

"Tidal Wave"
Chronology of 19 Occurrences in Ellen White Relating to the Holy Spirit
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The phrase "tidal wave" occurred in the currently published Ellen White writings 23 times. She uses in three different ways:

Holy Spirit (the Spirit, glory, power, blessing of God): 19 times

Destruction: 3 times

Trashy literature: 1 time

This document outlines the 19 times she used this to describe the moving of the Holy Spirit. The statements are arranged chronologically, by dates of occurrences referred to in the writings, not the date of her writing about them, except June 1889, which was statement of desire.

Summary of Dates and References

1844 *Summer*: 4SP 249.1; GC88 400.2; GC 400.2; SR 370.1

1874: GCB, April 5, 1901 par. 11

1884 (*June?*): 9MR 100.2; 20MR 359.4

1889 (*January*): 5MR 234.4

(*April*): 3SM 160.6; 11MR 257.3; 1SAT 126.2; 1888 542.2;

(*June*): 1SAT 118.2; 1888 350.2

1891: 4MR 311.4; 1888 854.2

1901: 6MR 311.2; 13MR 205.1; 1888 1740.1

The references to each occurrence are given, but if the passages are identical (or nearly so), the last published occurrence alone is reproduced, with the references to the other occurrence(s) given in a Note after the passage, along with any other information regarding the incident. All emphases are supplied.

Introduction

Tracing phrases finds a single thread in an amazing tapestry. The full implications of that thread's uses over time are much to be pondered and explored.

The imagery of a "tidal wave" is quite compelling--immense power, universal impact, the moving of things in very unusual ways. And when this wave is describing God--His Spirit, power, glory, and blessing--the ramifications are staggering, and must be understood as best we can. How important is such a moving? Why would one enjoy such a thing, why long for it, and desire it for others?

The years that this phrase "tidal wave" described events follow an interesting pattern, anchored in a prophetic year (1844), not showing up for another 30 years (1874), then another 10 (1884). Then something changed. Five years later (1889) it is used *three* times, two for actual events and one longing for more. Two years later (1891) it happened again, and finally 10 years later (1901).

Why did it occur in 1844? Why not again for an entire generation? What changed over the next generation? Is this something whose time is gone, just a passing phenomenon that peaked in the late 1800's? Or is it something that God longs to manifest?

A statement Ellen White made the year of the final manifestation must shed some light on the question. "I pledged myself that if I came [back] to America, I would speak the truth in California and in Battle Creek." (GCB, April 5, 1901 par. 11). What is "the truth" of which she spoke? After all, Jesus called His replacement "the Spirit of the truth" (John 16:13). Another statement made on the downside of the peak of occurrences must be considered. November 1892 in what is arguably her most passionate letter, she penned these amazing words, "The truth we have set before us for the past few years, is immense in its importance, reaching into heaven and compassing eternity." {PH002 25.2} (See another tracing, that of "heaven" and "eternity" the author of this paper has made.)

We must see the connection between the Spirit and the truth. And we must see how personal this all is, that it involves each of us personally, and that it involves a divine Person. What did He want to do, and what was our response? Can a tidal wave be unwelcomed, and blocked in some way?

In the same 1892 letter she touches on the heart-breaking problems. "The grand, life-giving truth of the Bible, if practiced, would make men wise unto salvation; but the acceptancy of the Holy Spirit is not felt to be a positive necessity." {PH002 23.1} "There is no truth in heaven or in earth that would affect some characters, although it might be presented in all power and matchless purity and loveliness, because the heart does not love the practice of these holy sentiments.... Satan and his confederacy of evil have made every effort to cover up, to confuse minds, to make of none effect the precious, glorious truths of God's word. We are living in strangely solemn times, and at the very time when the people of God should be wide awake, many are asleep or dead spiritually." {PH002 25.2}

What can we learn from these times the "tidal wave" moved years ago? Do we long for it too?

