

The Bible; as it Reads

Thoughts on Literal; Figurative; and Spiritual

A 7emca7 Study

There is a lot of discussion going on these days regarding literal or figurative applications of Bible verses, especially those relating to Prophecy. (Actually there is very little in the Bible that does not relate to prophecy in some way!) it is rather unwise to take any real hard stand on this question because, regardless of 'official definitions', we all tend to vary somewhat in our concept of these words; also God is not bound by our narrow human ideas. The Word of the living God is a living Book and knows no boundaries. We will look at a few thoughts on the subject; concepts that we are clearly shown are incorrect, and others where we have a large playing field to explore.

First we will look at Spiritual meanings or "spiritualizing scripture".

"The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared, "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." [Mark 12:24.] The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." [John 7:17.] If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad, and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error." GC88 598.

Even before the last of the apostles rested in their graves, false teachers arose, many coming in from paganism, which taught that the scriptures had these 'mystical meanings' that only the specially initiated could understand. This gave rise eventually to a group that called themselves the Gnostics; the ones in the know. These persons would take passages that a child could easily have understood, and explain them in such weird and sometimes ridiculous ways, that even intelligent minds were brought to confusion. One 'spiritual application' from a 'father' of the Roman Church, in explaining the clean and unclean animals in the Law of Moses, said:

"Moreover, 'Thou shalt not,' he says, 'eat the hare.' Wherefore? 'Thou shalt not be a corrupter of boys, nor like unto such.' Because the hare multiplies, year by year, the places of its conception; for as many years as it lives so many [places of conception] it has. Moreover, 'Thou shalt not eat the hyena.' He means, 'Thou shalt not be an adulterer, nor a corrupter, nor be like to them that are such.' Wherefore? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male, and at another female." 1888 EJW, FACC 81

Origen, another 'church father', taught that not to give the scripture a spiritualized meaning was wrong and freely combined pagan and Greek philosophies with the Hebrew Scriptures. His influence was behind the Bibles of Constantine of which MSS two survive today, the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus. It is these corrupted scriptures that have given rise to our modern translations of the Bible. Notice this historical information which clearly shows the danger of putting one's own mystical ideas into Holy Writ:

"Irenaeus who was martyred A. D. 202, said that "some" at that time "endeavored to turn these things into metaphors,"--still most were sound in the faith. About the middle of the third century Origen arose and with him. "commenced a new era in prophetic interpretation, which greatly affected the voice of the church."

“Taking a leap of centuries, we come to the testimony of Martin Luther; respecting the system of spiritualizing scripture practised by Origen and his followers, he says, "The allegorical sense is commonly uncertain, and by no means safe to build our faith upon; for it usually depends on human opinion and conjecture only, on which, if a man lean, he will find it no better than the Egyptian reed. Therefore, Origen, Jerome, and similar of the fathers, are to be avoided, with the whole of that Alexandrian school, which according to Eusebius and Jerome, formerly abounded in this species of interpretation. For later writers unhappily following their too much praised and prevailing example, it has come to pass, that men make just what they please of the Scriptures, until some accomodate the word of God to the most extravagant absurdities." September 4, 1844 JVHe, HST 37.

It is in Miller's Rules that we also find some thoughts on Literal and Spiritual. How did Miller understand the role of literal and figurative in his Rule #11? Please note, in the comment below Miller is actually quoting from another author, and in so doing you see that he fully agrees with the authors premise.

“His next, and third part: "Designations of time in the prophecies." On this point, his rule, which he has laid down on page 65, is perfectly right, and must, I think, stand the test in all cases. ***"Every passage of Scripture, or of any other book, is to be interpreted as bearing its plain, and primary, and literal sense, unless good reasons can be given why it should be tropically (figuratively) understood."*** 1842 WiM, MRSH 7.

“Designations of time in the prophecies. He first reminds the reader of one of the plainest and most cogent rules of Hermeneutics, viz: "That every passage of Scripture is to be interpreted as bearing its plain and primary sense, unless good reason can be given why it should be tropically understood." In this position we heartily concur, and should greatly rejoice had he at all times been governed by it." Joshua Himes 1842. Here he is commenting on the works of Prof. Stuart, and his "Hints on Prophecy".

