this message with power. Till they receive the Spirit, they cannot realize what God can do through them. {RH, June 10, 1902 par. 13}

**1904** [Section "Present Opportunities," Article "The Power Promised"; this shows further adaptation of the 1899 letter contents, still has the basic question, "What was the result?" It ends with current application.]

What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the utmost bounds of the inhabited world. The hearts of the disciples were surcharged with a benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6:14. As they proclaimed the truth as it is in Jesus, hearts yielded to the power of the message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with Christians in seeking the pearl of great price. Those who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. The prophecy was fulfilled: The weak shall be "as David," and the house of David "as the angel of the Lord." Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of love and benevolence. **One interest** prevailed. **One subject** of emulation swallowed up all others. The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. {8T 19.4} [hit 5]; also: {AUCR, June 1, 1904 par. 9} [hit 9; article "The Reception of the Holy Spirit"]; later condensed: {CCh 99.3} [hit2]

"With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them." Acts 4:33. Under their labors there were added to the church chosen men, who, receiving the word of life, consecrated their lives to the work of giving to others the hope that had filled their hearts with peace and joy. Hundreds proclaimed the message: "The kingdom of God is at hand." They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. The Lord spoke through them; and, wherever they went, the sick were healed, and the poor had the gospel preached unto them. {8T 20.1}

So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit. {8T 20.2}

To us today, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the Day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word. {8T 20.3}

**1908** [Article "The Promise of the Spirit"; this is yet further adaptation of the 1899 contents, with a stress on the prerequisite, not consequence, of unity, and the lack of current appreciation.]

What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the day of Pentecost? -- The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the utmost bounds of the inhabited world. The hearts of the disciples were surcharged with the benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." As they proclaimed the truth as it is in Jesus, hearts yielded to the power of the message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with Christians in seeking the pearl of great price. Those who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. The prophecy was fulfilled, that the weak shall be "as David," and the house of David "as the angel of the Lord." Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of love and benevolence. **One interest** prevailed. **One subject** of emulation swallowed up all others. The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of his kingdom. {RH, April 30, 1908 par. 10} [hit 12]; compilation: {YRP 314.3&4} [hit 7]

Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away. And the testimony borne of them after the Spirit had been given was the same. Mark the word: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." The spirit of Him who died that sinners might live animated the entire congregation of believers. {RH, April 30, 1908 par. 11}

Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with his followers to the end of time. But the promise is not appreciated as it should be; and therefore its fulfilment is not seen as it might be. With many the promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected,--spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plentitude. {RH, April 30, 1908 par. 12}

**1911** [Chapter entitled "The Gift of the Spirit"; this appears to be adapted in turn from the 8T version; there are more descriptions of the changes in the disciples, and the application to the current time.]

What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. The prophecy was fulfilled, "He that is feeble . . . shall be as David; and the house of David . . . as the angel of the Lord." Zechariah 12:8. Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. **One interest** prevailed; **one subject** of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. {AA 48.1} [hit 1]; compilation {AG 218.2} [hit 3]

"With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:33. Under their labors were added to the church chosen men,

who, receiving the word of truth, consecrated their lives to the work of giving to others the hope that filled their hearts with peace and joy. They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. The Lord spoke through them, and as they went from place to place, the poor had the gospel preached to them, and miracles of divine grace were wrought. {AA 48.2}

So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit. {AA 49.1}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high, were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. As they witnessed for truth and righteousness they were repeatedly assailed by the enemy of all truth, who sought to rob them of their Christian experience. They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection. Under the Holy Spirit's working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. As in humility they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine. {AA 49.3}

The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude. {AA 50.1}