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### Josiah Litch: His Life, Work, and Use of His Writings, on Selected Topics, by Seventh-day Adventist Writers

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ABSTRACT

JOSIAH LITCH: HIS LIFE, WORK, AND USE OF HIS WRITINGS,  
ON SELECTED TOPICS, BY SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST WRITERS

by

Daniel David Royo

Adviser: Jerry Moon

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: JOSIAH LITCH: HIS LIFE, WORK, AND USE OF HIS WRITINGS, ON  
SELECTED TOPICS, BY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST WRITERS

Name of researcher: Daniel David Royo

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Jerry Moon, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 2009

Problem

Josiah Litch was a leading figure in the Millerite movement from 1838-1844. During this time he developed ideas that would appear again as part of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of prophecy and end-time events. This present study sought to determine how Litch's ideas developed throughout his life, and how his understanding of the Bible, specifically during the Millerite time period, affected Seventh-day Adventist doctrines.

Method

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. The second is a biographical overview of Litch's life. The third deals with Litch's historical

and theological research, and how three Seventh-day Adventist writers used his works. The fourth examines the events surrounding Litch's interpretation of the time periods of Rev 9, and how it affected the year-day principle. The fifth chapter examines Litch's understanding of the pre-advent judgment, and the anticipated fulfillment of elements of prophecy he considered to be yet future.

### Results

Litch's work influenced the Millerite movement through his research and extensive prophetic writing. His interpretation of the time periods of Rev 9 provided an example of the validity of the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation, and his understanding of the pre-advent judgment developed independently of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the pre-advent judgment.

### Conclusions

Josiah Litch helped the Millerite movement to have the extensive impact that it did through his writing, preaching, and pioneering towards the South. In the years following 1844, he abandoned his commitment to Scripture alone, followed tradition with the Albany Adventists, and eventually lost all distinctiveness in his understanding of the Bible, from the emerging dispensationalists. His interpretations generally did not directly affect the development of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine, apart from the teachings that had been accepted by the Millerite movement, but subsequent Seventh-day Adventist writers considered his earlier writings authoritative on prophecy.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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ON SELECTED TOPICS, BY SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST WRITERS

A Thesis  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Divinity

by  
Daniel David Royo

2009

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

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Date approved

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AH</i>	<i>Advent Herald</i>
<i>Lectures</i>	<i>Evidences From Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ About 1843, Exhibited in a Course of Lectures</i>
<i>MC</i>	<i>The Midnight Cry</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Second Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald, and Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald</i>
<i>RPA</i>	“Rise and Progress of Adventism”
<i>SCC</i>	<i>The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ: About A.D. 1843.</i>
<i>ST-M</i>	<i>Signs of the Times</i> (Millerite)
<i>ST-SDA</i>	<i>Signs of the Times</i> (Seventh-day Adventist)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of my wife, Danielle, and the inspiration and suggestions of my mother, Adrienne. I am also grateful for the financial support of the Potomac Conference; the administration has given me the opportunity to study at the seminary.

Those on my committee have been very helpful; Jerry Moon has provided valuable feedback and encouragement. Merlin Burt challenged me to take the second look, and encouraged me in the writing process. Carol Williams and Violeta Paraschuk helped with finding materials. Bonnie Proctor assisted with editing. I would also like to express my gratitude to Sarah Barnes-Vallandingham, archivist at Wilbraham and Monson Academy, Winston Hall, Kara Jackman, and Andrea Libertini.

Most of all, I thank God for giving me life and the ability to engage in research, and to participate in the life-long process of coming to know Him, through the lives of those who have sought to walk with Him in the past.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of Problem**

The history of the Millerite movement is one that involves intriguing events and individuals that led to a movement that gained national prominence. The driving force behind the movement is clearly the leader for whom the movement is named, William Miller, but the movement would not have gained the popularity it did without assistance from others who joined the cause and added their thoughts and talents.

One of the first ministers, of major note, to accept William Miller's message and remain committed to the movement all the way through until 1845, was Josiah Litch.<sup>1</sup> He is considered by some to be the Millerite movement's "leading theologian."<sup>2</sup> He was a prolific writer and championed the Millerite cause in New England as well as in Philadelphia.

Josiah Litch was a minister with the New England Methodist Episcopal Conference when he read a copy of Miller's *Lectures* with the intention of disproving

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<sup>1</sup> There is record of two other ministers who accepted Miller's views before 1838, Henry Jones and Elder Fuller, but Fuller was the only one "to remain faithful to his convictions." See George R. Knight. *Millennial Fever and the End of the World* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

Miller's teachings. Following his acceptance of Miller's views, Litch published a pamphlet in 1838 entitled, "The Midnight Cry, or a Review of Mr. Miller's Lectures on the Second Coming of Christ, about A. D. 1843." He published a book in June of the same year, *The Probability of the Second Advent of Christ: about A. D. 1843*, and both generated considerable interest.<sup>3</sup> In the book, Litch included an interpretation of a prophecy from Rev 9 regarding the fifth and sixth trumpets in which he concluded that the Ottoman Empire would lose its power in August of 1840. As the date approached he refined the interpretation and specified Aug. 11, 1840, as the precise date the prophecy would be fulfilled. When the Ottoman Empire turned its sovereignty over to a contingent of diplomatic envoys on Aug. 11, a substantial number of people viewed this as a fulfillment of the prophecy and also saw it as a confirmation of the "year-day principle" of prophetic interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

Another area of theological understanding that Litch contributed to the Millerite movement, which would later appear as part of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of what happened at the end of the 2300-day prophecy, was his view of a judgment preceding the first resurrection of Rev 20. Litch reasoned that there had to be a close of probation, prior to Christ's return, when God would decide who would be resurrected bodily in the first resurrection, and who would be resurrected in the second (Rev 20). Litch also argued that the plagues would fall during this time of judgment.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Le Roy Edwin Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946-1954), 4:520, 528-533.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:587-588. See also J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1905), 104-107.

<sup>5</sup> Froom, 4:588-593.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that:

1. Litch was instrumental in promoting the Millerite movement as a “general agent” who lectured and traveled extensively, and as editor of several Millerite periodicals (*The Signs of the Times* and *Trumpet of Alarm*).

2. He added scholarly weight, and substantive historical and theological research to the Millerite movement, including substantiating the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation.

3. He discovered a biblical basis for several doctrines of the future Seventh-day Adventist theological framework such as the pre-advent judgment and the fact that the seven last plagues were yet future, yet developed them by different means.

4. He moved away from the historicist understanding of prophecy following 1844 because he felt embarrassed that there was not a supernaturally originated event on earth in 1844.

## **Relevant Literature and Research**

The most exhaustive study I have found of Litch’s interpretations of prophecy and involvement in the Millerite movement is Le Roy Froom’s *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 4. Besides this work, there are a number of Seventh-day Adventist works that include brief treatments of Litch’s contributions such as George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*; P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*; and J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*. Beyond works published by Seventh-day Adventist publishers, there

are also Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission*, and Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*.

Several works not published by Adventist publishers also make reference to Litch; among them are Ruth A. Doan, *The Miller Heresy, Millennialism, and American Culture*; David L. Rowe, *Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800-1850*; and Jonathan Butler and Ronald Numbers, *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*.

The *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, in the first several decades of its publication, makes numerous references to works by Litch, from the Millerite movement. His writings were considered generally reliable sources, specifically his *Prophetic Expositions* on prophecy, and “Rise and Progress of Adventism” for its historical content. There are also references to Litch’s contemporary activities, and disputes over the Sabbath. In later years, Litch is mentioned as a historical figure who played an active role in the Millerite movement.

Many of Litch’s original works are extant and available for study. I limited myself, in my research, to what I had access to in the Center for Adventist Research, at the James White Library, Andrews University, and what I could find in electronic form on the World Wide Web.

## **Methodology**

This paper is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 presents a biographical overview of Litch’s life, including Litch’s contributions to the Millerite movement as a “general agent,” and as editor of two Millerite periodicals. Chapter 3 addresses Litch’s historical and theological research in his writings, and the use made by Adventist writers

of his work. Chapter 4 examines Litch's interpretation of Rev 9, how his understanding of the events of Aug. 11, 1840, developed during the Millerite movement and beyond, and how this interpretation was used by Seventh-day Adventist writers. Chapter 5 examines Litch's understanding of the pre-advent judgment, and the anticipated fulfillment of elements of prophecy he considered to be yet future. Chapter 6 summarizes the previous chapters, and draws conclusions.