“You enter upon the process of proof by which your main position is to-be established, by laying down the following as one of the plainest and most cogent of all the rules of hermeneutics, viz., that every passage of Scripture, and of every other book, is to be interpreted as bearing its plain, and primary, and literal sense, unless good reason can be given why it should be tropically understood. To the truth of this canon I cordially assent. I subscribe also with equal freedom and readiness to the connected remark, that "when we admit the tropical sense of a passage, we do it because, if literally understood, the subject and predicate would not harmonize, or because a literal sense would be frigid, unmeaning, or inappropriate." Joshua Himes 1844.

William Millers 8th rule states: “Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy, to represent future things, times and events; such as mountains, meaning governments; beasts, meaning kingdoms; Waters, meaning people; Lamp, meaning Word of God; Day, meaning year.”

When Miller says ‘figures’, he means things that make no literal sense; like red dragons in the sky. Also he uses the figures to point to literal events; many prophecies and parables have literal and spiritual lessons combined.

Take Lazarus and the rich man; definitely not literal as far as the Abraham's bosom and hell fire, but why did Jesus use the name ‘Lazarus’ to designate this symbolic person? He could have told this parable without using that name, or any name. He did it so that this literal element would later move the minds of the people and especially the leadership, back to the spiritual lesson and warning that the parable

contained. Not long after this, a literal Lazarus actually did literally die and literally come back from the dead; and Jesus' words were fulfilled to the letter:

“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Luke 16:31

When Jesus raised Lazarus, the leaders did not accept the truth before their eyes and instead they wanted to kill him and Jesus. This combination of the parable and the miracles were laid out before the Jews so that no excuse could ever be given that there was not enough proof presented for them to recognize the day of their visitation!

Prophetic Color Schemes

Let's look at another example of this amazing method of the Holy Spirit of combining literal and spiritual together for added impact.

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:” Revelation 17:4

“And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!” Revelation 18:16

These are symbolic descriptions of the great Papal power; in the first one we see a woman, and we do not go out running around the streets looking for some actual lady of the night, dressed this way; no, it is a symbol. Also in the second one we see a 'city clothed', do cities get dressed? No, but the people in them do; and so we see a literal facet in this symbolic prophetic word picture. Go and look at a picture of any great assembly of the leaders and potentates of this system and your eyes are dazzled by the array of purple and scarlet, as well as gold and jewels! It is a literal item used by the Holy Spirit to draw the mind of the observer back to the words of prophecy when they behold this literal sight.

But do these colors also have spiritual meaning? Yes, they do; scarlet, the color of blood on this power who is saturated with the blood of saints on their garments; and purple the color of royalty on the power that “sits as a queen” and rules with kingly power over the earth; BUT the colors are literally there. Maybe you can see what I mean? The Holy Spirit uses words in many different ways.

There is another amazing aspect of this papal color scheme that to me is an additional little hint that God is actually controlling events down here in this earth; His hand is influencing 'wheels within wheels' and those who do not limit themselves with the chains of human theories on what the scriptures have to do, can see amazing evidences of this. That Papacy likes to think it is following the literal guidelines of the ancient Hebrew Priesthood. Notice: as you look at Exodus in the places where the design and building of the Tabernacle is described, you will see at least 26 times, the phrase, “blue, and purple, and scarlet” in regards to the fabrics of the tent and robes. What is missing in the Papal extravaganza? The color Blue; what did the color blue mean spiritually? It was the color of divinity and God's Law and Authority. Why does not blue appear instead of only scarlet and purple in the Roman powers assemblies? Obviously, because God is showing that they are not under His law and His authority. Think about it!

Here is another example of literal and symbolic together:

“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” Revelation 17:9

It is clear this is a symbol; no woman could literally sit on seven mountains at once! However, we also know that Rome is called the seven-hilled city! Again, this is a literal fact that draws the mind of the reader to connect the prophetic narrative to its literal element.

Mixing Literal and Symbolic

I have heard some expositors claim that you cannot have literal and spiritual elements in the same verse; but first off, we need to remind ourselves that as useful as it is to have them, verses, or even chapters, did not exist in the original Scriptures. Just explore for yourself; Scripture often has elements of the literal in with prophetic and symbolic; and it is not an accident either, because the literal item serves to bring the mind to the prophetic scriptures when it is seen taking place.

