

*It was Raymond Cottrell's paper, reproduced below, that played a large part in Seventh-day Adventists discarding the views of Daniel 11:40-45 and Armageddon as presented in Uriah Smith's book Daniel and the Revelation. I question some of the things he wrote and have provided some comments which you will find in bracketed italics.*

John Witcombe, [pastorjcw@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjcw@gmail.com)

*“Raymond Forrest Cottrell (April 21, 1911, Los Angeles, California – January 12, 2003, Calimesa, California) was a respected Adventist theologian, missionary, teacher, writer and editor. He was an associate editor of both the Adventist Review (the church's official news magazine) and the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. Raymond Cottrell, is seen by some as a ‘progressive Adventist’, as he disagreed with certain traditional positions of the church, including the investigative judgment, and served in an editorial role for the independently owned and operated magazine Adventist Today. He was a consulting editor to Spectrum magazine, another independent Adventist paper, both which leaned to progressive Adventist viewpoints. He was the first Adventist to become a member of a scholarly theological society, and was instrumental in the founding of the Biblical Research Institute.”*  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond\\_Cottrell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond_Cottrell)

## **The Pioneers on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon**

by  
Raymond F. Cottrell

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The fact that equally conscientious, experienced, and respected students of the Scriptures are to be found on both sides of the “Eastern Question” suggests the value of knowing something of the origin of each position. It is the objective of this paper to ascertain the views of the pioneers on the subject and to appraise their methods of study, in the hope that such information may clarify the problem and assist in restoring unity both of viewpoint and spirit.

Among Seventh-day Adventists the power of Daniel which “shall come to his end, and none shall help him” has always been considered equivalent to the one represented by John under the symbol of the drying up of the great river Euphrates. The history of Adventist interpretation on this point may be divided into the following three phases: (1) the pioneer period of harmony, from 1844 to 1875, (2) the period of conflict, from 1875 to 1880, during which a new interpretation replaced the original one, and (3) the period of orthodoxy, from 1880 to the present, so called because of emphasis on a so called “denominational/position.” Available evidence will be considered chronologically, emphasis being given to the period of conflict. This will be accompanied by an analysis of the methods of prophetic interpretation which gave birth to each of the two views. Every effort will be made to interpret the available evidence in an impartial way, without attempting to defend or to attack either view.

## THE PERIOD OF HARMONY

A careful study of denominational literature covering the first third of the century since 1844 indicates that the “pillars of the faith” constituted the theme of study, sermon, and the printed word. The Sabbath conferences did much to unify the doctrinal basis of the message; and primary emphasis in prophetic interpretation was given to explaining and authenticating the birth of the Advent message. In all of this there was general unanimity.

Available evidence for the period consists of four documents which make it clear that the pioneers of the message were united in their understanding of the king of the north and Armageddon. The first of these four is a hymn entitled “Armageddon” appearing in the first Adventist hymnal, in 1852. The second is a lengthy article by Elder James White entitled “Thoughts on the Great Battle,” and the third an editorial by Elder Uriah Smith commenting on Daniel 11—both of which appeared in the year 1862. The fourth is an article by Elder White discussing the new view of Daniel 11 in relation to the “landmarks” of the Advent movement, dated 1877. These will be considered in order.

### 25. ARMAGEDDON

- 1 Hosannah! Hark, the melody,  
Strikes sweetly on my ravish'd ear;  
The constellations make reply  
In echoes from each distant sphere,  
Till all the wide expansion rings  
With “live for ever, King of kings.”
- 2 He comes! He comes! The heavens rend!  
Floods clap your hands! Ye mountains joy!  
Forests in glad obeisance bend!  
Earth, raise your hallelujahs high;  
Let Zion wake the lofty strain—  
“Live, King of kings! For ever reign!”
- 3 Ripe is the vintage of the earth;  
Its clustering grapes are round and full;  
And vengeance, vengeance bursts to birth,  
Sudden and irresistible.  
Messiah comes to tread amain,  
The wine-press of the battle-plain.
- 4 The cry is up, the strife begun,  
The struggle of the mighty ones;  
And Armageddon's day comes on,  
The carnival of slaughter's sons;  
War lifts his helmet to his brow  
O God, protect thy people now!
- 5 Assemble quickly fowls of air!  
Come to the supper of the Lord:  
The great ones of the earth prepare  
To reap the harvest of the sword;  
And captains' flesh shall be your food,

And ye shall drink of heroes' blood.

- 6 Yea, come, O king, and take the spoil;  
With thy confederates share the prey:  
Ha! Ha! Death grins a ghastly smile;  
The morning dawns—and where are they?  
The flames, the flames, great Autocrat,  
Spread o'er thee in Jehosophat.
- 7 The graves are cleav'd! the saints arise!  
The resurrection of the just!  
And now, unto their kindred skies,  
Up leap the tenants of the dust!  
They rise to meet their Lord in air,  
And tune their hallelujahs there.

(Hymns for Advent Believers Who Observe the Sabbath of the Lord, published by James White at Rochester, N. Y., 1852, page 23, emphasis his.)

This hymn is noteworthy both for what it says and for what it leaves unsaid. The first three stanzas emphasize the part Christ and the angels play in the last great battle. The fourth and fifth point to the crisis facing God's people during the battle and the ultimate defeat of all the wicked. The sixth stanza glorifies Christ as victor, while the last describes the results of the battle. In summary the battle of Armageddon as understood by the pioneers consisted in the people of God being attacked by the wicked but delivered by Christ and His angels. There is no hint of Armageddon being a conflict of nation against nation.

Ten years elapsed before the appearance of further comment on the subject—in 1862, during the Civil War. Certain individuals, obviously not the responsible leaders of the church, were teaching that the battle of the great day of God “was commencing.” Elder White's article presented a clear statement of what was at that time the denominational view of Armageddon:

We wish to offer a few thoughts upon the battle of that great day, which may lead to a more thorough investigation, and a better understanding of this subject...

The special preparations for that battle do not commence until the time of the pouring out of the sixth vial... (Quotes Revelation 16:12-14)

As to the place of gathering, we only wish to say at this time that we think there are good reasons to locate it where Christ makes his descent at his second coming... (Quotes Revelation 19:11-14)

The person described is the Son of God. The armies of heaven which followed him are the angels. An army of horsemen is here used to represent the majestic approach of Christ to this earth, accompanied by the host of heaven... (Quotes Revelation 19:15, 16; cf. 17:13, 14)

Here, then, the great battle is fought, and there is no proof that a gun is to be fired. The power by which Christ and his army overcome is represented by a sharp sword going out of the great Leader's mouth... (Quotes 2 Thess. 2:8; 1:7, 8, “flaming fire;” and Revelation 19:17-21)

Here it is seen that the great battle is not between nation and nation; but between earth and heaven. Satan wishes to make another attack on Jesus Christ. He musters the fallen spirits of his command,

and they go forth to the kings of the earth, and the whole world, to gather them to battle. The King of Kings overcomes, and destroys all his enemies.