## CHAPTER 2

### BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS

In his first sermon before the first General Conference of Christians awaiting the advent entitled “A Dissertation on the Second Advent,” Litch outlined the setting of the meeting.

It is with deep emotion, friends and brethren, I stand before you at this time and on this interesting occasion. The purposes of our meeting are so novel, the objects to be accomplished so grand and vast, and the theme to be discussed and contemplated so glorious, as to inspire the heart with the most sublime and ennobling view and feelings. For we meet from various and distinct places, on an occasion such as our own country, if not the world, has never before looked upon. We meet to contemplate our blessed Savior’s glorious advent near.<sup>1</sup>

This conference marked the beginning of the organized efforts of the nascent Millerite movement, as they began to pull together disparate elements of those who had been influenced by William Miller’s understanding of prophecy. Josiah Litch had already embraced Miller’s views, and had been preaching and writing about prophecy for two years prior to this conference. His participation in the Millerite movement was one step in a life that was characterized from beginning to end by his penchant for pioneering the new and different. In fact, from my perspective as a Seventh-day Adventist, the only

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Christians, *The First Report of the General Conference of Christians Expecting the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, Held in Boston, Oct. 14, 15, 1840* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1841), 25.

action he took in which he chose not to pioneer a new religious direction, in relation to his peers and contemporaries, was when he attended the Albany conference in 1845.

### **Early Life and Pre-Millerite Ministry**

Litch was born April 4, 1809,<sup>2</sup> in Lunenburg, Massachusetts,<sup>3</sup> and at seventeen years of age was converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>4</sup> He studied at the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham<sup>5</sup> where Wilbur Fisk became the full-time principal in June of 1826.<sup>6</sup> At the academy, Fisk offered a class for aspiring ministers in which he

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<sup>2</sup> J. M. Orrock, "The Speaking Dead," *The Light-Bearer*, March 1893, 20; [Josiah Litch], "Twenty-five Years Ago," *AH*, April 7, 1863, 92.

<sup>3</sup> This location for his birth was confirmed in a phone conversation with the town clerk of Lunenburg, Massachusetts. The town clerk said that the listing is under the name of "Josiah Lietch," and his parents' names were "John and Jerusha Lietch." This location, of his family home, is confirmed by an email from Sarah Barnes-Vallandingham, the archivist at Wilbraham and Monson Academy, who stated that Josiah Litch was listed as a student there, and the town of Lunenburg was listed next to his name. See also Northampton County Genealogy, "J. Lincoln Litch," Northampton County Pennsylvania Genealogy Project, <http://northampton.pa-roots.com/Portraits/Litch.htm> (accessed July 7, 2009). Other sources have listed the place of his birth as Hingham, Massachusetts. See "The Speaking Dead," 20. Froom stated that Litch was born in "Higham, Massachusetts." This location is not listed on a map, but based on its use in some other sources appears to be a misspelling or alternate spelling of Hingham. The archivist of Hingham, in an email, stated that there is no record of anyone by the name of Josiah Litch being born there. See Froom, 4:528.

<sup>4</sup> See Orrock, 20; Froom, 4:528.

<sup>5</sup> Orrock, 20. I was unable to confirm the dates Litch was a student at the Wesleyan Academy, because most of the records were destroyed in a fire in the mid-1800s.

<sup>6</sup> In 1826, shortly after Wilbur Fisk became the new principal at the Wesleyan Academy, there was a revival that spread through the students of the academy, as well as through the surrounding area. This year corresponds with Litch's 17<sup>th</sup> year of life, and it was likely that his conversion took place as part of this revival. See Douglas J. Williamson, "The Ecclesiastical Career of Willbur [*sic*] Fisk: Methodist Educator, Theologian, Reformer, Controversialist" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1988), 33, in

discussed issues of theology,<sup>7</sup> and Litch probably got his training for his future ministry in this specialized class. In 1827, the academy took financial responsibility for the *Zion's Herald*, a periodical for the Methodist Episcopal church,<sup>8</sup> that by 1828 would be absorbed by the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. Fisk also led the students to found and organize their own temperance society in April 1827.<sup>9</sup> These activities at the young academy would have given Litch an up close and personal view of publishing, an activity which he would continue throughout his life, and resolute action in causes that were unpopular in the broader society.

Litch was “admitted on trial” to enter the ministry in 1833 with the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>10</sup> His first circuit was the Sandwich circuit in the New Bedford district where he worked with John J. Bliss.<sup>11</sup> He continued on

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Proquest Dissertations and Theses,  
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=753384481&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=2&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1245267019&clientId=1898> (accessed June 11, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> David Sherman, *History of the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham, Mass. 1817-1890* (Boston: McDonald & Gill Company, 1893), 98, <http://books.google.com/books?id=YQcAAAAAYAAJ> (accessed Mar 19, 2009); Joseph Holdich, *The Life of Willbur [sic] Fisk, D.D., First President of the Wesleyan University* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1842), 179-180.

<sup>8</sup> Sherman, 122-124.

<sup>9</sup> Williamson, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1829-1839*, vol. 2 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1840), 198, <http://books.google.com/books?id=GjgTHgAACAAJ> (accessed January 14, 2009). This is also the same year Apollos Hale, a future Millerite preacher, was “admitted on trial.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 201. It is interesting to note that the following year, John J. Bliss was “expelled from the connection” and was “deprived of his official standing as minister and

trial until he was ordained as a deacon and “admitted into full connection” in 1835.<sup>12</sup> On April 25, 1836, he married Sarah Barstow—the daughter of William Barstow, a fellow minister in the New Bedford district—in Rochester, Massachusetts.<sup>13</sup> Two children survived to adulthood from this union, Wilber Fisk Litch and Josiah Lincoln Litch;<sup>14</sup> their eldest, however, was William B., born in January 1838.<sup>15</sup> At the annual meeting in June 1837, Litch was “elected and ordained” as an elder.<sup>16</sup>

In an action that exemplified his tendency toward that which was new and different, the February 16, 1839, edition of the newly created *Massachusetts Abolitionist*

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preacher.” Also, in 1834 Abel Stevens, the Methodist historian, was “admitted on trial” in the New England Conference. See *ibid.*, 259.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 323. According to the *Doctrines and Discipline*, the ordination of both deacons and elders took place at the annual meetings. See Methodist Episcopal Church, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1854), 36, [http://books.google.com/books?id=PxYP\\_Lw2T8cC](http://books.google.com/books?id=PxYP_Lw2T8cC) (accessed January 14, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> See John S. Barry, *A Historical Sketch of the Town of Hanover, Massachusetts, With Family Genealogies* (Boston: John S. Barry, 1853), 231, <http://books.google.com/books?id=jKKAAAAAIAAJ> (accessed March 15, 2009). Sarah’s father, William Barstow, was a Methodist minister who served in the New England Conference for many years, and “located” in 1833. He worked as a minister for several more years, but later lost his voice and was unable to continue in the ministry. In 1844 he moved to Philadelphia to be with his children, and lived there the rest of his life. See Josiah Litch, “Rev. William Barstow . . .,” *AH*, January 6, 1862, 422-423.

<sup>14</sup> See Barry, 231. According to the 1900 U. S. Census on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), Sarah B. Litch had 5 children, but only two survived to adulthood.

<sup>15</sup> “Obituary,” *ST-M*, March 15, 1842, 190. William B. Litch died in Boston on March 8, 1842, at the age of “4 years and two months.”

<sup>16</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences, 1829-1839*, 458. Litch is also listed in 1837-1838 as a “superannuated or worn-out” preacher, and is therefore not assigned a church. In the minutes from the following year’s meeting, Litch is listed as having received additional monetary compensation to make up for missing his “regular allowance on the circuit.” *Ibid.*, 543.

contained Litch's endorsement of the new paper.<sup>17</sup> In the 1830s, Methodist Episcopalism was in turmoil. There had been abolitionist movements for some time, but the movement against slavery began to heat up, especially after the 1836 Methodist General Conference voted that they were "decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim[ed] any right, wish or intentions to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave."<sup>18</sup> Litch did not side with his principal at the Wesleyan Academy, Wilbur Fisk, who strongly opposed abolition and endorsed the idea of

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<sup>17</sup> Keith E. Melder, "The Beginnings of the Women's Rights Movement in the United States, 1800-1840" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1964), 304-305, in Proquest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=755174511&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=1&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1247508669&clientId=1898> (accessed May 8, 2009). Litch endorsed the publication of the *Massachusetts Abolitionist* on Feb. 16, 1839. The *Abolitionist* was started as an alternative to the *Liberator*, an older abolitionist paper, over the issue of women's involvement in abolitionism. The individuals who eventually formed the Massachusetts Abolition Society initiated the publication of the *Abolitionist*. They opposed William Lloyd Garrison's radical approach to abolitionism, and wanted to deal with the slavery issue independently of women's rights. See Oliver Johnson, *William Lloyd Garrison and His Times; or Sketches of the Anti-Slavery Movement in America, and of the Man Who Was Its Founder and Moral Leader* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1881), 282-285; Wendell Phillips Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879: The Story of His Life Told By His Children*, 4 vols. (New York: Century Co., 1885-1889), 2:275-281.