I have also heard these same persons mix literal and spiritual elements in their own sermons: Here is an excerpt from a sermon by Jeff Pippenger in 2011; notice how he gives both a literal and spiritual meaning to the same passage.

Isaiah 30:19 “For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:”

“Do you know what they can do? They could make a list of everyone who is convicted of this message and is teaching it, and they could forbid them to teach in any institution of Adventism, but do you know what’s happened in the meantime? If you go back to Daniel 12:4 where it says at the Time of the End there will be an increase of knowledge; most of us understand that you can go back into 1798 the Time of the End and demonstrate that there was an increase of mechanical and inventions and the steam engine—there was an increase of knowledge that time period, at the same time there is an increase of prophetic knowledge; and you can go to our day and age and in 1989, the Time of the End, and there is an increase of prophetic knowledge and there is also an increase of knowledge outside of the prophetic realm. What is that? Technology, you can shut the doors but you can’t shut down the internet. There are ways to communicate this message at this point that were not possible in the Millerite history. A messenger here can stay in his home, in a room and teach this message and people can be hearing it all over the world simultaneously.”

Is it valid to be using both a spiritual and a literal meaning to these verses? Certainly! Also Jeff tells how when he began to present this prophetic message in his church, how he was literally placed in an out of the way corner to have his class.

Do prophetic passages contain both literal and figurative elements? It certainly appears that many do. Take the prophecy about Jesus: “A virgin will conceive and bear a son” it was literal; it happened that very way. Then the rest of it says “butter and honey shall he eat” now that is symbolic for subsisting on goodness and truth; I am sure Jesus was not raised only on literal butter and honey! There are many places you can find this kind of thing.

Jesus on the cross; the prophecy says “many Bulls of Bashan have compassed me” now was Jesus surrounded by cattle on the cross? No, it is a symbol; but then it says, “they pierced my hands and my feet” and “they parted my garments and cast lots for my vesture” that was literal; it really happened that way, so when people saw it actually happen, their minds would be drawn to the prophecy!

Turn over to Revelation 9:7-9;

“And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair

as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.”

Regarding Islam in prophecy, we see a grand mixture of the literal and the symbolic. A symbol used for Islam here is locusts; locusts literally come from the desert lands in swarms, making this a perfect symbol for Islam. Then it speaks of war horses; and we all know that the Arabian and Turkish warriors are world famous for their horses and, as it says in verse 17, their war-horses can be fierce as lions in the battle. But horses with scorpion tails do not make literal sense; a mixture of literal and symbolic goes into this prophecy with the literal items helping to identify the power spoken of.

Also look at Revelation 9:11 and see another fascinating example of the power of God to use His Word as He wishes to.

“And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”

We know that the verses were not in the original scriptures and yet there it is! We are shown the power behind 9/11; both literally--Islam; and spiritually, the devil! And yet there is even another layer to this verse; it is from the time when the first king arose in Islam that we calculate the period of the two time-prophecies we find in this chapter; the ones that when fulfilled literally, gave a mighty power to the Millerite movement in 1840.

I have heard some literal/symbolic interpretations though, that seem to be stretching things a bit: we know the number 46 is connected with rebuilding the literal temple. But then some claim that it applies also to our body-temples; Jesus raising up His spiritual temple in these last days; because there are 46 literal chromosomes in our body. OK, but why would this be relevant to this rebuilding a spiritual temple now in the End Time? Humans, at least most of them, have always had these 46 literal chromosomes. Both wicked people and God’s people always have 46 chromosomes.

144,000?

Is the 144,000 a literal number or is a spiritual number? Those who claim you cannot have both together yet inform us with certainty that it is literal and do not seem to be aware that this breaks their own rule about literal and symbolic not appearing together. It very well may be a literal number; but it is also symbolic; notice below it says “in number”.

“Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. The living saints, **144,000 in number**, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses’ did when he came down from Mount Sinai.” CET 58.1

The case for the number 144,000 being literal is very strong; there were literally 12 tribes of Israel; there were literally 12 apostles of Jesus; there are literally 12 gates to the New Jerusalem and literally 12 foundations.