The beast and the false prophet are said to be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. This cannot mean a second destruction; but the intensity of that burning power which is to consume the wicked, is here represented by a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

A thousand years later, and there is another display of the wrath of God, which accomplishes the second death. See Chap. xx. That also is represented by a lake of fire and brimstone. This is the same as the fire from God out of heaven (sic!), or the chapter teaches two second deaths... (Quotes Revelation 20:9, 14) ...As there cannot be two such deaths, it follows that the fire from God out of heaven, is the same as the lake of fire and brimstone.

Satan is to make two especial attacks on Jesus Christ. One at his second coming, which is called “the battle of that great day of God Almighty,” the other at the end of the one thousand years. He is met each time by displays of the power of the great and dreadful God. Each manifestation of that power which is to destroy the wicked, is represented by a lake of fire.

So, if you please, there are two lakes of fire, one at each end of the one thousand years, instead of one lake, burning a thousand years, or as many say, to all eternity. Hence the text, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are” (were, Macknight), does not prove that the beast and false prophet (chap. xix, 20) had been burning there a thousand years, but merely that the Devil suffers what the beast and false prophet did one thousand years before. Thank Heaven, sin and sinners, whether they be fallen man or fallen angels, will come to an end, and God will have a clean universe.

(An editorial by James White in the Review and Herald, Vol, xix, No. 8, January 21, 1862, p. 61, entitled “Thoughts on the Great Battle.” Practically the entire editorial is quoted, with the exception of references as indicated, Emphasis mine.)

The denominational view had not changed since the publication of the hymnal ten years earlier. Armageddon was still a battle “between earth and heaven” rather than one “between nation and nation.”

*[James White’s article was written on Jan 21, 1862. On December 2 of that same year he wrote a larger article clearly identifying the battle of Armageddon with literal warfare along with the spiritual aspects of Armageddon.*

*James White’s take on the Battle of Armageddon can be read on page 98 of the document entitled Opposing Views on Daniel 11 - Email Dialog with Friends. This document can be found at: <http://www.thirdwoe.com/> (Password: 1844)*

*Here is what Ellen White said about Armageddon: “Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of Satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.” Maranatha 257 (IMR 145)*

*According to the following statements a literal, last great battle is fought after the close of probation: “I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus’ work was done in the sanctuary, and*

*then will come the seven last plagues.” CET 100 “Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion.” 7BC 968 “But while already nation is rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.” 6T 14*

*“Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come in full. The ... winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.” Maranatha 175*

*Armageddon will indeed include a literal battle fought between nations after the close of probation when the four angels release their hold; a literal battle where deadly instruments of warfare will be used and ships will be sunk.*

*Ellen White clearly teaches that the battle of Armageddon will be a physical battle. But in her writings she also describes the battle of Armageddon in terms of the great controversy battle between Jesus and His followers and Satan and his followers.]*

A little later in the same year an editorial by Elder Smith appeared commenting briefly on Daniel 11:45, in which it is evident that he understood that prophecy in harmony with the contemporary denominational view of Armageddon. First, he quotes a current news item as follows:

“A correspondent of the Liverpool Mercury, writing from Rome, states that French officers have latterly been very busy in obtaining information respecting Jerusalem and the state of things in that quarter. He adds that they had been taking measurements in several localities, particularly the ground that lies about the Mosque of Omar, on Mount Moriah... The French were also actively employed in making a road from the Holy City to Damascus, along which they were erecting houses a certain intervals. It is said that such a scheme as this intelligence shows to be in course of development points to the realizing of Pio Nono’s favorite plan of removing the seat of the Papacy to Jerusalem.”

(An editorial by Uriah Smith in the Review and Herald, Vol. xix, No. 24, May 18, 1862, p. 192. Emphasis his.)

Immediately following the quotation appears the laconic comment, “Is not the above item significant, taken in connection with Dan. xi, 45?” That is all! He simply takes it for granted that everyone will agree with him in recognizing Rome as the power indicated in the last verses of Daniel 11. The brief, direct, matter-of-fact tone of his comment is the best possible evidence that the leaders of that time hold unanimously to the original denominational position.

The fourth document relating to the period of harmony occurs in an editorial by James White in the pages of the Review dated November 29, 1877. Inasmuch as the article as a whole deals with developments occurring during the next period, it will be quoted in its entirety then.

By 1877 Uriah Smith had shifted from his original position and substituted Turkey for Rome. James White advised caution in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy and found Uriah Smith “removing the landmarks fully established in the Advent movement.” The article (quoted in full below) makes it clear that the position making Rome the power of Daniel 11:45 and Revelation 16:12 had been “fully established” as a “landmark” in the Advent movement up to that time.

*[In 1862 James White believed that the power of Revelation 16:12 was the Turkish Empire and not Rome: “These plagues, from the very nature of the case, must be manifestations of wrath and judgments upon men. But if the drying up of the literal Euphrates is all that is brought to view, nobody is hurt, and the plague turns out to be no serious affair, after all. These objections existing against its being taken literally, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of its territory, which is the Ottoman or Turkish Empire. 1. It is so used in other places in the scriptures: see Isa.viii,7; Rev.ix,16. In this latter text, all must concede that the Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power; and being the first and only other occurrence of the word in the Revelation, it may well be considered as governing its use in this book. 2. The drying up of the river in this sense would be the consumption of the Turkish Empire, accompanied with more or less destruction of its subjects. Thus we should have literal judgments upon men, as the result of this plague, as in the case of all the rest.” December 2, 1862 JWe, ARSH 5.*

*By 1877, not only Uriah Smith, but the denomination had shifted its view of Revelation 16:12 from Rome to the Ottoman Empire as being the power of the great river Euphrates. Regarding the history as to how Smith’s book (that documents this shift) came together, Arthur White, in January, 1945 wrote in the Ministry the following:*

*Two years passed before the readers of the Review were informed of the intention of its editor, Uriah Smith, to prepare the manuscript for a book—Thoughts on the Revelation. In speaking of this, he set forth his purpose to build on the series of articles written by Elder White and himself, and called for suggestions from the people. Here is his statement:*

*“We have commenced to revise, and in a great measure rewrite, the ‘Thoughts on Revelation,’ published in Review, Volumes XX and XXI. We shall devote what time we can to this work, besides preparing matter for the Review, otherwise than writing. If any brethren have any suggestions to make on any part of the book, we hope to receive them at once.” The Review and Herald, July 18, 1865.*

*From time to time during 1865 and 1866, brief notes informed Seventh-day Adventists that Elder Smith was devoting what time he could to the promised work, but it was not until April, 1867, that the copy was put in the hands of the printer, and the completed book was listed for sale on June 13. As the finished volume was received by James White he reached for his pen, wrote a few words of commendation, and then stated:*

*“These thoughts are not the fruit of one brain. In the time of the end the Revelation was to be unsealed and opened. And from, the open book, light has been shining. William Miller saw much. Others since have seen more. . . This is a book of thoughts, clothed in the author's happy style, plain, yet critical and practical, coming down to the spiritual wants of the common people, yet elevated and dignified. This standard work should be in the library of every believer.”— The Review and Herald, July 16, 1867.*