<sup>18</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church, *Debate on Modern Abolitionism in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Held in Cincinnati, May, 1836* (Cincinnati: Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, 1836), 5, <http://books.google.com/books?id=MLUyxOEIHPoC> (accessed May 27, 2009). See also John R. McKivigan, "The Sectional Division of the Methodist and Baptist Denominations as Measures of Northern Antislavery Sentiment," in *Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery*, ed. John R. McKivigan and Mitchell Snay (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 346-349, <http://books.google.com/books?id=e-unV4v5puYC> (accessed May 27, 2009); Holland McTyeire, *A History of Methodism* (Nashville: M. E. Church, South, 1888), 601-612, <http://books.google.com/books?id=CIEXAAAAYAAJ> (accessed January 16, 2009).

colonization as a solution to slavery.<sup>19</sup> Fisk even declined the election to be a delegate to the infamous 1836 General Conference, because “he felt the abolition-colonization controversy had tainted the electoral process by which the New England delegation had been chosen (all of the other delegates were avowed abolitionists).”<sup>20</sup>

Litch may very well have followed Orange Scott—a Methodist Episcopal clergyman who separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church over the issue of slavery and episcopacy, and founded the Wesleyan Methodist Connection—given his willingness to leave the Methodist Episcopal church later, had he not encountered and joined William Miller in proclaiming the advent near.

### **Millerite Movement**

Litch’s next pioneering move into a new and different theological realm began in February 1838 when he was given a copy of Miller’s *Lectures*, apparently during the year of respite when he was listed as a “worn-out” minister.<sup>21</sup> His reaction, upon first reading the book, was to dismiss it; he read the book only “to gratify a friend and from a curiosity

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<sup>19</sup> Despite Litch’s difference with his former principal, he named one of his sons—who was born the year after Fisk’s death in 1839—Wilbur Fisk Litch. See “Obituary—Dr. Wilbur F. Litch,” *The Dental Cosmos*, February 1913, 242-243. Wilbur F. Litch went on to be a prominent teacher of dentistry in Philadelphia, first working for his uncle J. W. Barstow, and then earning an M.D. and working for the military during the Civil War. W. F. Litch eventually became dean of the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery. W. F. Litch was also the recipient of numerous awards, invented several dental procedures, and edited a prominent dental journal entitled *Dental Brief* until the time of his death, December 25, 1912, in Ardmore, Pennsylvania.

<sup>20</sup> Williamson, 33.

<sup>21</sup> J[osiah] L[itich], “The Last Twenty-five Years,” *AH*, March 24, 1863, 76. In this article, Litch confirms that he was “sojourn[ing] for a season” in the city of Lowell, Massachusetts. A ministerial friend asked if he had read Miller’s *Lectures*, but he actually read the book at the request of the woman who gave it to him.

to know what arguments could be adduced in support of so novel a doctrine.” He thought he “could entirely overthrow the system in five minutes” on the basis of the fact that he believed that the “falling away” of 2 Thess 2 was yet to be fulfilled. He understood the prevailing belief among Protestant prophetic interpreters to be that the 1260 years of papal persecution began with the decree of Phocas in 606, and would end in 1866.<sup>22</sup> As he studied Miller’s book, he became more and more convinced that what Miller was teaching was biblical truth; he saw the logic in believing that Christ’s reign would take place on an “*earth renewed*,” and not in coexistence with the papacy. This caused him to conclude “that it was impossible to disprove the position which Mr. Miller had endeavored to establish.”<sup>23</sup>

Once Litch was persuaded of the biblical foundation of Miller’s teachings, he felt an obligation as a member of the clergy to share the knowledge he had found with as many people as would listen. He described the sense of responsibility, the debate over its implications that raged in his mind, and the way this controversy was brought to an end when he wrote “the Lord, in a night dream, showed me my own vileness, and made me willing to bear reproach for Christ, when I resolved, at any cost, to present the truth on

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<sup>22</sup> For an example see Francis A. Cox, *Outline of Lectures on the Book of Daniel* (New York: C. C. P. Crosby, Clinton Hall, 1836), 172-173, <http://books.google.com/books?id=AMBGAAAIAAJ> (accessed May 27, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Josiah Litch, “RPA,” *Advent Shield and Review*, May 1844, 55-57. Litch would later refer to William Miller as “him who taught us to read the Bible.” “American Evangelical Advent Conference,” *AH*, October 28, 1862, 341.

this subject.”<sup>24</sup> In this dramatic way, God called him to carry out the work of preaching the Millerite message.

In making his decision, Litch followed not only his pioneering approach, but also his willingness to decisively step out in a new direction, even if he would later revise or even reverse his position. He put his mind to the task of summarizing Miller’s arguments in the form of a 48-page pamphlet entitled *The Midnight Cry, or a Review of Mr. Miller’s Lectures on the Second Coming of Christ, About 1843* that was disseminated throughout New England. From this point on, Litch was committed to preaching, teaching, and advocating for the message that he had accepted and, as a result, he became the earliest prominent minister to accept Miller’s interpretation of prophecy and proclaim it without interruption through the Disappointment in 1844.<sup>25</sup>

About this same time Charles Fitch accepted William Miller’s teachings and began to preach them at his church, Marlboro Church Chapel in Boston. He prepared two sermons on the subject and preached them to his congregation, but the reaction from the church, the community, and his fellow clergy was such that he reverted to his post-millennial views.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 55. Moon points out that Isaac Wellcome, the Second Advent historian, quotes this passage involving the dream on p. 70 of his history, but leaves out the phrase “in a night dream” without any indication of having omitted that phrase. See Jerry Moon, “Josiah Litch: Herald of ‘the Advent Near,’” unpublished paper, 1973, Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 13. See also Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People* (Yarmouth, ME: Isaac C. Wellcome, 1874), 70.

<sup>25</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 56.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Fitch, *Letter to Rev. J. Litch on the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1841), 7-9. Knight wrote that Litch probably accepted Miller’s teachings before Miller’s *Lectures* were published in the *Boston Times*, thus making it



Litch soon began to prepare a second work on Miller's views, but this time using his own arguments to reach similar conclusions to those he had read in Miller's *Lectures*. The second work, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ About A. D. 1843*, was a 204-page book that expanded on Miller's interpretations, disagreed with them in some points, and added some new interpretations where Litch differed with Miller's understanding.<sup>27</sup> In June 1838 the new book was published with a preface pointing out that Litch had already been faced with the question as to what he would do if the event that he was anticipating, based on his interpretation of prophecy, did not happen. Litch affirmed that his confidence in the Bible would not waver, even if Christ did not return in 1843. He stated that so many prophecies had already been fulfilled, that he was willing to allow that some of his interpretations might prove to be erroneous.<sup>28</sup>

In the spring of 1839, Litch again went to Lowell, Massachusetts, where Reverend Timothy Cole had invited William Miller to speak. It was during this visit to Lowell that Litch first met Miller in person.<sup>29</sup> Litch spent the following six months in

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likely that Fitch's actions took place before Himes and Cole accepted Miller's teachings. See Knight, 94. This view is substantiated by Litch's testimony that he preached his first sermon on the Millerite view in Lowell, Massachusetts, in February 1838. See "A Quarter of a Century," *AH*, February 17, 1863, 48.

<sup>27</sup> It was in this work that Litch first presented the interpretation of Rev 9 that foresaw the fall of the Ottoman Empire in August 1840. "History and State of the Cause," *ST-M*, January 24, 1844, 187. For a full discussion of this topic see chapter 4 of this work.

<sup>28</sup> Litch, "RPA," 56; Josiah Litch, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ About 1843, Shown by a Comparison of Prophecy With History, Up to the Present Time, and an Explanation of Those Prophecies Which Are Yet to be Fulfilled* (Boston: David H. Ela, 1838), 5.