Extracts

1844 Summer: Midnight Cry

In the summer of 1844, Adventists discovered the mistake in their former reckoning of the prophetic periods, and settled upon the correct position. The 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, which all believed to extend to the second coming of Christ, had been thought to end in the spring of 1844; but it was now seen that this period extended to the autumn of the same year, and the minds of Adventists were fixed upon this point as the time for the Lord's appearing. The proclamation of this time message was another step in the fulfillment of the parable of the marriage, whose application to the experience of Adventists had already been clearly seen. As in the parable the cry was raised at midnight announcing the approach of the bridegroom, so in the fulfillment, midway between the spring of 1844, when it was first supposed that the 2300 days would close, and the autumn of 1844, at which time it was afterward found that they were really to close, such

a cry was raised, in the very words of Scripture: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." {4SP 248.2}

Like a tidal wave the movement swept over the land. From city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places it went, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. Before this proclamation, fanaticism disappeared, like early frost before the rising sun. Believers once more found their position, and hope and courage animated their hearts. The work was free from those extremes which are ever manifested when there is human excitement without the **controlling influence of the word and Spirit of God**. It was similar in character to those seasons of humiliation and returning unto the Lord which among ancient Israel followed messages of reproof from his servants. It bore the characteristics which mark the work of God in every age. There was little ecstatic joy, but rather **deep searching of heart, confession of sin, and forsaking of the world**. A preparation to meet the Lord was the burden of **agonizing spirits**. There was **persevering prayer**, and **unreserved consecration to God**. {4SP 249.1}

Note: SR 369.3 & 370.1 are identical.

In the parable of Matthew 25 the time of waiting and slumber is followed by the coming of the bridegroom. This was in accordance with the arguments just presented, both from prophecy and from the types. They carried strong conviction of their truthfulness; and the "midnight cry" was heralded by thousands of believers. {GC 400.1}

Like a tidal wave the movement swept over the land. From city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places it went, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. Fanaticism disappeared before this proclamation like early frost before the rising sun. Believers saw their doubt and perplexity removed, and hope and courage animated their hearts. The work was free from those extremes which are ever manifested when there is human excitement without the **controlling influence of the word and Spirit of God**. It was similar in character to those seasons of humiliation and returning unto the Lord which among ancient Israel followed messages of reproof from His servants. It bore the characteristics that mark the work of God in every age. There was little ecstatic joy, but rather **deep searching of heart, confession of sin, and forsaking of the world**. A preparation to meet the Lord was the burden of **agonizing spirits**. There was **persevering prayer** and **unreserved consecration to God**. {GC 400.2}

Note: GC88 400.1 & 400.2 are nearly identical

1874: Oakland, California

I pledged myself that if I came to America, I would speak the truth in California and in Battle Creek. My husband and I were the pioneers in the work in Battle Creek, and in connection with Elder Loughborough we established the work in California. In the starting of the work in Oakland, we came to the place where we must have means; and we did not know what to do. My husband was sick and feeble, and very busy. I said, "Will you let me go to Battle Creek to try to raise some money for the work here." "How can you go?" he said. "I am overwhelmed with responsibility. I can not let you go." "But God will take care of you," I said. We held a meeting in an upper room of a house in Oakland, where prayer was wont to be made. **We knelt down to pray, and while we were praying, the Spirit of God like a tidal wave filled the room, and it seemed that an angel was pointing across the Rocky Mountains to the churches in this part of America.** Brother Tay, who is now sleeping in Jesus, rose from his knees, his face as white as

death, and said, "I saw an angel pointing across the Rocky Mountains." Then my husband said, "Well, Ellen, I shall have to let you go." I did not wait for another word, but hurrying home, put a few gems in a basket, and hastened to the cars. I made very little preparation, for I had just time to get to the cars. Weeping like a child, my husband said, "If I had not said you could go, I do not think I could say it now, but I have said it, and I will not take it back." {GCB, April 5, 1901 par. 11}

Note: The phrase "if I came to America" refers to her return from Australia. The 1901 GC Session was her first after returning to the USA September 1900. She is recalling here the early events of the work on the West Coast of the USA. See 2BIO 418.4 to 2BIO 421.2 for evidence for the date.