*In 1872, five years after Thoughts on the Revelation was printed, a companion volume, Thoughts on Daniel, was issued and announced for sale on December 31, 1872. This, too, quite largely represented the joint study of able Bible students. After passing through several editions as single volumes, the two companion books in 1881 appeared as a combined work, Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation.” Arthur White, Ministry, January 1945.*

*In 1881 Ellen White was urging the church to print a book that would present our prophetic views before the world. That very year, the two volumes, Thoughts on Daniel and Thoughts on Revelation were combined into one book, specifically designed to be sold by literature evangelists door to door.*

*Ellen White wrote many statements of endorsement regarding this publication. It seems reasonable to me that the following statement could very well have been referring to that decade-long investigation of Daniel and Revelation by a joint study of able Bible students led by Uriah Smith which resulted in publishing a book for the world that presented the results of that investigation: "By a thorough investigation of the prophecies we understand where we are in this world's history; and we know for a certainty that the second coming of Christ is near. The result of these investigations must be brought before the world through the press. . . . We have not given heed to fables, but to the 'sure word of prophecy.' We are now living in the full blaze of the light of Bible truth." 4T 592 (1881).*

*In 1877 James White presented a novel concept that the Papacy (king of the north) would move his headquarters to the United States (the glorious holy mountain of Daniel 11:45) located between the two seas (Pacific and Atlantic Oceans). His son, Willie White, did not think that his father actually believed what he presented on Daniel 11. He thought perhaps James White presented this view because of budget concerns. Willie White wrote:*

*"In father's efforts to arouse our brethren to clear of the B. C. College debt, and to raise money for the B. C. San. and for the European Mission, and for the proposed British Mission, and other things, he had met the plea, "It is too late, Eld. White to plan for all these things. TOO LATE, TOO LATE." And when he heard Eld. Smith's presentation, fear seized his soul, and he threw in his exposition on Daniel 11, not so much that he really believed it, as that he thought it would check a movement that he thought was bordering into fanaticism, and might lead to the hindrance of the work to be done. He was reproved by the Lord for bringing in distrust as to the unity of the leaders, and sank down in discouragement, and thus the great financial campaign collapsed." —Letter to Elder John Vuilleumier, March 6, 1919.*

*"During the few months preceding this meeting, I had read Daniel and Revelation by Elder Uriah Smith. I loved the writer; I admired his style; I loved his teaching; and I was shocked when Elder White presented another view regarding the king of the North. One day I said to him, 'Father, I have just read Elder Smith's book and his exposition seems clear to me. Do you really believe that Rome is the king of the North?' His answer was, 'I think Elder Smith is going too fast in his exposition, and I thought it was time to present something to check the current of belief that what is transpiring was the beginning of Armageddon.'" —Letter to Elder Froom, December 12, 1930.]*

The first indication of a change of opinion on the part of Uriah Smith appeared two years prior to the article just referred to. The transition, evidently a gradual one, will now be considered, together with the circumstances which produced it.

## THE PERIOD OF CONFLICT

Ever since the close of the Crimean War in 1856 Turkey and Russia had kept an uneasy peace; but in the early seventies tension mounted, until the Turkish massacre of Christians in Bulgaria, so brutal and sanguinary as to fill all Europe with indignation, led Russia to a declaration of war, in 1877. Under the pretense of championing the Christian minority in Bulgaria, Russia hoped to enhance her own prestige in the Balkans. As Russian armies converged on Constantinople, England dispatched a fleet to the Black Sea and Austria mobilized.

To avoid a clash with either of these major powers, as well as to safeguard gains already made, the czar hastily concluded the Treaty of San Stefano with the Sultan early in 1878. Britain and Austria, however, viewed with alarm the resulting Russian advance toward the Dardanelles, and, denouncing the treaty, summoned the powers of Europe to a congress at Berlin for the purpose of revising it. The Russians sullenly submitted. Bismarck, the leading character at the Congress of Berlin (1878), played the role of

“honest broker,” as he called it, disclaiming any German interest in the Balkans. It was he who coined the expression “sick man of the east” for this very occasion. Disraeli, England’s representative, concurred with the other diplomats in a decision which served effectively to support Turkey and to checkmate Russia. As a result, Austrian power rushed in to fill the Balkan vacuum and eventually led to the outbreak of World War I at Sarajevo.

While the storm clouds were gathering, Protestant press and pulpit made much of the supposed imminent demise of the “sick man of the East” and his expulsion from Europe. Reports began to appear in the Review of sermons delivered by ministers of other denomination, along with comments by news analysts. The first of these appeared in the Review of February 11, 1875—quoted from another religious journal. As war broke out and it appeared that Turkey could not last much longer, an article by Uriah Smith appeared (July 12, 1877) under the caption, “Turkish Empire’s Downfall.” This article is clearly a reflection of the popular Protestant viewpoint of the day:

Rev. Dr. Nowman, of the Metropolitan Church, Washington, D. C., preached last night the second of a series of discourses he has prepared on... certain prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as referring to the Turkish Empire, and as pointing directly to its certain and total destruction within a brief period. He denominates the Turkish Empire as the most cruel, heartless, vile, and wicked of all the nations of the earth, and declares it to be the duty of England, France, Germany, and Italy to unite with Russia in its overthrow. Believing, as the doctor does, that the prophecy of Daniel, “He shall come to his end and none shall help him,” refers to Turkey, he says of that Empire, “Her die is cast, her funeral knoll is sounded;” that no Christian nation in all Europe dare help her, and that Russia will swoop the accursed Empire from the face of the earth. (Emphasis mine.)

At first there was little evidence that Uriah Smith concurred with the popular Protestant interpretation of the day. He merely quoted from other journals; but as time went on such articles began to appear more frequently, gradually accompanied by his own comments. He had apparently cast in his lot with them. Events seemed undeniably to substantiate the popular Christian reasoning of the day which seems to have been somewhat as follows:

The power of Daniel 11:45 is to “come to his end with none to help him;” Turkey is obviously approaching her end; therefore Turkey must be the power designated in Daniel 11. Of course this appealed even more to many Seventh-day Adventists, who knew that this portion of Daniel applied to the time in which they were then living—the time of the end; it was evidence of Christ’s soon return. Reduced to its elements, the logic may be restated thus: A certain power is to disappear from history; Turkey is disappearing; therefore Turkey must be the designated power. There was, of course, merely circumstantial evidence, and scriptural proof was not available.