<sup>29</sup> See Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller, Generally Known as a Lecturer on the Prophecies and the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), 135-136, [http://books.google.com/books?id=hfU\\_dOu9p6YC&](http://books.google.com/books?id=hfU_dOu9p6YC&) (accessed January 13,

Eastham, Massachusetts, continuing his responsibilities as an itinerant minister, and presenting “several courses of lectures” in the areas nearby to people who were interested in Christ’s second coming.<sup>30</sup>

The following year marked a major turning point in the Millerite movement; Joshua Himes joined the cause and brought recognition from around the Northeast and around the world to William Miller’s interpretations. On March 20, 1840, in Boston, Himes launched the periodical that would go on to be the flagship for the movement, the *Signs of the Times*. During 1840, Litch continued as an itinerant minister in eastern Massachusetts, but by July 1, 1840, he was listed alongside William Miller as the two “writers on the prophecies” who assisted Himes in the publication of the paper.<sup>31</sup> Also in the spring of 1840, Litch completed and published the first edition of another work entitled *An Address to the Clergy*.<sup>32</sup> This book examined some of the topics that were present in Protestant thought at the time, specifically “the nature of the kingdom of God,” the issue of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the “argument on the fall of the

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2009). William Miller spoke in Lowell May 14-22 and May 29-June 2. It may be significant that the annual Providence Conference meeting for the Methodist Episcopal church took place in Lowell a month later on July 1, 1839. See *Minutes of the Annual Conferences, 1829-1839*, 634; *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1839-1845*, vol. 3 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1845), 68, <http://books.google.com/books?id=CNRLAAAAMAAJ> (accessed January 14, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Josiah Litch, “Dear Brother Himes,” *ST-M*, April 13, 1840, 15.

<sup>31</sup> “Signs of the Times,” *ST-M*, July 1, 1840, 53.

<sup>32</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 61. Moon points out that there were three editions of this work, the first with the title given above, the second and third bearing the title of *An Address to the Public, and Especially the Clergy, on the Near Approach of the Glorious, Everlasting Kingdom of God on Earth, as Indicated by the Word of God, the History of the World, and Signs of the Present Times*. Litch later referred to the work as *Address to the Public*,

Ottoman empire.” This work aroused significant interest among the clergy, some of whom accepted the ideas, but many of whom strenuously objected.<sup>33</sup>

As a result of his book, Litch was gaining attention for the Millerite cause, but this brought with it added scrutiny. The summer of 1840 was characterized by anticipation of the fulfillment of Litch’s interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets of Rev 9. He added more detail to his interpretation made two years prior, and concluded in the August 1 edition of the *Signs of the Times* that the “hour” specified in the prophecy corresponded to fifteen calendar days, thus placing the expected fall of the Ottoman empire on August 11, 1840.<sup>34</sup>

### **Full-Time Commitment to Millerite Movement**

The leaders of the Millerite movement began to realize that they needed a more organized approach to preaching the message they had, to the world. They planned to meet on October 14<sup>35</sup> at Himes’ Chardon Street Chapel, in Boston, and to continue the meetings as long as was necessary, in order to “accomplish much in the rapid, general and powerful spread of ‘the everlasting gospel of the kingdom at hand,’ that the way of the Lord may be speedily prepared, whatever may be the precise period of his [*sic*]

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but other writers have referred to it as *Address to the . . . Clergy* in order to maintain a consistent title. See Moon, 14-15.

<sup>33</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 61. See also Wellcome, 127.

<sup>34</sup> See Josiah Litch, “Fall of the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople,” *ST-M*, August 1, 1840, 70. See chapter 4 for more information.

<sup>35</sup> There are some discrepancies with regard to the dates of the meetings; the initial announcement in the September 1 *Signs of the Times* names the starting date as “Wednesday, Oct. 13, 1840.” Wednesday that year fell on the 14<sup>th</sup>, which agrees with the dates in the report, published in the November 1 *Signs*. Moon places the opening of the meeting on Oct. 15. See Moon, 15.

coming.”<sup>36</sup> Litch presented two sermons, and was appointed to two committees as part of the conference.<sup>37</sup> Froom noted that this was “the first prophetic conference to be called in America” and that it marked “the beginning of a distinctly new era of unity, witnessing, and expansion—a new epoch in the enlarging Advent Movement.”<sup>38</sup>

At thirty-one years of age, Litch had now distinguished himself as an able writer, expositor of prophecy, and leader of the newly organized and formidable movement announcing “the Advent near.” He soon came to the realization that he could not continue his work as an itinerant minister for the Methodist Episcopal Church and at the same time be faithful to his commitment to proclaim Christ’s soon coming as widely as possible. He wrote of the difficulty of the decision given the fact that “he had been on terms of sweetest friendship” with his fellow clergy, “with [the Methodist Episcopal] institutions he felt the strongest sympathy; and then, again, the feelings and welfare of a beloved family were presented to his mind, as an insuperable barrier in the way of being exclusively devoted to the work of proclaiming the Lord’s coming.” With this in mind, Litch resolved to “throw himself upon the providence of God, and go forth.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> “A General Conference on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,” *ST-M*, September 1, 1840, 84.

<sup>37</sup> “Proceedings of the Conference on the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, Held in Boston, Mass. October 14, 15, 1840,” *ST-M*, November 1, 1840, 113-116.

<sup>38</sup> Froom, 4:560.

<sup>39</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 62.

Litch had considered the implications of his decision, and he intended to devote himself as a full-time agent<sup>40</sup> of the Millerite cause. But this decision demonstrated Litch's whole-hearted commitment to what he understood to be truth at the moment. Litch severed his ties with the Methodist Episcopal Church by presenting a series of sermons in Providence, Rhode Island, just before the annual meeting of the Providence Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church that commenced June 9, 1841, in Providence, Rhode Island. At this conference, Litch's presiding elder,<sup>41</sup> Fredrick Upham, stated that "he had nothing against Brother Litch, but he believed he preached the Miller doctrine, and he felt it his duty to bring it up, as some of the brethren wished to know how it was." Litch was then questioned by the bishop, and other ministers, for "thirty to forty-five minutes" on "nearly every point peculiar to Miller's theory." He wrote the following of the proceedings and conclusion of the meeting.

The best of feelings were preserved throughout the whole scene, and a deep melting solemn sensation pervaded the conference. After deliberation on the question, the Conference came to the conclusion that I held to nothing contrary to Methodism, although I went in some points beyond it. They then, at my own request, granted me a location, and thus left me at liberty to devote my whole time to the dissemination of this important subject; and if it is heresy, they have taken a measure of responsibility for it. The influence of that examination, there is good

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<sup>40</sup> Agents were individuals who were hired by churches or publishing houses to promote their publications, represent them, and act on their behalf in official matters.

<sup>41</sup> In the Methodist Episcopal Church structure, the presiding elder oversaw a district of itinerating ministers and was their immediate supervisor. There were several districts, and corresponding presiding elders, within a conference, and the bishops of the nation-wide church appointed the presiding elders. For a description of the role of presiding elders, see Glen A. Messer, "Restless for Zion: New England Methodism, Holiness, and the Abolitionist Struggle, Circa 1789-1845" (ThD diss., Boston University, 2006), 67, in Proquest Dissertations and Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=1158516401&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=2&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1246300873&clientId=1898> (accessed June 15, 2009).

reason to believe, was most salutary, and afforded a most valuable opportunity of bringing the subject before those who before knew little or nothing of it.<sup>42</sup>

Litch made the decision to leave the Methodist Episcopal itinerant ministry with some emotional difficulty and he also left on good terms with his fellow ministers who gave him “nothing but the strongest assurances of regard and esteem and confidence . . . together with their best wishes for [his] future welfare and success.”<sup>43</sup>

The interview process between Upham and Litch took place two years before March 1843, the earliest date that the Millerites anticipated Christ’s return. As the date approached, several other Methodist preachers in the New England Conference faced ecclesiastical trials for their Advent beliefs. One was brought up to trial for teaching “second advent errors,” and by 1843, the Providence Conference, which had just separated from the New England Conference, recorded that they questioned several young ministers with regard to their beliefs, and most capitulated to the conference and abandoned their second advent beliefs whereas two others chose to leave the ministry because of their involvement with the Millerites.<sup>44</sup> The timing of Litch’s interview, as well as his ability to articulate the Millerite beliefs, contributed to Litch’s departure on friendly terms as compared to some of those who later accepted Miller’s teachings.

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<sup>42</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 62-65. The letter was originally published in the September 1, 1841, issue of the *Signs of the Times*. See also Methodist Episcopal Church, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences, 1839-1845*, 160. To have “located” means that the preacher was no longer an itinerant. For a description of the challenges facing Methodist preachers resulting in location, namely illness and family considerations, see Messer, 58-59; Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. 2 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839), 44-46, 53-54.