Let’s explore these numbers: 144,000 is more than just a literal numerical amount, it has deep spiritual significance. The number three represents the spiritual kingdom, good or evil; the true Godhead and Three Angels’ Messages, or the evil confederacy of the Beast, False Prophet and Dragon with the false Three Angels’ Messages of the unclean spirits.

Number four represents world-wide; the four winds being restrained by four angels from blowing on the earth, and the worldly (carnal) i.e., the four designations of the earth's inhabitants: nations, kindreds, tongues and people; and the events of the fourth horseman of the fourth seal that destroys the fourth part of men with four weapons.

It takes a union of the natural with the divine (spiritual), to gain salvation and enter into heaven. If you add them, you get seven, the divine symbol of completeness. The product of three times four is twelve. The number twelve is the number of the kingdom of heaven. The twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles were the foundation of God's church.

Twelve squared, twelve times twelve, equals one hundred forty four, and in Revelation 21:17, we read;

“And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.”

One hundred forty four is the measure of a man that rests on the foundation of Christ. The measurement given in Revelation 21 is the length and the breadth. [See vs. 16]. The breadth is the width; how much do you love the Lord? The length is the depth; how deep is your conviction? How do you square up? We all will soon find out in the final crisis.

“Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.” Isaiah 28:17.

The line and plummet measure to see if the walls are in line with the foundation, are you in line with Christ, the foundation of your salvation?

A thousand is ten times ten times ten. Ten means universal: The Ten Commandments are the law of the universe. Three represents spiritual things, and in this case, God's servants, the 144,000. Their foundation is Christ and their conviction and love are equal. They are truly “of the angel,” which represents Christ. These are they that will be redeemed from the earth. Their love for their Lord is great.

We can find such richness of meaning all through scriptures if we dare to cast off the restraints imposed on us by the ‘higher critics’ that prowl the religious world on all levels, seeking to confuse the Word of God that was designed for the simplicity of the child of God, and make it unintelligible to all but themselves. Note also that they rob themselves as well by this practice and end up vainly seeking water in dried up, cracked cisterns of man's wisdom; when God's Word flows with the Living Water of the Holy Spirit.

This Earth's Destiny

So is it possible that the same passage of scripture may have a literal meaning as well as a figurative, Prophetic meaning? It is very possible to see more than one sensible interpretation of the same scripture, and they always support each other. For example Psalm 46:1-3;

1 “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”

We see in the dramatic chapter of Great Controversy, ‘God's People Delivered’ how at the end, right at Jesus Second Coming, these things will literally take place.

“It is at midnight that God manifests his power for the deliverance of his people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the

tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up, and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying, "It is done." [Revelation 16:17, 18.]

"That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." [Revelation 16:17, 18.] The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of the hurricane, like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness, are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the Great hath come in remembrance before God, "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." [Revelation 16:19, 21.] Great hailstones, every one "about the weight of a talent," are doing their work of destruction. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free." GC88 636.

Yet when we examine the words of verses 1-3 of this Psalm in the figurative sense, we see great meaning there as well regarding the events of end-time prophecy.

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains (governments, religious powers) be carried into the midst of the sea; (Peoples) 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, (strife and trouble amongst the nations) though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. (We see a symbolic picture of massive upheaval and anarchy in these words.)

Before and After the Cross

What about 1 Corinthians 15:46?

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

Is it talking about prophecies before or after the cross? Does not seem so; if you actually take that verse as it reads and apply it, you would look for a natural, literal meaning to prophecies first then also a deeper spiritual meaning and they would not cancel each other out. Taking a literal and also a spiritual view of certain passages does not change the picture; it still shows we are at the end of time!

There are both literal and spiritual meanings to many prophecies; there are also places where Sister White will use a literal and then a spiritual meaning from the same text. It does not have to be strictly one or the other. It can be both; but always the spiritual gives us deeper insight. There is room for spiritual and literal; trying to put a strait-jacket on the Bible is not wise. The only prophecies that are always spiritual after the cross and literal before are those referring directly to Israel and Jerusalem by name. We see that after the divorcement of the literal nation, the promises given to literal Israel all apply to the children of faith in Jesus, and references to Jerusalem etc. to the church.