*[It is not historically correct to characterize Uriah Smith as casting his lot in with the popular Protestant interpretation of that day. It was "by a thorough investigation of the prophecies" (4T 592) that Uriah Smith and his brethren came to the positions they held. After careful study they came to the same understanding that the Millerite Movement had come to back in 1841. The idea that the king of the north was papal Rome came from the days of the Reformation, long before 1798, the start of that time period when the book of Daniel was to be more clearly understood. Now that knowledge on the book of Daniel was being increased, it was seen that there was no way, using the sound principles of prophetic interpretation taught by William Miller (endorsed by Ellen White), that papal Rome could be the king of the north. In 1841 Josiah Litch wrote a verse by verse interpretation of Daniel 11 that you can find at this website: <http://tinyurl.com/kpvtq9g>*

*Uriah Smith’s commentary parallels what Josiah Litch wrote in his commentary. What you will find in Litch’s commentary is the same kind of careful scholarship that led Josiah Litch to uncover the time*

*prophecy of Revelation 9 (August 11, 1840). He took the text of Daniel 11 and found its fulfillment in history. Those from the time of the Reformation (Martin Luther: <http://www.dr-fulee.org/docs/loiamp/loiamp.pdf>), long before the time of the end which began in 1798, could only speculate that papal Rome must somehow be the king of the north. Now that they were in the time of the end and knowledge was being increased as the prophecy said would happen, God's people gave careful study to Daniel 11 and discovered that the Protestant Reformation's assumptions that papal Rome was the king of the north couldn't stand up under careful exegesis of the text. This is what Uriah Smith and his group of able Bible students discovered as they allowed the Holy Spirit to open the meaning of these prophecies to them as they thoroughly investigated them. The "repeat and enlarge" idea that James White appeals to (Daniel 2, 7, and 8 end with Rome therefore Daniel 11 must also end with Rome) is not one of William Miller's rules of prophetic interpretation. To say that Daniel 11 must end with Rome on the basis of "repeat and enlarge" allows a presupposition to predetermine the outcome of the examination of the text.]*

The new principle of prophetic interpretation introduced by Uriah Smith at this time was that current historical events are, in themselves, adequate as a guide to the interpretation of prophecy. *[Uriah Smith did not introduce this erroneous principle of prophetic interpretation. This is an unfortunate and somewhat misleading characterization of Uriah Smith.]* James White, on the other hand, maintained the tested Adventist position that scripture alone may interpret scripture, and that current history is to be used to verify interpretations already validated by the Scriptures themselves. *[This is precisely what this group of able Bible students used in their "thorough investigation of the prophecies". To make the contrast by saying that only James White followed these principles is misleading.]* Furthermore, the new view coincided with the Catholic position which eliminates her from the prophetic picture as the great antichrist—a view in which Protestants largely concur today. Thus the new view was actually a victory for the papacy. *[This "new view" which, in fact was not a new view, seeing that it was taught in 1841 by Josiah Litch, was not taking away the belief of the antichrist. Uriah Smith was not removing the Papacy from the prophetic picture as the great antichrist. This was no victory for the papacy. Smith and his brethren clearly taught the truth on the papacy in Daniel 7, 8 and in Revelation.]*

It does seem, however, that in arriving at the new view of the king of the north, Uriah Smith was not consistent with his own announced principle of interpreting Daniel 11. In approaching Daniel 11 he professedly adopts the same principle clearly stated by Elder White; whereas in the last few verses of the chapter he deviates from that principle:

There was still something, then, which Daniel did not understand. What was it? Undoubtedly it was some part of his preceding vision, that of Daniel 8, of which Daniel 9 was but a further explanation.

As the result of his supplication, he now receives more minute information respecting the events included in the great outlines of his former visions. (Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation, p. 225.9; emphasis mine.)

Elder White could see nothing but danger in this new method of prophetic interpretation, and finally in the Review of November 29, 1877 (Elder Smith, editor), voiced his fears and restated what had always been the denominational position. Particular attention should be given to the methods by which he proposed to interpret prophecy, and the caution he felt with respect to the process of interpretation mentioned above:

Positions taken upon the Eastern question are based upon prophecies which have not yet their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement. It may be said that there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and

Russia as the fulfillment of that portion of prophecy which will give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message. But what will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question." (Emphasis his in the last sentence; mine elsewhere.)

"Let us take a brief view of the line of prophecy four times spanned in the book of Daniel. It will be admitted that the same ground is passed over in chapters two, seven, eight and eleven, with this exception that Babylon is left out of chapters eight and eleven. We first pass down the great image of chapter two where Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome are represented by the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron. All agree that these feet are not Turkish but Roman. And as we pass down, the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the beast with ten horns, representing the same as the great image, again all will agree that it is not Turkey that is cast into the burning flame, but the Roman beast. So of chapter 8, all agree that the little horn that stood up against the prince of princes is not Turkey but Rome. In all these three lines thus far Rome is the last form of government mentioned. (Emphasis mine.)

Now comes the point in argument upon which very much depends. Does the eleventh chapter of the prophecy of Daniel cover the ground measured by chapters two, seven and eight? If so, then the last power mentioned in that chapter is Rome." (Emphasis his.)

(An editorial by James White entitled "Unfulfilled Prophecy" in the Review and Herald, November 29, 1877; Uriah Smith, editor-in-chief.)

Several facts stated in this article are of vital importance in understanding the issue which was then at stake:

- (1) James White firmly believed Rome to be the last power mentioned in Daniel 11.
- (2) This was "one of the landmarks fully established in the Advent movement."
- (3) Uriah Smith and others were "found removing the landmarks."
- (4) A majority of the denomination leaders were in "general agreement "with Uriah Smith.
- (5) Those who adhered to the view were "positive" and "confident" of their position, which seemed to be fully substantiated by events then transpiring.
- (6) The new position had emerged from the "war now in progress between Turkey and Russia," which was held to be "the fulfillment of that portion of the prophecy" (Daniel 11:45), and would therefore "give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message."

*[Their method of interpreting Daniel 11 was the same method that Josiah Litch had used back in the early 1840s. Uriah Smith and his fellow Bible students came to their understanding in the early 1870s and in 1877 they could see in the current world affairs the potential for their previously arrived at interpretation to find a fulfillment in the current war that was then raging. This would be similar to finding in the Senator Blair Sunday Law debate that took place in 1888 a potential for the prophecy of the Sunday laws to find their fulfillment at that time. In both cases this was not to be. And the failure of fulfillment at that particular time did not necessarily make either one a wrong interpretation.]*

- (7) The basis of the new view was current history rather than Scripture.

*[This is not an accurate statement. The view our church came to on Daniel 11:36-45 was based upon using sound principles of prophetic interpretation. It was based upon using the same methods of interpretation used in understanding the first half of the chapter.]*

- (8) “General agreement” on the new view gave confidence to those who adhered to it. Surely the majority must be right.

*[This point is a mischaracterization of our pioneers. They did not believe that a majority must necessarily be right.]*

- (9) James White considered it wise to “tread lightly” when dealing with “prophecies which have not yet had their fulfillment.”
- (10) Not believing that the war then in progress was a fulfillment of Daniel 11, it was therefore to him “an anxious question” what would be the effect of “this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected.” He feared that instead of a “great confirmation” of the message there would result another disappointment.
- (11) The method of prophetic interpretation followed by Elder White was to make the Bible its own expositor, using passages of Scripture which were clearly understood to explain parallel portions of scripture which were not understood.