<sup>43</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 65.

<sup>44</sup> See Messer, 252-253.

Litch became the second person, along with William Miller, to dedicate himself full-time to preaching the Millerite message. Litch went immediately from his meeting with the Providence Conference to the Second General Conference of Advent believers in Lowell, Massachusetts, June 15-17, 1841. At the conference, Litch gave three presentations. The first was a review of his interpretation of the time periods of the fifth and sixth trumpets, with the addition that he quoted from a number of newspapers indicating that the close of the time periods had indeed taken place the previous August 11. He also gave an address on the order of events of the millennium, that included what he called the “trial judgment,” or a pre-Advent judgment.<sup>45</sup> His third presentation was a summary of where the lines of prophecy converged at the anticipated close of time, in 1843.<sup>46</sup> These three topics basically covered the major areas of focus for his contributions to the Millerite movement, and the first two are examined in this thesis.

It was also at this conference that Litch was chosen to act as a “general agent” for the movement, with responsibilities to promote the message and present the publications wherever he was able to go.<sup>47</sup> This arrangement gave him a broader assignment to travel

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<sup>45</sup> Josiah Litch, “Dissertation on the Millennium,” in *The Second Report of the General Conference of Christians Expecting the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, Held in Lowell, June 15, 16, 17, 1841* (Boston: J.V. Himes, 1841), 2-3. See chapter 5 of this thesis for a discussion of the “trial judgment.”

<sup>46</sup> Josiah Litch, “The Glorified Kingdom of God on Earth, at Hand,” in *The Second Report of the General Conference of Christians Expecting the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, Held in Lowell, June 15, 16, 17, 1841* (Boston: J.V. Himes, 1841), 6-11. This sermon was later republished as *A Dissertation on the Glorified Kingdom of God on Earth, at Hand*, Second Advent Tracts no. 10 (Boston: J.V. Himes, 1841).

<sup>47</sup> See “New Arrangement,” *ST-M*, July 1, 1841, 56; “Signs of the Times,” *ST-M*, August 2, 1841, 68.

throughout New England and eventually led him to pioneer the Millerite message towards the south, and later on he followed others west to Ohio.

In his first acts as general agent, he made his way to places where he knew people and would more likely have a receptive audience. He followed the Methodist Episcopal circuit of annual meetings, and preached in the town where the meetings were held, in order to present his views to his former colleagues and partners. He went to Dover, New Hampshire; Worcester, Massachusetts; and Scowhegan, Maine.<sup>48</sup> In the midst of his busy schedule, he also found time to revise his *Address to the . . . Clergy*,<sup>49</sup> compile and write a foreword for a reprint of lectures from Joshua Spaulding,<sup>50</sup> and drop them off in Boston.

Josiah Litch put his deep convictions and his power of persuasion to work in a visit with Charles Fitch, who had accepted Miller's teachings shortly after Litch. Fitch summarized the visit later: "At length Brother Litch, whom I had never seen, called & said, "Brother, you need the Doctrine of the Second advent to put with the doctrine of

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<sup>48</sup> Litch, "RPA," 64, 65.

<sup>49</sup> See Josiah Litch, *An Address to the Public, and Especially the Clergy on the Near Approach of the Glorious, Everlasting Kingdom of God on Earth, As Indicated by the Word of God, The History of the World, and Signs of the Present Times* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), vi. The revised edition contained an address to the public, as well as an update on the fulfillment of his interpretation of the three woes.

<sup>50</sup> See Joshua Spaulding, *Sentiments Concerning the Coming and Kingdom of Christ Collected from the Bible and from the Writings of Many Ancient and Some Modern Believers, in Nine Lectures, with an Appendix*, 2nd ed. (Boston: J.V. Himes, 1841), v. The date attached to the preface is October 1, 1841.



Holiness.”<sup>51</sup> As a result of this visit, Fitch published an open letter in the form of a tract summarizing his response to Litch’s visit and his reason for rejoining the Millerite movement.<sup>52</sup>

Litch’s travels continued in New England and New York, including a visit to Low Hampton to participate in a conference in William Miller’s hometown. His vision, however, for the expansion of the Millerite movement reached beyond the area where the movement had begun. In December 1841, Litch made his first visit to the city that would become his home for about the next twenty years, Philadelphia.<sup>53</sup> It would be at least a year before his family would move to join him there, but according to his recollection, it was the first time that the Millerite message had been heard south and west of New York City. He traveled with Miller and Himes, preaching in different locations during the months of December to February. At that time he was able to further develop the relationships that would form the backbone of the future of the work in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, DC.<sup>54</sup>

May of 1842 proved to be a significant time of setting a firmer foundation for the future of the Millerite movement. Litch preached at meetings in New York City, at the

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<sup>51</sup> Charles Fitch to Bro. and Sis. Palmer, 26 July 1842, box 2, folder 12, F. D. Nichol Collection (collection 264), Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI (Spelling and punctuation as in original).

<sup>52</sup> Fitch, *Letter to Rev. J. Litch, on the Second Coming of Christ*, iv, 5. Moon points out the impossibility of Froom’s date of the event, as he refers to “a cold December day,” when in fact Litch places the event the autumn of 1841 in his “RPA.” See Moon, 18; Froom, 4:536; Litch, “RPA,” 65. Fitch confirms that beginning December 1, 1841, he was preaching the doctrine of the Second Advent “as often as every day.” See Charles Fitch to Bro. and Sis. Palmer, 26 July 1842.

<sup>53</sup> See Litch, “RPA,” 66.

Apollo Hall,<sup>55</sup> and the “Adventist Anniversary Conference” in Boston, which, according to Froom, proved to be the most significant and noteworthy in its long-term focus and goals.<sup>56</sup> It was at this meeting that Fitch and Apollos Hale presented their “1843” chart, and plans were laid to hold camp meetings the following summer to spread the message far and wide. Urgency was in the air, as April of the following year marked the first anticipated date of Jesus’ return.<sup>57</sup>

Litch immediately put into action what had been decided at the conference, namely holding a camp meeting. He again took the lead in Millerite missionary activities, though inadvertently. From Boston, he made a two-day trip to Stanstead, Canada East (Quebec), for meetings he had agreed to hold. After two weeks of meetings, there were large crowds attending, with individuals traveling thirty or forty miles to hear about Jesus’ soon return. Following the meeting in Stanstead, Litch held another series of meetings right across the border in Derby, Vermont. When these attracted an equally large interest, the leaders thought they should hold a camp meeting right there. The camp meeting was quickly organized and held starting June 21 in Hadley, Canada East.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Apollo Hall was an art gallery, also known as Apollo Gallery, that was mainly used for art exhibitions. Other groups occasionally used the gallery for meetings. William Lloyd Garrison recorded using it for a meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1843. See William Lloyd Garrison, *No Union With Slave-Holders, 1841-1849*, Letters of William Lloyd Garrison 3, ed. Walter M. Merrill (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1973), 156-158; [http://books.google.com/books?id=8N\\_X\\_z4Z4awC](http://books.google.com/books?id=8N_X_z4Z4awC) (accessed June 29, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> Froom, 4:614-619.

<sup>57</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 68.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. See also Levi P. Adams, “Dear Brother Himes,” *ST-M*, August 17, 1842, 158. Nichol gives the location of this first camp meeting as “Hatley, Lower Canada,” and

People from nearby Bolton, Canada East, also wanted to hold a camp meeting, so Litch made his way there, and finished that camp meeting July 3. By Litch's estimate, since he had arrived in Stanstead, about "five or six hundred souls were converted to God."<sup>59</sup> The first Millerite camp meeting in the United States was held about this same time, in Kingston, New Hampshire.<sup>60</sup>

Litch continued his efforts to reach out to his former colleagues in the Methodist Episcopal Church by paying a visit to the annual meeting of the Maine Conference that was going on in July. Rather than meeting in a building, he "lectured in an orchard . . . to immense congregations."<sup>61</sup>

During the summer and fall of 1842, Litch completed his work on the books that would have perhaps the widest use among future expositors in the groups that resulted from the Millerite movement. This work was his two-volume *Prophetic Expositions*, which were explanations of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation "illustrated by

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Froom gives the location as "Hatley, Quebec." Wellcome repeats Litch's statement from "RPA," giving the location as Hadley, Canada East. See Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry: A Defense of the Character and Conduct of William Miller and the Millerites. Who Mistakenly Believed that the Second Coming of Christ Would Take Place in the Year 1844* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), 107; Froom, 4:642; Wellcome, 231; Moon, 19. For a full discussion of the Millerite movement's entrance into Quebec see Denis Fortin, "L'Adventisme dans les Cantons de l'est du Québec" (PhD diss., Université Laval, 1995), 157-166.