1884 (June?): Portland, Oregon

Friday morning at five o'clock we commenced our meeting, and I arose and talked a short time telling them we had waited for these leading men to take a position which God could approve and **let His Spirit into the meeting**. We had no more appeals to make to them and no more time to lose in waiting for them. They had stood directly in the way of our work from the first, and now our work was for these who had come to this meeting to be benefited. I had two front seats cleared and asked those who were backslidden from God and those who had never started to serve the Lord, to come forward. They began to come. Other seats were cleared, and finally there was the whole body (of) seats of the tent filled; about one dozen were in the side seats. {20MR 359.3}

Then the Spirit of God like a tidal wave swept over the congregation. Such solemnity, deep, earnest, heartfelt confessions, were made. These men who had stood like icebergs melted under the beams of the Son of righteousness. They came right to the point. They made thorough work. **Confessions were made with weeping and deep feeling**. We had a most solemn, blessed season of intercession, and then closed the meeting and took our breakfast and assembled again at eight o'clock to finish the work. Parents confessed to children and children to parents, husbands to wives and wives to husbands, brothers to sisters, and sisters to brothers. **It seemed like the movement of 1844**. I have not been in a meeting of this kind for many years. After the hard fought battle the victory was most precious. **We all wept like children**. {20MR 359.4}

Brother Boyd spoke of his gratitude while the **tears rained from his face**. Oh, I praise the Lord. I praise Him for He is to be praised. In the Lord's mercy, He laid me by from hard labor, for rest and repairs, and I will trust Him with my whole heart. I will trust Him. {20MR 359.5}

There seems to be an **entirely new atmosphere** in the camp. Elder Boyd yesterday was elected as president of this conference, but the very ones who had treated him shamefully did not come out fully and freely, and he declined. He told them he could not serve them; he longed for peace and rest. Yet he would proclaim the third angel's message while he had breath. But now, today, he has accepted and will serve them as president. The **work now goes off like clockwork** in the conference business. Oh, **what a work the Lord can do in a short time!** {20MR 360.1}

I have given you but little particulars. It is so childish and inconsistent and miserable a mess that I do not think (it) possible for me to write. These murmurings, faultfinding, these exalting little notes to mention this. Making a man an offender for a word is a grievous sin in the sight of God. But this battle has turned; **victory through Jesus Christ is ours**. And we know the battle must be fought sometime and it must be done without yielding one inch to gratify and please this

faultfinding, disorderly element. {20MR 360.2}

We never saw so much dust and storm raised against a man that when investigated there was not the least thing for it all, as in this case. Oh, what work Satan can make with human hearts that are not daily partakers of the divine nature. I did not expect to write this when I commenced, but I felt **so thankful** I wanted to tell you. {20MR 360.3}

Note: This is from Letter 20, 1884, to Uriah Smith, June 27, 1884. 9MR 100.2 & 101.1 are identical. The month is assumed from the date of the letter.

1889 January: South Lancaster, Massachusetts

One place we were laboring in America, and there was **every youth in our college . . . converted as we were telling them the simple story of the cross**, to come to Jesus just as they were. Such an experience. . . . {5MR 234.3}

The glory of God came into that meeting. It seemed at times at the commencement of the meeting that the glory of God was about to drop upon us, but it did not come only to a few, but at **this time like a tidal wave it swept through that congregation, and what a time of rejoicing.** {5MR 234.4}

There were no wild demonstrations, for the praise of God does not lead to that. We never hear of any such things as that in the life of Christ, as jumping up and down and around, and screaming and hollering. No; God's work appeals to the senses and reason of men and women. {5MR 234.5}

There are no such outward demonstrations. But **the Spirit of God** has an influence upon the human heart that **shows itself in the countenance**, and the **shining of the very face reveals Jesus within**. Now it was a miracle of God's mercy that **took every student in that school and transformed them in character, and sent them out as missionaries**. Two of the teachers are now in Tahiti as missionaries that were in that meeting. The **light of the glory of God was there**--Ms 49, 1894, pp. 10, 11. (Sermon at Ashfield, Australia, Camp meeting, November 3, 1894.) {5MR 235.1}

Note regarding location: This is from Manuscript 49, 1894, dated November 3, 1894. It was also extracted in 10MR 308.1 to 309.4. The section describing the "tidal wave" was not included, but the location, South Lancaster, was included, that was deleted in the ellipses above. Further descriptions are found in this extract that follows here.