The Treaty of San Stefano was signed shortly after the above article appeared in the Review, seeming further to confirm the majority position. However, as narrated above, the Congress of Berlin completely reversed the picture and came to the rescue of Turkey, which by virtue of that fact remains in Europe today. The events of Daniel 11:45 were not fulfilled then as “so confidently predicted”, and there was nothing to point to as confirming the message borne by Adventists. In other words, events vindicated Elder White’s position and established the validity of this “anxious question.”

*[Just as the Sunday law prophecy did not take place as it appeared it could have, so verse 45 was not fulfilled at that time. Our denominational position was not invalidated just because it was not fulfilled at that time.]*

Remarkably, however, the new position, which had had its genesis in the assumption that the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 was a fulfillment of Daniel 11, was as confidently maintained as ever.

*[The interpretation of Daniel 11:36-45 did not find its genesis in this war. Our interpretation was established before this war. See RH March 28, 1871, pages 116, 117 for evidence that the genesis was not the war of 1877.]*

It is never easy to surrender a position affirmed publicly, even though presumably valid evidence offered in support of it proves untenable. The major premise had been forfeited, but the conclusion based upon it was retained—a rather strange procedure indeed!

*[The fact that verse 45 was not fulfilled at that time did not necessarily reflect upon the soundness of the method of prophetic interpretation that they used to come to their conclusions.]*

Evidence of this fact appears in the following editorial by James White entitled “Where Are We?” which appeared in the Review a few months later (October 3, 1878), while Uriah Smith was listed as “local editor”:

There is a line of historic prophecy in chapter eleven, where the symbols are thrown off, beginning with the kings of Persia, and reaching down past Grecia and Rome, to the time when that power shall come to his end, and none shall help him." If the feet and ten toes of the metallic image are Rome, if the beast with ten horns that was given to the burning flames of the great day be the Roman beast, if the little horn which stood up against the Prince of princes be Rome, and if the same field and distance are covered by these four prophetic chains, then the last power of the eleventh chapter

which is to "come to his end and none shall help him," is Rome. But if this be Turkey, as some teach, then the toes, of the image of the second chapter are Turkish, the beast with ten horns of the seventh chapter represents Turkey and it was Turkey that stood up against the Prince of princes of the eighth chapter of Daniel. True, Turkey is bad enough off; but its waning power and its end is the subject of the prophecy of John and not Daniel.

Here James White's method of interpretation appears more clearly than before. Wielding that merciless weapon of logic, the reductio ad absurdum, he appeals to the consistency of scripture—for the consistency was evidently one of his strong points. He repeated the same line of reasoning the following evening after an address by Uriah Smith on the Eastern Question delivered before the delegates to the seventeenth session of the General Conference. James White again maintained that the four great prophecies of Daniel continue parallel down to the coming of the Lord.

That James White should differ publicly with Uriah Smith at the close of such a meeting indicates that a crisis was at hand which might result in a schism within the denomination.

*[In the church at that time there was general unity of belief on the king of the north. The church had spent ten years thoroughly investigating Daniel and Revelation. There was no danger of a schism. According to Willie White, the reason James White presented a conflicting view on the king of the north had more to do with his desire to retire debt from our institutions. Willie White did not think that his father even believed what he presented. What James White did was shocking to his son and no doubt to many others. God reproved James White for his actions in creating "differences of ideas" (15MR 21) regarding the prophetic views that our church held at that time.]*

Bitter feelings were apparently taking the place of brotherly love, and something was urgently needed to save a dangerous situation from further deterioration. It seems that Sister White counselled her husband after that evening meeting to the effect that his taking public issue with Elder Smith was a mistake. Regardless of the respective merits of the views presented his course was clearly in error, and it was wise to let the matter drop for the time being. Unfortunately no written account of the counsel given has been preserved; the report is based on oral reports of individual present and was placed in writing by a third person who was not present at all. Sister White's own instruction in regard to such testimony is clear:

Do not give credence to unauthenticated reports as to what Sister White has done or said or written. If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works. Are there any points of interest concerning which she has not written, do not eagerly catch up and report rumors as to what she has said. (Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 696.)

Such a conversation as that presumed to have taken place cannot therefore be relied upon too strongly. Certainly it may not be construed as evidence for one side or against the other, and must be interpreted, if at all, in the light of succeeding events. It does seem likely that some such counsel was given upon that occasion, for the editorial of the preceding day "To Be Continued" never was. It is clear, however, that Elder White did not understand the counsel to be permanently binding, for two years later he expressed the same view in an article appearing in the Signs of the Times. Again he speaks of:

. . . four distinct lines of prophecy. These are given in chapters two, seven, eight, and eleven. The eleventh chapter of Daniel closes with the close of the fourth monarchy . . . the Roman Empire which comes to its end at the second coming of Christ. (Signs of the Times, July 22, 1880; with elders White, Andrews, Smith, and Waggoner as editors.)

*[Apparently, James White continued to share views that were contrary to the published position of our church at that time. He was laid to rest one year later at the young age of 60. His example of not presenting a united front, for which he was reproved, has affected many to this day.]*

This is the last statement in official denominational literature in defense of the “landmarks” of pioneer days with regard to the king of the north and Armageddon. Whatever counsel may have been given Elder White, then, applied only to the particular situation existing at the General Conference then in session, and was designed to keep the men there assembled from coming to an open break over the question. (See E. G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 76, 77, which most likely refers to this particular incident. Evidently the counsel applied to the spirit in which Elder White had spoken rather than to the views he had expressed; for if anything, Sister White may have said was of the nature of a pronouncement on the subject under discussion, Elder White would surely have accepted it.

It was better to let minor errors circulate (obviously one side or the other was in error) than to forfeit the bond of fellowship; it was better to let the matter rest than to see a brother, or the work as a whole, suffer. Certainly the wisdom of such counsel is beyond question. Many years later similar counsel was forthcoming with respect to a controversy over the “daily”—the matter was to be dropped for the time being, since a greater loss would be suffered from a warring leadership than from a minor bit of error. Later, however, that question was reviewed and settled, with practical unanimity of opinion existing today among Seventy-day Adventists. The new view of the “daily” then temporarily shelved, is in reality the correct one and stands fully vindicated.

#### PERIOD OF ORTHODOXY

In 1881 Elder James White’s motto, “I would rather wear out than rust out”, came true in his own experience. The arduous labors of the defender of “the landmarks fully established in the Advent movement” was laid to rest and his voice of caution silenced.

*[Papal Rome being the king of the north was not a “landmark fully established in the Advent movement” as James White claimed. The Sabbath Conferences fully established the doctrinal landmarks of this Advent movement. The study of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation by a group of able Bible students took place from 1862 to 1872. This was the “thorough investigation of the prophecies” that Ellen White spoke of and of which she said the results must be published, which they were in Smith’s book. It was then that she said that “We are now living in the full blaze of the light of Bible truth.” 4T 592]*

There was “general agreement” prevailing among the leaders on the new view, as admitted by Elder White in the Review four years earlier. Therefore upon the death of Elder White the new view, by default, was left unchallenged, and the old view unchampioned. The new view thus became the denominational position, and prevailed to the extent that half a century later few, even among experienced workers, were aware that any other interpretation than the new view had ever prevailed and that the faith of the founding fathers of the Advent movement was once unanimously to the contrary.