<sup>59</sup> Litch, "RPA," 68. For a description of the Millerite approach to camp meeting, see Froom, 4:643-655.

<sup>60</sup> Fortin points out that there is some discussion with regard to which was the first camp meeting; Nichol downplays the Hadley camp meeting because the wider Millerite movement did not authorize it. Fortin, 161; Nichol, 111. Litch, for his part, declares the Hadley camp meeting to be the first. See Josiah Litch, "Editorial Correspondence, no. V," *ST-M*, July 13, 1842, 117.

<sup>61</sup> Wellcome, 321. See also *Minutes of the Annual Conferences, 1839-1845*, 173, 270.

copious historical references and quotations.”<sup>62</sup> He recognized that the books had “been prepared in the midst of a great pressure of the other duties and cares, and in many respects under most unfavorable circumstances.”<sup>63</sup> But his purpose in writing the books was “to embody and present more compactly and distinctly, a great variety of facts and arguments which . . . are now scattered and dispersed through many works.”<sup>64</sup> Though he would later abandon the foundation of the views taken in these two books, they mark perhaps the zenith of his scholarly contributions to the movement.

In the fall of 1842, Litch returned to Philadelphia “on the invitation of a friend,” and presented “a course of lectures,” this time with Apollos Hale. Litch preached in a Methodist Episcopal church, and noted that there had not been much work done there except the trip he had taken about a year before, and there was certainly an interest among at least “four or five churches” that invited him to return and speak.<sup>65</sup> This reception prompted Litch to return to Philadelphia in December and make this the focus of his ministry into 1843.<sup>66</sup> He and Hale kept their commitment to return just a few weeks later. Through the persuasion of some friends of Litch, specifically J. W. Dyer, he and

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<sup>62</sup> Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Expositions: Or, A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time of Its Establishment*, 2 vols. (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 1:vi. The preface states “Boston, Oct 12, 1842.”

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:iii.

<sup>65</sup> Josiah Litch, “Second Advent Cause in Philadelphia,” *MC*, November 19, 1842, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Josiah Litch, “The Cause in England,” *ST-M*, November 15, 1843, 110-111.

Hale opened a series of meetings that lasted for three weeks.<sup>67</sup> Litch's power of persuasion came through again in a letter written to William Miller, from Philadelphia, in which he wrote that "the people all demand that Father Miller should come and give them a course of lectures." He pressed Miller further by saying that he and Hale had "pledged them if they would make the arrangements that he [Miller] shall be forthcoming." His *piece de resistance* was, "they have done so and now we have no alternative but to fulfill our pledge."<sup>68</sup>

Litch again moved decisively, and at the beginning of January 1843, he set up a reading room that housed Millerite materials for the public to access. He also started to publish a small periodical entitled the *Philadelphia Alarm*; it ran for thirteen weeks, with a circulation of 4,000.<sup>69</sup> Philadelphia, however, was just the launching point to the areas around it. Throughout the month of January, Litch reached out to the areas surrounding Philadelphia, and after Miller and Himes had come and lectured in February,<sup>70</sup> Ezekiel Hale, Jr., persuaded Litch to make a trip to Washington, DC, accompanied by T. Drake and J. J. Porter.

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<sup>67</sup> Josiah Litch to William Miller, December 29, 1842. Box 2, folder 22, F. D. Nichol Collection (collection 264), Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>68</sup> Josiah Litch to William Miller, December 29, 1842.

<sup>69</sup> Litch, "RPA," 71.

<sup>70</sup> See L. D. Fleming, "Editorial Correspondence," *MC*, February 17, 1843, 1; "Conference in Philadelphia," *MC*, January 6, 1843, 1.

In the latter part of February, they preached at the Methodist Protestant Church, at the Navy Yard, in Washington, DC.<sup>71</sup> In Litch's letters to the *Midnight Cry*, regarding his trip to Washington, his abolitionist views came through clearly. In both Washington and Pittsburgh, which he also visited on the same trip, he mentioned that there were some "colored people," and their churches, who were receptive to the Millerite message, and he lamented the state of the slaves in Washington. His consolation was that he found hope in the soon return of Jesus to set them free from their bondage.<sup>72</sup> His views with regard to slavery had shifted from the more rigid views espoused by his former colleagues in the Methodist Episcopal Church in New England to a more time-conscious, pragmatic view. In light of the soon return of Jesus, his goal was not immediate emancipation, but rather sharing the message with them in such a way that all might be able to hear it. This was the same mission-minded thinking that had allowed Methodism to soften its hard-line view against slavery in order that as many slaves as possible might be reached, and had led to the agitation within the Methodist Episcopal church that would lead to the split between north and south in 1844.<sup>73</sup>

In mid-March, Litch returned to Philadelphia, and there intended to reach "the West and South" by reformatting the *Philadelphia Alarm* into the *Trumpet of Alarm*.<sup>74</sup> He

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<sup>71</sup> Litch, "RPA," 71-72.

<sup>72</sup> Josiah Litch, "Brother Litch," *MC*, March 24, 1843, 77.

<sup>73</sup> See Messer, 253-257.

<sup>74</sup> Litch, "RPA," 72. Moon points out that there are some differences regarding the date of release of the first issue of the *Trumpet of Alarm*, between the date approximated in the *Midnight Cry*, which is sometime in April, and Froom's date which is sometime in March. See Moon, 21; Froom, 4:625; "Trumpet of Alarm," *MC*, April 20, 1843, 17.

remained in Philadelphia throughout the summer, and despite doom-filled predictions for the Millerite movement, he wrote, “My own faith was never more firm than now, and the longing desire of my heart is, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.’”<sup>75</sup>

Litch again employed his power of persuasion, as well as his extensive knowledge of history connected to the prophecies, at a camp meeting in Middletown, Pennsylvania, at the end of July. At the Middletown camp meeting there was a minister from the Church of God who opposed Miller’s views, but following Litch’s lecture on Dan 11 on Friday afternoon and evening, the minister retracted his plans to preach a sermon against Millerism.<sup>76</sup>

Though the Millerite movement was accused of numerous instances of outlandish behavior, and extreme reactions to the teachings, there were only two documented instances of extremism during the time of the Millerite movement from 1838-1844. Litch was a witness to both of the cases, and strongly opposed the excesses. The first took place at a camp meeting in Stepney, Connecticut, in late August and early September of 1843. There was a speaker in attendance by the name of John Starkweather. At the time, Starkweather was an assistant pastor at Himes’ Chardon Street Chapel, but had already demonstrated “holiness” tendencies. He paced the aisles of the meeting, crying out “Glory!” and “Hallelujah!” He singled out people for eternal damnation on the basis of their “materiality” and “clutch to the things of the world.” As a result of his preaching, people threw off whatever they deemed to be vain and worldly. The excesses that came

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<sup>75</sup> Josiah Litch, “Philadelphia,” *MC*, July 27, 1843, 182.

<sup>76</sup> N. Southard, “Middletown Camp Meeting,” *MC*, August 10, 1843, 193; “This Paper . . .,” *MC*, August 3, 1843, 185.

as a result of Starkweather's preaching, and his influence on his listeners, prompted Litch to strongly condemn his work. He described it as a "disgraceful scene, under the garb of piety," and "*evil, and only evil.*" He went on to write, "I wish to enter my most solemn protest against the whole concern of *fanaticism* as I witnessed it at the *Stepney camp-meeting* [italics his]." Litch went so far as to state that if Millerite meetings became like the meeting at Stepney, he would advocate for stopping the Advent meetings altogether.<sup>77</sup>

The second instance of fanaticism took place in Philadelphia itself, in connection with a Dr. C. R. Gorgas. As October 22, 1844, approached, the anticipated day of Christ's return as a result of the seventh-month movement, begun in the summer of 1844, a group led by Dr. Gorgas<sup>78</sup> made their way out of the city to a hill to await Jesus' return. Dr. Gorgas claimed to have received a vision indicating that at 3 a.m. on October 22, Jesus would return as expected by the Millerites. The group of about 150 made their way out of the city "in opposition to the earnest expostulations of Mr. Litch and other judicious persons," and set up camp with two tents about four miles outside the city.<sup>79</sup> Greatly exaggerated versions of this event became fodder for future accusations of extremism among the Millerites, but Litch had firmly opposed the activities and ideas of Gorgas from their very inception.