One place we were laboring in America, and there was **every youth in our college at South Lancaster, Massachusetts, converted as we were telling them the simple story of the cross**, to come to Jesus just as they were. Such an experience. I missed the youth there one evening, and I inquired, "Where are they? They have been here, but they are not here now." {10MR 308.1}

Soon a whole class of them came in and took their seats. Then they got up and began to bear their testimonies--I have done wrong to such a neighbor, I have done wrong to such a man, I have done this sin and that and the other one--and another one stood up on his feet and bore his confessions. They said, "I wanted to come to this meeting knowing that I had removed the last stumbling block before my feet and the feet of others." **What a testimony** they bore. . . . {10MR 308.2}

I am so thankful for Jesus. Oh, I feel so thankful wherever I am, on the water, on the land, that Jesus is my Saviour. There is no caste with God. Whatever the color, whatever the nationality, however weak we may be, rich or poor, God is our Father, and we can come to Him

and ask for the things that we need. {10MR 308.3}

Now here is the word before us. "According to His divine power." We have no strength, we have nothing of ourselves, we are utter weakness. We cannot take one step toward God unless His grace is working upon human hearts and drawing us. Just as soon as we take the first step toward His mercy and grace He advances toward us, He advances with His pardon and grace. He takes away the sins of the world, and imputes to us His righteousness. {10MR 308.4}

Now we may think, "I did not feel just as I wanted to." In that very meeting there was one that **thought that he had received the love of God as he never had received it before**. The **next morning he came to the meeting** and he got up. I knew in a moment something was the matter. The light was not in his countenance. Said he, "Somehow I **don't feel as I did last night**. Somehow I don't feel a nearness to God. I lost the blessing." {10MR 309.1}

"Where did you lose it, Brother R? Where did you lose it?" "I can't tell." "You slept through the night and God guarded you all night. Then what is the matter this morning?" Well, he did not know. I will tell you. You have not educated yourself to **believe in God whatever feelings you have**. Feeling is not your God, and it is no use for you to offer sacrifice on the altar of feeling, for **feeling and faith are just as distinct from each other as heaven and earth**, as the east is from the west. {10MR 309.2}

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Now faith walks the narrow plank, and walks till it comes to the end, then steps right off onto nothing, as it were. Yet it is everything. It is a mighty upholder. You walk the plank of faith and you cannot see another step to go. You **need not consult how you feel**. Feeling has nothing to do with it. Do I believe in God, that He is my God, and that His promises will be verified to me? Then I go right about my work. I **never look or examine whether I have feeling or have no feeling**. I know what my duty is from the expressed will of God, and it is for me to do it and do it intelligently. {10MR 309.3}

I will tell you when I know that God helps me. It is when I feel utterly unable physically to speak to the people. I go out so weak at times that it seems to me that I could not utter a word. As I stand before the people the blessing of God never fails me. The Lord uses the frail instrument to speak to the people.--Manuscript 49, 1894, pp. 10-13. (Camp Meeting, Ashfield, Australia, November 3, 1894.) {10MR 309.4}

Note regarding time: There does not appear to be a definite time mentioned in the published portions of the manuscript. However, there are multiple similarities in descriptions of the meetings to those in the RH3/5/1889 article "Meetings at South Lancaster, Mass." These meetings occurred in January 1889 (around the 10th to the 21st of the month), thus that date is used for what is described here. (See also the comment below in 1888 543.1 dated 1890 about the South Lancaster meetings.)

1889 April: Chicago

We have traveled all through to the different places of the meetings that I might **stand side by side with the messengers of God** that I knew were His messengers, that I knew had a message for His people. I gave my message with them right in harmony with the very message they were bearing. {1888 542.1}

What did we see? We saw a **power attending the message**. In every instance we worked--and some know how hard we worked. I think it was a whole week, going early and late, at

Chicago, in order that we might get these ideas in the minds of the brethren. The devil has been working for a year to obliterate these ideas--the whole of them. And it takes hard work to change their old opinions. They think they have to trust in their own righteousness, and in their own works, and keep looking at themselves, and not appropriating the righteousness of Christ and bringing it into their life, and into their character. We worked there for one week. It was after one week had passed away before **there was a break and the power of God, like a tidal wave, rolled over that congregation.** I tell you, it was to set men free; it was to point them to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. {1888 542.2}

And there at South Lancaster, the **mighty movings of the Spirit of God** were there. Some are here that were in that meeting. God **revealed His glory**, and **every student** in the College was brought to the door there in **confession**, and the **movings of the Spirit of God were there.** And thus [it was] from place to place. **Everywhere we went we saw the movings of the Spirit of God.** {1888 543.1}

Note: This is from Manuscript 8, 1890, dated 2/3/1890. The paragraph in 1888 542.2 is published in 11MR 257.2&3, 1SAT 126.2, and in part in 3SM 160.6.