Except for one other circumstance, it is not likely that this situation could have prevailed. Since the days of William Miller primary emphasis had been given to defending the prophecies relating to 1844. Elders White and Smith, alone the “writing prophets” of the Advent movement, gave major attention to prophecies applying to events still future. With the death of Elder White, therefore, contemporary literary talent was all on the side of the new view, and more than anything else this situation was responsible for establishing the new view as the official denominational position.

Left without peer in the field of Biblical history and prophecy, Elder Smith's light burned so brightly as to be recognized by all his brethren, and his basic positions were, without exception, based on sound methods of interpretation. Others were either unwilling to devote the time and effort required for the diligent and meticulous study of which he was capable, or lacked the necessary background for doing so. In either case, all were willing to follow his lead in this field, as he was so far ahead anyway, while they went about other equally important phases of a rapidly growing work.

*[This does not properly characterize how we came our prophetic views. It was a group process lead by Uriah Smith. He was not left without peer. There were a number of other pioneers, gifted in an understanding of history and Bible prophecy, who studied deeply and published their works which concurred with the findings of that "thorough investigation" that had been undertaken by our church.]*

By common consent Elder Smith was accepted as the authority; and for the next half century, in recognition of his scholarship and devotion to the cause, whatever he personally believed to be true came to be the accepted view of the denomination. While his work as a whole was endorsed by the Spirit of Prophecy, Sister White pointed out that in the future further study would clarify some details of the prophetic picture, then already basically complete.

*[Whatever clarification of details that was to be made in the future would not change the prophetic outlines in Smith's book. When some tried to change even the minor detail as to what the daily referred, Ellen White objected to such changes and they were not made.]*

Settlement of the problem of the king of the north automatically established the identity of the power of Revelation 16:12 which was to be "dried up". Inasmuch as these two passages of prophecy had always been considered as referring to the same power, Turkey became the power to be dried up under the sixth plague.

*[This was already understood even by James White back in 1862 when he declared in an article that this power of Revelation 16:12 was the Ottoman Empire. (RH Dec 2, 1862, page 4)]*

In 1910 Elder M. C. Wilcox published a little tract entitled "The King of the North," which sought again to establish Rome as the designated power of Daniel 11. Following a statement of the view of the pioneers, he proceeded to give a fairly complete analysis of the problem upon the same basic principles of prophetic interpretation Elder White employed, but with considerable more detailed scriptural proof. This tract was published privately, and for this reason its influence was comparatively limited. Apparently official publications were no longer open to a discussion of the problem.

During the first World War interest in Turkey revived. A number of influential Seventh-day Adventist evangelists confidently predicted the fall of Turkey at that time, just as Elder Smith had done a third of a century earlier.

*[Uriah Smith did not confidently predict the fall of Turkey in 1877. The potential for Turkey to fall was there but his presentations were all carefully worded because no man can predict the precise process by which unfulfilled prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled.]*

With commendable caution, and reflecting the spirit of Elder White, the General Conference Committee counselled our evangelists against posing as war "propheteers." But, as in the days of the Russo-Turkish War, contemporary circumstances led some of these well-meaning men to be positive and confident in their position and proclamation of the imminent end of Turkey, for the same reason as in 1877 – it was a powerful drawing and for public interest sure to furnish "great confirmation of the faith." Once again the

“sick man of the east” was to be driven out of Europe. Current history was again relied upon and set forth as an adequate means of prophetic interpretation.

*[This is an incorrect statement because current history was never used as the basis of prophetic interpretation by Uriah Smith and his brethren when they did their "thorough investigation of the prophecies" as Ellen White described it.]*

Inevitably, like their spiritual ancestors a third of a century earlier, they proved to be false prophets – to their own embarrassment and that of the denomination as well.

*[Uriah Smith was not a false prophet and was not embarrassed nor was the denomination embarrassed when verse 45 was not fulfilled in 1878.]*

Following World War 1 there was a revived interest in the problem of Armageddon and the king of the north. If what had been expected in regard to Turkey during World War 1 was not the object of these prophecies, what was? Those who held to the new view of Elder Uriah Smith found valuable support in books of the type written by Lothrop Stoddard during the early 1920's, such as The Rising Tide of Color, The Yellow Peril, and The world of Islam. Though true in many respects to fact, they were designed to play upon the popular imagination in the style of Hearst. The expression “yellow peril” had been coined by news analysts about the turn of the century, and this now became the catch word of those who held to the new view. There had long existed in the popular mind a picture of some titanic struggle between east and west, popularly referred to in common parlance as “Armageddon.” This idea of the nature of Armageddon was now adopted by numerous Adventist writers and evangelists as it blended nicely with the interpretation already derived from the Russo-Turkish War, namely, that Turkey was the power indicated by prophecy.

*[Uriah Smith's interpretation was not derived from the Russo-Turkish War. This is an incorrect and misleading statement. This does not reflect the history of how our church arrived at its prophetic views.]*

During the late 1920's and early 1930's considerable attention was given to this new concept of Armageddon.

Strange to say, World War II saw a revival of the same confident assertions to the effect that World War II would definitely come to a climax in Armageddon. It would almost seem that Adventists are allergic to Armageddon. For fifteen years there has now been a growing interest in reaching a solution to the problem which has led to the same erroneous predictions being made during four major wars. Also, it seems to many that the time has come when these things should be clearly understood, for the events must be at hand.

*[In 1881 Ellen White said that “we are now living in the full blaze of the light of Bible truth” (4T 592). We clearly understood back then the major Bible prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.]*

Whereas in the past it mattered little whether the details of a minor point such as this were understood, world conditions lend urgency to the quest for a solution. During the past fifteen years there has also been a growing tendency to return to the original view of the early pioneers and to their method of interpretation – namely, letting the Bible itself rather than current history serve as interpreter.

*[This is a misleading statement. Uriah Smith and his fellow Bible students who did that “thorough investigation of the prophecies” never used current history as an interpreter of the Scriptures.]*

Uriah Smith was indeed a “bright and shining light.” Nothing so original, scholarly, and scriptural as Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation has ever been written on the prophecies of these two books. In its major positions this book, which gave his personal opinions permanent form and is considered by some to be a statement of “the denominational position,” has unquestionably stood the test of time—as Inspiration said it would. Unfortunately, however, in the minds of many it has come to hold a quasi-inspired position in the Adventist canon. But, as pointed out in the Ministry of January, 1945, the supposed statement by Sister White clothing it with the robe of inspiration is without validity.