Romans 9:7 “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

A Towering Question

“The living Word of the Living God”; people went to the stake for declaring that in the past because church leaders were saying it had to be only as they saw it and declared it, and no other way.

The Bible is a Living Book and has different layers of understanding for people at different spiritual levels. But, and this is important, the levels do not contradict each other saying something completely different, like the ‘spiritualizing’ Gnostics of the past claimed. If a level of understanding does contradict; then it is not a true interpretation.

For example, I am not willing to take the stand that the pioneers were in error when they saw the Dark Day, the Blood Moon and the Falling Stars literally and declared them to be a literal fulfilment of prophecy! They certainly were a literal fulfilment; and if one can see a spiritual application as well, that is fine; but the one does not need to cancel the other! God’s Word is deeper than man’s mind.

I heard this testimony by a man who was brought to see the reality of the Word of God and become a Christian by reading, on his own as a teen, the text in Nahum 2:4:

“The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.”

He saw that this referred to modern cars and suddenly God’s Word became real to him! The Advent pioneers thought it was trains because they had not yet seen cars. But should someone have rushed to tell him that it could not be literal? Of course not! He may later see spiritual meanings in it as well but that initial experience anchored his faith.

What about believing the towers falling in the Bible can point to 9-11 as well as future events? Either way, it shows us we are right at the end of time and need to prepare a character by the Grace of God to stand in the judgment.

Isaiah 30:25 “And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.”

We know that there are no accidents in God’s Word; we see Revelation 9:11, and Testimonies volume 9, page 11; and we also see TOWERS FALLING in the Word—the phrase obviously put there to catch the eye of folk running through scripture after 9/11. If someone looks at the texts about Towers falling and sees 9/11, as many do; and they fall to their knees to start seeking the Lord, as many have; should I rush out and tell them, “No, no! Don’t do that! These falling towers have only a future, spiritual meaning”? No way! I can show the spiritual meaning also; but the text says, “First that which is natural, then that which is spiritual’. Towers falling make perfect sense literally, and this does not detract from the spiritual application; instead they harmonize.

Are you aware that not long before Jesus went to the cross, we see a Tower falling in Jerusalem? Yes notice:

Luke 13:4 “Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

How did Jesus apply it? He used it as a warning to get characters right with God in preparation for the Judgment! Certainly, if nothing else, our Towers falling today warn us to prepare our characters for Judgment!

The end of Joel 1 describes a situation that is literally taking place on this earth right now! It also points to the literal time of the seven last plagues; and in addition has spiritual meanings. It is unbelievable that it is only an accident that God has described present happenings as clearly as those verses do and yet does not want to use it to draw our eyes to the times we are living in.

Joel 1:18 "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. 19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. 20 The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."

Anyone who has any awareness of the modern massive destruction of earth's forest resources by burning them off and stripping the land bare to grow cash crops for Bio-fuel and to raise cattle to feed the affluent 'riotous eaters of flesh' at the expense of the world's indigenous people and wildlife, certainly could see how they would be crying to the Lord for the horrendous cruelty and destruction that is happening!

U Smith's Error

One of the common accusations being thrown at one regarding the kind of views I am presenting here, is that this was how U. Smith made his mistake so that he called the King of the North, Turkey, instead of Rome; and took a literal view of the Battle of Armageddon, being a literal military assault, where powers from the East march through Turkey to attack powers in the middle east! We need to take a closer look at this man's experience.

Just a boy during the Millerite movement, he grew to make a name for himself in scholastic studies and writing. If you see an early photo of the man he shows an earnest looking pleasant appearance; however in pictures of him in his later years the face fairly exudes an expression of arrogance.

There came times when Sister White, who had a burden for him from his youth, had to write rebukes to him from the Lord. Just as happened with many back then, his resentment rose against Sister White and he took and promoted the stance that while the actual things she saw in vision were inspired, the words she used to write them out were not. So he set himself up as a judge of the Spirit of Prophecy to decide which things were from God and which were only the product of a human; a woman at that. There were others at that time that joined in this idea and G I Butler for one began to use it on the very Scriptures themselves.