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<sup>77</sup> Josiah Litch, "Protest," *MC*, September 14, 1843, 29. On September 21, the *Midnight Cry* ran an excerpt of a letter from Edward Irving, a preacher in England, on how to deal with extremists. Litch had mentioned in his letter that Irving had dealt with fanaticism in England. See "How to Avoid Fanaticism," *MC*, September 21, 1843, 39. There was also a writer who disputed Litch's strong denunciations of the Stepney camp meeting, and denounced Litch for speaking too hastily. See H. A. Chittenden, "Bridgeport Camp-Meeting Again," *MC*, September 28 1843, 44-45.

<sup>78</sup> Sylvester Bliss used the spelling "Georgas," but Litch's letter, reflected in Froom, recorded the spelling as listed above.



Litch's desire, during his time in Philadelphia, was to extend the reach of the Millerite movement to the south and west, but he also had visions of spreading it overseas. In October 1843 he received a letter from Robert Winter, Millerite lecturer in England, on the progress of the work there. Litch replied with an update of what was happening with the work in the United States, and both letters were printed in the *Midnight Cry*. In his letter, Litch expressed aspirations he had held the previous spring, to spend the summer in England preaching with Winter.<sup>80</sup> In 1844, he again published his intentions to go to England, this time with Joshua V. Himes.<sup>81</sup> He even went so far as to acquire a passport,<sup>82</sup> but he never made the trip, and there is no record of Litch ever going outside the United States, except to Canada. Litch intended to go until early October 1844, but when he accepted the seventh-month movement, he chose to suspend the trip. He never resurrected his previous aspirations.

In late 1843, Litch again made a trip south to Baltimore. On this trip, he ran into more resistance and prejudice, but with time, individuals became more interested.<sup>83</sup> As a

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<sup>79</sup> Bliss, 276. For a fuller discussion of Gorgas, see Nichol, 339-348, 411-412.

<sup>80</sup> "The Cause in England," *MC*, November 2, 1843, 93-94.

<sup>81</sup> Joshua V. Himes, "Mission to Europe," *AH*, August 21, 1844, 20; idem, "The English Mission," *AH*, September 25, 1844, 64.

<sup>82</sup> On ancestry.com, there is a photograph of the letter he sent to the United States Secretary of State requesting a passport. The letter is dated September 24, 1844. There is also a record in the log that his passport was issued on September 26, 1844.

<sup>83</sup> Litch, "RPA," 75; "Baltimore, Md.," *MC*, January 4, 1844, 189.

result of his lectures, an African-American preacher accepted the Millerite message and devoted his church building, and his full-time effort, to proclaiming the message.<sup>84</sup>

Miller had anticipated Jesus' return sometime between March 1843 and March 1844, and as the end of this year approached, Miller and Himes again joined Litch in a trip south to preach in the nation's capital. They started a series of sermons, February 20, 1844, and spent two weeks lecturing in Apollo Hall. Litch described the results as follows: "A greater revolution in public sentiment has rarely been witnessed in so short a time than was brought about in Washington in reference to the Advent doctrine."<sup>85</sup> A reporter quoted a senator as saying, "Are the Millerites in town?" When the reporter answered in the affirmative, the senator responded, "I thought so, for I never heard so much singing and praying in Washington before."<sup>86</sup>

What may very well have contributed to an increased interest in the meetings was the unfortunate accident aboard the *U. S. S. Princeton*. A large deck gun, known as the "Peacemaker," blew up during an exhibition, killing the Secretary of State, Abel Upshur, the Secretary of the Navy, Thomas Gilmer, as well as several others.<sup>87</sup> One historian

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<sup>84</sup> Joshua V. Himes, "Editorial Correspondence: Baltimore and Washington," *MC*, February 29, 1844, 249.

<sup>85</sup> Litch, "RPA," 76; James White, *Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1875), 277-278.

<sup>86</sup> J[oshua] V. Himes, "Editorial Correspondence," *MC*, March 14, 1844, 265.

<sup>87</sup> White, 277. See also E. F. Ellet, *Court Circles of the Republic, or the Beauties and Celebrities of the Nation; Illustrating Life and Society Under Eighteen Presidents; Describing the Social Features of the Successive Administrations from Washington to Grant* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Publishing Company, n.d.), 355-357; <http://books.google.com/books?id=Wz4VAAAAYAAJ> (accessed June 30, 2009);

described it as being “one of the more devastating disasters to befall a presidential administration in American history,” and before the Civil War and the assassination of Lincoln, “unquestionably . . . the most severe and debilitating tragedy ever to confront a president of the United States.”<sup>88</sup> One of the positive results of the effort put forth was the start of a new Millerite paper, the *Southern Midnight Cry*. There were interested people when they left Washington, but no one remained to follow up the work that had been done, so the movement eventually died off in Washington.<sup>89</sup>

During December 1843, George Storrs, a fellow minister who had been with Litch in New England as part of the New Hampshire Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, published an article in *The Midnight Cry* outlining his beliefs in favor of conditional immortality.<sup>90</sup> Litch responded decisively, writing that before joining the Millerite movement, he had been “a strong and zealous advocate of the doctrine of the unconscious state of the dead.” “But considerations of so much weight in my own mind presented themselves that I was forced to abandon the doctrine.” Litch went on to outline his basic objections to Storrs’ view.<sup>91</sup>

During this same time Storrs had been influencing Fitch to accept the doctrine of conditional immortality. Himes combined Storrs’ and Litch’s arguments in a thirty-two-

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Edward P. Crapol, *John Tyler: The Accidental President* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 207-211.

<sup>88</sup> Crapol, 210.

<sup>89</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 76.

<sup>90</sup> See George Storrs, “The Intermediate State of the Dead,” *MC*, December 21, 1843, 154-157.

<sup>91</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “Intermediate State,” *MC*, January 11, 1844, 193-194.

page pamphlet entitled *A Conversation Between Geo. Storrs and J. Litch* and made it clear that he wanted to leave the issue in the past.<sup>92</sup> Litch wanted to outline his views more fully, so he went on to publish *The Anti-Annihilationist* as his statement in favor of the inherent immortality of the soul.<sup>93</sup> The issue of the immortality of the soul would be one that would be a point of contention for years to come.

Throughout March and April, Litch spent most of his time in Philadelphia, but by May, he attended the Advent conferences in New York,<sup>94</sup> Philadelphia itself,<sup>95</sup> and Boston.<sup>96</sup> He then made his first trip west, stopping first in Low Hampton,<sup>97</sup> and then Rochester and Buffalo on his way to Ohio.<sup>98</sup> In late June, Litch preached in Ohio, starting in Cleveland, and then on to Akron and Cincinnati. The “big tent” was set up in Cincinnati for meetings beginning July 7, where Litch was a featured speaker, and he was expected to remain for about two weeks.<sup>99</sup> He then, in late July, was present at a tent

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<sup>92</sup> J[oshua] V. Himes, “Intermediate State of the Dead,” *MC*, April 18, 1844, 313.

<sup>93</sup> The first issue was released April 15, 1844. See William Rouseville Alger, *The Destiny of the Soul: A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W. J. Widdleton, 1878), 853, <http://books.google.com/books?id=8sqcl1B6dtoC> (accessed April 16, 2009).

<sup>94</sup> “The Advent Conference,” *MC*, May 16, 1844, 348.

<sup>95</sup> C. S. M[inor], “The Conference in Philadelphia,” *MC*, May 23, 1844, 358.

<sup>96</sup> “Anniversary at Boston,” *MC*, June 13, 1844, 377.

<sup>97</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “Letter from Bro. J. Litch,” *MC*, June 27, 1844, 399.

<sup>98</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “Letter from Bro. Litch,” *MC*, July 11, 1844, 415.

<sup>99</sup> E[noch] Jacobs, “Great Tent Meeting,” *Western Midnight Cry*, June 29, 1844, 97.

meeting in Madison, Indiana, where he lectured as well.<sup>100</sup> Thus he fulfilled his goal of spreading the message both to the south and to the west.

When the date anticipated for Jesus' return, in the spring of 1844, passed, Litch appears to have been relatively unconcerned, since he had never narrowed the return down to a specific day. There were other Millerites, however, who continued to study and eventually focused the prophecy to a specific day. In mid-August 1844, at the Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting, S. S. Snow presented his understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary as being the antitype of the Day of Atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month. Snow concluded that the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar would fall on October 22, 1844.