During the years the further prediction by Sister White that deeper study of the Scriptures would require certain changes of a minor nature, has also been fulfilled. For instance, the denominational view of the “daily” today is entirely at variance with that of Elder Smith. Again like others of his day, Uriah Smith personally maintained the Arian position in regard to the nature of Christ; but the appearance of Desire of Ages made necessary the revision of portions of the book in which expression is given to this point of view. Great Controversy eventually brought about a reversal of Uriah Smith’s positive identity of the two divine beings mentioned in Daniel 11. It should be remembered that much of what now appears in the Spirit of Prophecy was not available when Elder Smith wrote.

Many other details might be cited in which either the book itself has been altered to harmonize with clearer light on the prophecies, or in which a majority of denominational workers take a different position from that which still appears in print. These changes have been brought about as a result of (1) the discovery of minor errors originally made with regard to historical fact, (2) statements later appearing in the Spirit of Prophecy to the contrary, or (3) a consensus of opinion in support of a different position. However – and this should be emphasized – no major change has ever been or ever will be necessary until the end of time, for the basic principles and facts of prophecy and history therein enunciated are in complete harmony with the clear statements of Scripture, and have stood the test of time.

Our confidence in Uriah Smith as a devout, scholarly, and able exponent of the prophecies stands firm as a rock.

*[I would think it might be difficult to have confidence in Uriah Smith as being an able exponent of the prophecies if one believed that he used current events to interpret prophecy.]*

Yet it is one thing to accept Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation as the best book ever written upon the subject, and quite another to invest it with the aura of inspiration and infallibility. Probably no one could be found who would agree with all that the book now contains – to say nothing of what appeared in the original – and yet expression is often given to the infallibility theory, and an attempt made to require others to agree with Uriah Smith on certain points which happen to be in harmony with personal views.

## METHOD OF THOUGHTS ON DANIEL AND THE REVELATION

An examination of the method of the book does much to clarify its nature and the purpose which it was designed to serve.

In the first place, this book presents a defense of truth rather than a discovery of truth. The Review, in whose columns the material first appeared in print, was then as much a missionary paper for non-Adventists as it was a journal for church members. Whereas prior to 1844 the popular churches had devoted much interest to the prophecies, they now often took the position that prophecy could not be understood – Daniel and the Revelation in particular being sealed books. Inasmuch as the position of

Seventh-day Adventists was vindicated by a careful study of these two books, this attitude was essential to their denunciation of Adventists as deluded fanatics. One of Elder Smith's objectives was to demonstrate that Adventists simply believed what a majority of Christian Scholars had taken for granted prior to 1844.

This explains why he consistently followed the practice of quoting extensively from able expositors of prophecy before him, finding in general that these men were in agreement with his own understanding of the Scriptures.

As any able, honest scholar would do he brought together the best of what Christian writers before him had said, and his argument, or defense, is often based on what they had written. The very fact that he makes no evident use of the writings of Sister White, even of those then available, indicates conclusively that he intended these articles primarily for non-Adventists. In writing, he was clearly in the position of an "apologist." Although he never deviated from strict Adventist orthodoxy insofar as the pillars of the faith are concerned, he nevertheless avoided in every way the idea that the ideas expressed were in anyway original with him or even with Seventh-day Adventists. The only alternative to this explanation of his objective in writing would be the manifestly impossible conclusion that, as a syncretist, he was quite lacking in original thought and simply based his conclusions on what he took to be the consensus of Christian scholarship, and that in addition that he did not accept the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy.

In the second place, the method of presentation is essentially the evangelistic approach, whereby the writer seeks to convince others of what he himself and his church already believe. It is definitely not the approach of a student seeking to discover what is truth. It is the method of our ablest evangelists today, and of our evangelistic magazines such as the Signs and Our Times. An evangelist, either speaking or writing, makes abundant reference to what other leaders of thought, both religious and secular, have said. News may also be presented in substantiation of positions taken. What other denominations, through their historic creeds, documents, and official writings have said on various doctrinal points is also used effectively. But we offer these things in defense of a position already found to be scriptural, and not as original authority of our position.

The book Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation should be used for the purpose for which it was written—as a defense of truth, and not as an original discovery of truth or as a fountain of inspired infallibility. It was never intended by its author to be a pronouncement on the "denominational position." Current history and human opinion do not establish truth; but once truth is discovered in the Bible it may appropriately and effectively be defended by current history and the best in contemporary Christian thought.

*[Ellen White wrote: "The result of these investigations must be brought before the world through the press." This is what our church did in selling Smith's book door to door. This book was written to present our denomination's position on the prophecies. Smith's book is not using current history and human opinion to establish truth.]*

Finally, Sister White's repeated and emphatic statements in regard to bringing this book before the public indicate that it is primarily adapted to that end, rather than as an inherent source of authority by which to bind the minds of able scholars among us today. Little wonder that our colporteur work was founded upon it!

*[This book was for our own members as well as the public: "The students in our schools should carefully study Daniel and the Revelation, so that they shall not be left in darkness, and the day of Christ overtake them as a thief in the night. I speak of this book because it is a means of educating those who*

*need to understand the truth of the Word. This book should be highly appreciated. It covers much of the ground we have been over in our experience. If the youth will study this book and learn for themselves what is truth, they will be saved from many perils.” IMR 63]*

The original discovery of revealed truth is primarily a deductive process, and such a presentation is adapted to the thinking of those who are already in a frame of mind to receive it. But the defense of truth before those who have not as yet accepted it is best approached by the inductive method— unquestionably Uriah Smith’s method of approach, and admirably adapted to the frame of mind then popular in religious circles of approaching the bible, like everything else, from the scientific and critical viewpoint.

As long as the book is accepted and used in the spirit in which it was written, it can do boundless good. When, however, it is taken to be a deductive, original approach to the study of prophecy, endless difficulty is certain to be encountered.

*[The book was written to provide in printed format for all to read the results of our denomination's investigation of the prophecies. Ellen White wrote: “Everything that can be done should be done to circulate Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation. I know of no other book that can take the place of this one. It is God's helping hand.--MS 76, 1901. “God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light to direct minds to the truth. Shall we not appreciate this light, which points us to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, our King?” IMR 63]*

Both approaches are entirely valid; but when the defense weapon of induction is used in a futile attempt to accomplish the task of determining what is truth, the tool itself will suffer from abuse and finished product cannot possibly measure up to the high ideals of a skillfully divided word of truth.

#### URIAH SMITH AN ADMIRABLE SCHOLAR

The fact that Uriah Smith was able to break so thoroughly and decisively with the view of the pioneers on Daniel 11 and Armageddon is evidence that he was blessed with an open mind as well as with the courage of his convictions.

*[Uriah Smith was in basic harmony with Josiah Litch on Daniel 11 and in harmony with James and Ellen White on the fact that there was a literal aspect to the battle of Armageddon that would involve warring nations during the time of trouble after the close of probation.]*

Today, he would be among the first to revise his book in harmony with evident truth; he was in no sense a dogmatist unwilling to budge from a position once he had taken it. He was, as well, intellectually honest and a scholar in the highest sense of the term. He was apparently willing to give up a cherished position when evidence seemed to indicate that it was no longer tenable. He also practiced suspended judgment, sometimes taking tentative, non-committal position, or suggesting the most likely of several probabilities.

