

Statement No. 15
Matters of Minor Importance May Need Correction
Statement Sponsor
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Statement: Ellen White said, regarding our important books, that “. . . there may be found matters of minor importance that call for careful study and correction.” The Eastern Question in Bible Prophecy teaching in Daniel 11:40-45 would not qualify as a matter of minor importance, thus forbidding the editors from eliminating this interpretation from *Daniel and the Revelation* and thus from our public discourse.

The published interpretation of Daniel 11:40-45 (Eastern Question), as presented in Uriah Smith’s book, *Daniel and the Revelation*, is **not** a matter of minor importance. Therefore, according to the Lord’s instruction to Ellen White, there should be no proposals entertained to make sweeping changes to this interpretation:

“In some of our important books that have been in print for years, and which have brought many to a knowledge of the truth, there may be found matters of **minor importance** that call for careful study and correction. Let such matters be considered by those regularly appointed to have the oversight of our publications. Let not these brethren, nor our canvassers, nor our ministers magnify these matters in such a way as to lessen the influence of these good soul-saving books. Should we take up the work of discrediting our literature, we would place weapons in the hands of those who have departed from the faith and confuse the minds of those who have newly embraced the message. The less that is done unnecessarily to change our publications, the better it will be.--Ms 11, 1910 (PUBLISHED IN 1SM P. 165). {10MR 49.3}

The enemy of all truth well knows that if minds can be kept occupied in searching for and giving wide publicity to imperfections in books that have been printed and widely circulated, great weakness will be brought to our work. Time would pass rapidly, and the great work needed in our cities would remain undone. Besides, there would be created in the minds of many an uncertainty as to the value of our publications that have done a good work and many minds would become absorbed in a further search for possible errors in our literature. {10MR 49.6}

The result would be the creation of a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of many as to the value of our denominational literature in general. . . . {10MR 49.7}

Satan and all his hosts are on the battlefield. The enemy of our souls has acted the part of a busy agent in presenting the thought that many of our books now in print are in need of general revision. He would be glad to have our brethren receive the impression that many changes must be made. He would delight to insinuate questioning and doubt into the minds of many of our people. {10MR 49.8}

I have been instructed that the Lord is not the author of the proposal to make many changes in books already published. If information regarding this sort of work, even as regards the few instances where revisions are needed, should become widespread, **seeds of doubt would spring up in many minds.** Satan would be busy at work implanting seeds of distrust and unbelief, and it would require much labor to remedy the evil that would be wrought.--Letter 70, 1910, pp. 2,4. (To A. G. Daniells, August 11, 1910.)

We as a church have not followed this instruction. To remove the Eastern Question from our public discourse and replace it with a variety of other conflicting messages is tantamount to making a major change in our books already published. We have discredited the Eastern Question in Bible Prophecy and this has led to seeds of doubt regarding Uriah Smith's book to spring up in many minds. The following is just one of many testimonies that could be cited:

January 7, 2019

Pastor John, I watched the Daniel 11 seminar lectures and saw your presentations. I have struggled to understand Daniel 11 for years. I had never considered Uriah Smith's book. Everywhere I went, Smith's view was always met with contempt. As a result of this I never took the Eastern Question seriously. Watching your lecture at the Daniel 11 Seminar late last year had an impact on me. It led me on a journey to read all you have written on the matter. My views have been settled. There exists no more confusion in mind about these prophecies. I am in full harmony with your views. I am writing to thank you for all that you have written and to thank you for having remained faithful to the message despite everything. Your faithfulness has been a source of encouragement. Understanding Daniel 11 has changed the way that I understand the Bible. I feel that for the first time, I understand the rules of interpretation adopted by our pioneers and their importance. Thank you. May God continue to keep and use you in a mighty way. May He bless you with light and protection. May He enlarge your influence. Thank you, _____

How can we remove the contempt that many have for Smith's book of which it is written: "The interest in *Daniel and the Revelation* is to continue *as long as probationary time shall last*."? The only way interest can be restored is for the leadership of God's church to cease undermining confidence in the interpretation of the prophecies that it presents.