Elder M L Andreasen, in his account of his school years, speaks of U Smith:

"Another man that I had for a few days as teacher was Uriah Smith. He was not a regular teacher, but "filled in." While A T Jones was rather unpolished, Elder Smith was polite and courteous. **He had been editor of the Review for many years, and had fallen into the habit of most editors, to think that he knew all things and that others knew very little, if anything.** He did it in a quiet way, but when he spoke he gave the impression that no one had better question what he said."

What does the Word tell us?

Isaiah 57:15 "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

We need to realize the importance of being fully surrendered to the Lord and endowed with the indwelling Holy Spirit, in connection with being able to rightly discern scriptures. We need the Holy Spirit; and when Pride, arrogance and rebellion against the Lord come in, the Holy Spirit backs off and the dark spirits move in. We cannot truly understand the Word without the Holy Spirit; and we end up filling the void with our own conjectures.

U Smith was not actually the 'writer' of his books on Daniel and the Revelation; he was a compiler and editor and he drew his materials from perusal of the writings of historians and theology professors of mainstream Protestantism. It would be incorrect to say that he did not uncover many useful and helpful facts; he did indeed. But the problem U Smith had was that he did not allow inspiration to guide him. It is interesting also that he, and others of those kingly leaders back then, never fully accepted the health message!

If he had faith in the inspiration given us in the Spirit of Prophecy, it is clear in the Great Controversy that nothing is declared about Turkey being the last power of end-time history; it shows it is the Rome/USA alliance. Spirit of Prophecy also says nothing about a literal, military Battle of Armageddon.

Another problem may have been a personal attitude one; it seemed he wanted to say something different than James White, who kept to the true pioneer view regarding the King of the North and the non-literal Battle of Armageddon. Inspiration would have set U. Smith straight if he had allowed it to.

"The enmity of Satan against good, will be manifested more and more, as he brings his forces into activity in his last work of *rebellion; and every* soul that is not fully surrendered *to God, and kept by divine power*, will form an alliance with Satan against heaven, and join in *battle against the Ruler of the universe*" (TM. 465).

"Thus the Spirit of Prophecy's application of the battle described in Rev. 16: 14-16 to the spiritual conflict is clear and decisive, and conclusively shows (as in all other statements referring to this final conflict *where the same unwavering teaching is found*) that by this presentation Uriah Smith's ideas-concerning Turkey and a military battle-on this subject are completely ruled out." Louis Were.

So using U. Smith as a 'straw man' to declare that all who may see literal as well as symbolic word pictures in Scripture are following Smith and declaring his views correct, is not justified in the least. Smith's problem was the same as some are exhibiting who are denouncing all who differ from their own views.

The Attitude of the Inquisition

James 3:17-18: 17 "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Galatians 5:15 "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

Even having correct doctrine does not justify intolerance among brethren. if we take the stand that the end justifies the means, and we are correct in attacking and discrediting everyone we feel does not agree with us; then what the Papacy did in the Middle Ages was also right. They did it to protect their flock from what they saw as error; and when they in the near future torture and imprison people again,

it will be because they are fulfilling their duty as shepherds to enforce their ideas of truth and protect their flock. They feel it would be a sin not to stamp out heresy. If what they did was wrong, then it is wrong for us to use the same methods. This is the spirit of the Beast power.

If you accept one person or ministry as your guide in spiritual matters, one is in no way different from Roman Catholics who kneel at the feet of the Pope and make him their god. We all need to pray and study Bible and Spirit of Prophecy ourselves because that is our source to know truth. We are to look to no man as that source of light to our souls; no human being or group here on earth.

Jeremiah 17:5 "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

The Inquisitional attitude is contrary to the very spirit of the Character of God. No man has the right to sit and judge and denounce everyone they don't agree with, and try to coerce, manipulate or threaten all into following only what he, himself holds as truth. If God wanted people forced to obey Him, He could do it Himself, but He doesn't use such methods.

As human beings we have no right to forbid others the same privileges of religious and doctrinal freedom that we expect for ourselves. We are not to try and do the job of the Holy Spirit, and use the devil's methods to promote the Lord's work. God will not bless us as we do this; even in attempting to establish control over others, that individual loses the Holy Spirit; and without Him, our 'truth' will only degenerate into foolishness.

My God help all of us with our characters and attitudes!