Uriah Smith would turn over in his grave in protest if he could see the use which some Adventists now make of his book. Many of his ardent “defenders” would certainly find the clear intellectual atmosphere in which he lived uncongenial to their way of thinking. Strangely enough, certain of his tentative positions are advanced today as absolute and final—simply because they are suggested by Uriah Smith, and sanctified by time. Would that those who use his book today exercised the spirit of scholarship its author did.

Some of Uriah Smith's conclusions which are now so dogmatically accepted by certain well-meaning individuals are, upon careful analysis, found to be based essentially upon impressive statements made by non-Adventists quoted by him, and which may or may not be in harmony with the Bible. Some, in the light of truth, which has grown brighter since he wrote that masterpiece of prophetic exegesis, are not known not to be scriptural at all. A candid recognition that one has been in error is not weakness as many think. Danger can come from only one elevation—setting up one's self as a prophet in his own right, and then claiming for his own predictions the authority of inspiration.

Another, and less pardonable, method using Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation in vogue in certain quarters today, is to set up one's own view on a given prophecy, then appeal to Uriah Smith in support of selected details of the view, and finally emerge with the pontifical assertion that his position is that of Uriah Smith, and therefore to be accepted as infallible! What would an able scholar like Smith say to chicanery such as this? How unfortunate that he is not here to defend himself! The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy have long been used in the same way by unscrupulous, intellectually dishonest, or simply deceived individuals. How shocked some staunch "supporters" of Uriah Smith would be to discover that some treasured positions they fondly believe Uriah Smith held, he never really held at all!

A final and crowning characteristic of Uriah Smith as a gentleman and a scholar—seriously!—is his exercise of complete intellectual tolerance and Christian liberty toward fellow laborers who differed with him. In the midst of conflict in the 1870's he and Elder White continued to labor heartily together on the editorial staffs of the Review and the Signs. Repeatedly, each as editor made room for the full expression of views which differed sharply with his own. Neither tried to prevent the other from giving expression to his convictions. There was no attempt at censorship, or a resort to some presumed storehouse of denominational infallibility. Each exercised unquestioning confidence in the integrity and leadership of other; and this generally subordinated petty differences of opinion. Would that the spiritual descendants of Elder Smith and Elder White, especially in maintaining positions of Daniel 11 and Armageddon, would also emulate their worthy example as Christian gentlemen! What chance would Elder White have had of getting his ideas into print today? Or, still more to the point, what chance would Elder Smith have had of getting his new views published in one of our periodicals now? Obviously, under present circumstances his new view could never have made headway against the "landmarks" championed by Elder White.

To silence the voices of men of integrity and experience in the Scriptures, just because they may happen to differ from us, is comparable to methods employed by another power in ages gone by against those who differed with her. It is a reflection of the same spirit. Are we as Seventh-day Adventists not in danger of becoming dogmatic, of measuring our beliefs by what the Adventist "fathers" have written? Should we not fear the establishment of an Adventist "tradition?" Should "church councils" become our means of defining doctrine and setting up the equivalent of creeds? Have we come to the place where some group of individuals is to be vested with the authority of speaking "ex cathedra?" Is a pope less dangerous in the plural than in the singular? Is someone's "imprimatur" or "nihil obstat" to be [obtained] before one may open his mouth to speak? Shall we in stoutly defending the principle of freedom of speech for ourselves as a people, deny it to one another as brothers? Many persuasive reasons are set for to defend the supposed necessity of some similar practices among Adventists, but a careful study of church history reveals that these very arguments were advanced by Rome in centuries gone by.

Let us call for a return to the methods employed in the early days of the church—the Sabbath conferences—when groups of consecrated, able students of the Scriptures assembled for study and discovered our doctrinal positions. If that method was successful in dealing with the doctrines, why should it not be applied to a study of the prophecies? This has never been done by us as a people, and it is the conviction of the present writer that this is the very thing needed today.

*[This is historically incorrect. Our people spent ten years in a “thorough investigation of the prophecies” and then published their results in the book Uriah Smith wrote. There are those who do not like some of the results of this study. But back in 1881, after this thorough investigation of the prophecies Ellen White wrote: “We are now living in the full blaze of the light of Bible truth.” 4T 592. Yes, Daniel and Revelation were opened to the understanding of our pioneers just as our doctrinal pillars were in the Sabbath Conferences of 1848-1850. We are to build upon their foundation and we are not to introduce new theories on the prophecies that God made plain through that ten year study; that “thorough investigation of the prophecies” by that able group of Bible students led by Uriah Smith. “There must be no long discussions, no presenting of new theories in regard to prophecies that God has already made plain.” RH, November 27, 1900 par. 13]*

No one individual established our doctrinal beliefs; and no one individual is capable of establishing valid interpretations of prophecy. Shall we not apply that principle enunciated by the wise man—“in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.” Let us have groups of conscientious, experienced, and respected men known for their original study of the Scriptures get together to restudy some of the details of our prophetic positions. Much might thus be accomplished to clarify the prophetic picture and to restore the pioneer spirit of study, together with the harmony that resulted from those early Sabbath conferences in regard to our doctrines.

*[If Daniel 2 is the hour hand, giving us the broad sweep of world history, Daniel 11 would be the minute hand, providing a much finer detail of world history that enables us to pinpoint where we are in history relative to the close of probation and the second coming of Jesus.*

*“Connected with the Battle Creek Sabbath-school is a large and flourishing Bible-class conducted by Bro. Uriah Smith. This class has once passed through the entire book of Revelation, free from the spirit of debate, all coming to the same conclusion on almost every point, and confident that they had found a better harmony than they had before seen, and clearer light on some portions of the book.” James White, June 3, 1862 JWe, ARSH 4.7, 8*

*The book of Daniel was also studied by this same group. It is evident that God was making plain to His church the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. It would be presumptuous to believe that God chose to make all the prophecies plain except the very prophecy that specifically deals with the time of the end—Daniel 11:40-45. It would be presumptuous to believe that God purposely withheld light on this most significant portion of prophecy that provides the waymarks for the time of the end; waymarks that we were told to watch for.*

*To believe that God selected certain prophecies of Daniel or Revelation to not make plain would give rise to individuals believing that they have a right to present to the church new theories that would conflict with Uriah Smith’s book that recorded the results of that thorough investigation that brought God’s church into the full blaze of the light of Bible truth.*

*When God has told us to present no new theories in regard to prophecies that He has already made plain, who has the authority to decide which prophecies He purposely chose to keep hidden from His church when they were conducting that thorough investigation? Who would dare to present new theories on Daniel 8? Many have and they are not to be commended for their actions. Just because the Spirit of Prophecy did not explain Daniel 11:40-45 does not mean that God did not make this portion of the prophecy plain to His church. It is safer to believe that God did indeed make this portion of prophecy plain to His Church. If you did not believe this, you would be tempted to present a new theory and chance disobeying a clear directive from God telling us not to do that.]*