1889 June: Rome, New York

Now, you have had light here, and what are you going to do about it? Are you going home and sit down, or are you going to work to build one another up in the most holy faith? God grant that you may work to the point. Oh, how I long to see the work as we may see it! **How I long to see the tidal wave pouring over the people!** And I know it can be, for God gave us all heaven in one gift, and every one of us can accept the light, every ray of it, and then we can be the light of the world. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." {1888 350.2}

Note: This is from Manuscript 5, 1889, dated June 19, 1889, a highly significant sermon entitled "Christ and the Law." It is also in 1SAT 118.2. This is not a historical description, but a desire. While the "tidal wave" had been seen in certain times and places, especially since the Minneapolis meetings, the more universal manifestation "over the people" was yet just a longing.

1891 January: Brooklyn, New York

Again at Brooklyn, N. Y., I had a deep, earnest desire for the Lord to work with his people. O, how my heart was drawn out in **wrestling prayer to God that he would manifest his power** on the Sabbath day and greatly bless his people. **He did all this and far more** than I had asked. **It seemed that a tidal wave of the glory of the Lord swept over the congregation, and many, many souls were filled with a rich blessing of God,** and this occasion to them was one never to be forgotten. They bore testimony that the power of God thrilled through and through them. Some persons were as pale as death, but their countenances were shining with the glory of God. This church had been newly raised up, and was in need of encouragement. O, Bless the Lord, bless the Lord; O, my soul! for the great goodness and mercy of God!

One brother in a prominent position in the Chicago mission had been so weighted down with discouragement that we all feared that he would separate from the work, but he was present at the meeting and was **greatly blessed.** He said that he came to that meeting, heavy in heart and

under a dark cloud, but the **Lord Jesus met him while bowed in prayer**. We had called them forward; but he did not come; but the Lord met him. "I seemed to have the Lord Jesus close beside me," he said. "How lovely, how precious, I thought I could touch him. I knew Jesus was by my side." And then he **broke out in a description of Christ as seen by the eye of faith**. He was a man very reticent, but of few words, but his tongue was loosed, his language was eloquent, as he **expressed the attributes of Christ as he was revealed to him**. Said he, "I am as light as a feather, I am happy in God, and I want to get back to Chicago and tell them what the Lord has wrought for me." Others bore testimony of **the power of the Holy Spirit that came upon them**. {1888 854.2}

Note: This is from Manuscript 2, 1891, January 9, 1891. This is also in 4MR 311.4 & 312.1.

1901 February 15: Elmhaven, California

Before I came to this conference, I was in doubt as to where to stay during the meeting. Dr. Kellogg had courteously invited me to make his house my home. The question arose, "It will be said that Dr. Kellogg has influenced me." But I thought, "Let people say this if they wish to. They have said it before, when there was no more reason for it than there is now." Still, as I wished to remove every possible excuse for talk, I decided not to go to the doctor's. On Friday evening, at our season of worship, I was asking the Lord to direct me where to stay. I had been sick, and was still sick. I did not wish to attend the conference at all, because I knew that the exertion would be a terrible strain on me. {1888 1739.1}

As I was praying, a **soft light** filled the room, bringing with it a **fragrance as of beautiful flowers**. Then a voice seemed to say, "Accept the invitation of My servant, John Kellogg, to make his house your home. I have appointed him as My physician, and you can be an encouragement to him." This is why I am staying at Dr. Kellogg's house. I wish in every possible way to treat Dr. Kellogg as God's appointed physician. This I am going to do. And I want my brethren to put their unjust sayings far away from them. Inquire, What saith the Lord? Go to Him for help. Depend not on the opinions of human beings, for they are liable to err. Go to the Lord God of Israel. He will give you understanding and knowledge. You are not to lean on any human being. {1888 1739.2}

At our season of prayer that evening the whole family was broken down. Though they knew nothing of what I had seen, yet they realized that **the Spirit of the Lord was among us. The blessing of God flowed through the room like a tidal wave. The Spirit took hold upon us**, and Brother and Sister Druillard **wept and praised** the Lord. We did indeed have **an outpouring of the Spirit**. Such things are **more precious to me than gold or silver**. {1888 1740.1}

Note: This is from Manuscript 43, 1901, dated April 1, 1901. See 5BIO 53.3 for date. The above paragraphs are also found in 6MR 310.4 to 311.2, and 13MR 204.1 to 205.1 (both of which gives the location).