Litch published his strong opposition to Snow's understanding in the same issue of the *Advent Herald* that reported on the Exeter camp meeting.<sup>101</sup> He expanded on his objections several weeks later, insisting on the Passover as the type of Christ's return, yet he made the statement that it was "clear that the general time of the Lord's coming is revealed, . . . but . . . 'of that *day* and *hour* knoweth no man.'"<sup>102</sup> Litch would soon reconsider his position.

In the meantime, Charles Fitch had become convicted of the importance of baptism by immersion. He had been baptized recently himself, and had been baptizing

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<sup>100</sup> Josiah Litch, "Letter from Bro. Litch," *MC*, August 8, 1844, 30.

<sup>101</sup> Josiah Litch, "The Seventh Month," *AH*, August 21, 1844, 21.

<sup>102</sup> Josiah Litch, "The Deliverance—The Seventh Month," *AH*, September 11, 1844, 47.

people in different locations during the spring and summer of 1844.<sup>103</sup> Litch attended a camp meeting at St. Georges, Delaware, where Charles Fitch was baptizing new believers. Litch wanted to be rebaptized, so Litch and his brother-in-law J. Barstow were baptized, and then Litch baptized his wife Sarah.<sup>104</sup>

In the two-month span between August and October, Litch deeply pondered the seventh-month movement. In a letter from Boston dated October 11, 1844, Litch finally accepted the date of the tenth day of the seventh month. He wrote:

DEAR BRO. HIMES:—I wish to say to my dear brethren and sisters who are looking for the coming of the Lord on the tenth day of the seventh month, but especially to those who have hesitated on the question—that the strong objections which have existed in my mind against it, are passed away, and I am now convinced that the types, together with the signs of the times are sufficient authority for believing in the Lord’s coming at that time; and henceforth I shall look to that day with the expectation of beholding the King in his beauty. I bless the name of the Lord, for sending this midnight cry to arouse me, to go out to meet the Bridegroom. May the Lord make us meet for the inheritance of the saints.<sup>105</sup>

While passing through New York, on his way back to Philadelphia, Litch gave Nathaniel Southard, the editor of the *Midnight Cry*, a similar letter. In this letter he wrote that he was “looking for the coming of the King of kings on the tenth day of the seventh month.” He went on to write, “My difficulties have all vanished” and, “[I] now lift up my head in joyful expectation of seeing the King of kings within ten days.” In the letter he briefly outlined his understanding of how the type of the Day of Atonement applies to the

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<sup>103</sup> See Bethany M. McIntyre, “‘A Star of No Small Magnitude’: The Life and Work of Rev. Charles Fitch (1805-1844)” (MA thesis: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2001), 74-76. Charles Fitch would die soon after, as a result of exposure to cold, from baptizing people in a hole he had cut in the ice.

<sup>104</sup> I. R. Gates, “St. George’s Camp-meeting,” *MC*, September 26, 1844, 90.

<sup>105</sup> Josiah Litch, “Bro. Litch on the Seventh Month,” *AH*, October 16, 1844, Second Edition, 81.

cleansing of the sanctuary, and thus, why the date would correspond with the type in its fulfillment.<sup>106</sup>

### **Post-Millerite Movement**

Litch had been willing to adjust his interpretations of details in Scripture before 1844, and he adjusted several times in the months following the disappointment of October 22, 1844. He maintained, during his initial shifts in understanding, that the fact that Jesus had not returned on October 22 did not shake his confidence in his understanding that all of the lines of Bible prophecy had been completed, and Jesus could still come at any time.<sup>107</sup> He did allow for the possibility that the 1335 days of Dan 12 might stretch to 1845,<sup>108</sup> a view he expanded on more fully about a month later.<sup>109</sup>

During this period of uncertainty, G. F. Cox, the Methodist minister whose letters Litch had compiled and published, wrote a letter to Miller, Himes, and Litch in which he argued that the imagery of the Day of Atonement would point to the fact that the high priest would enter the most holy place on that day, not necessarily mark the exact date of

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<sup>106</sup> Josiah Litch, "Brother Litch," *MC*, October 12, 1844, 125.

<sup>107</sup> In a letter written October 24, 1844, Litch expressed his expectation that Christ would come in a matter of days. He asked William Miller to have Himes send him a letter expressing his thoughts about what he would do "if time continues after a week from Sabbath. I think by that time, we will be able to gather again—but still I hope we shall be gathered by the great trumpet." Josiah Litch to Bro. Miller and Bro. Himes, 24 October 1844, Box 1, fld 12, William Miller Collection (Collection 25), Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>108</sup> Josiah Litch, "Note from Bro. Litch," *MC*, October 31, 1844, 143.

<sup>109</sup> Josiah Litch, "Letter from Br. J. Litch," *MC*, December 12, 1844, 186-187.

Jesus' return.<sup>110</sup> Litch did not adopt this interpretation, and within seven months, he wrote, "I believe we erred, and ran off our track about one year ago." He went on to state that he thought that Miller's original understanding of prophecy was correct, that time would run out in March 1844, and that the "hour of his judgment" of Rev 14:7 was not the same as the "midnight cry" that they had interpreted the seventh-month movement to be. Based on this logic, he expected Jesus' return at any time, as he thought they were still in the tarrying time.<sup>111</sup> The fact that Jesus did not return in 1843-1844 appears to have shaken Litch's confidence in the historicist prophetic hermeneutic, and its accompanying conclusions; a certain humiliation, perhaps, accompanied his reversal on interpretation.

In a letter written to the *Advent Herald*, almost a year after the disappointment of the seventh-month movement of 1844, he reflected on the movement up to 1844; his musings demonstrate his understanding of what was accomplished by the Millerite movement. He wrote that the keys to salvation were faith in Jesus' death on the cross for salvation, as taught by the apostles. He continued:

But it may be asked, is that all that is necessary to be believed in order to salvation? I reply, YES; it is all that is necessary in an absolute sense.—Why, then is there anything else in the Bible, if it is not necessary to be believed? I reply, as a means to that end; it is to assist our faith or prompt us to action. The doctrine of the Second Advent, for instance, is clearly taught in the Bible and should be preached and believed; but it should neither be preached or [*sic*] believed in such a manner as to make our faith or unbelief in any particular theory respecting it our salvation. For what purpose is the doctrine set forth in the Scriptures? The whole

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<sup>110</sup> See G. F. Cox to William Miller, J. Litch, and J. V. Himes, 7 November 1844, Box 1, fld 12, William Miller Collection (Collection 25), Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>111</sup> Josiah Litch, "The Ten Virgins," *AH*, May 21, 1845, 120.



tenor of the word of God replies, as a great motive to repentance, faith, and holiness.<sup>112</sup>

In the same letter, Litch went on to reflect on how this truth influenced the Millerite movement and his thinking about how the different doctrines of the Bible were prioritized relative to each other.

The coming of Christ, then, is rather the great motive to repentance, than a faith by which we are to be saved. Let us keep this in view in all our preaching and teaching[.] Perverting this great truth from its proper place and design may render it a curse rather than a blessing. But in its place and with its design before us, we can have no truth more salutary and important brought to bear on the conscience. It was this view of it which at first induced me to proclaim the doctrine, and now constrains me to continue in the work. I have believed, and still do, that the Lord designs all his true people should understand the subject, and they will, as the means of inducing a full preparation for the event. Hence, *our* duty is, to still cry, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh.” If we do not do it, the Lord will raise up those who will perform the work. To save souls and present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, is my one great desire—for this I mean, by the grace of God, to labor till the Master comes.<sup>113</sup>

#### Albany Conference and Aftermath

Litch was present in April 1845 for the Albany conference where the majority group, the “open door” Adventists, met under Himes’ leadership to distance themselves from the “shut door” Adventists. Though there was a strong resistance to organization at the Conference, Litch, having come from the structured Methodist Episcopal church, worked with a committee to examine and ordain several ministers to work on behalf of the Adventists. The conference also formulated a statement of beliefs and a plan of action

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<sup>112</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “The End, and Means to That End,” *AH*, September 10, 1845, 34.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* He signed the letter “Yours, waiting.”

outlining where the movement would go from that point.<sup>114</sup> In mid-May, Litch hosted a conference in Philadelphia that was not well attended, but Elon Galusha and Himes were present. At this conference, the Advent believers in Philadelphia affirmed their support for the conclusions of the Albany Conference.<sup>115</sup>

Litch would soon begin to part ways from his prior beliefs, beginning with one of the resolutions affirmed at the Albany conference. The seventh resolution affirmed that “the only restoration of Israel, yet future, is the restoration of the saints to the earth, created anew.”<sup>116</sup> He expressed his views in reaction to thoughts from a Dr. Herschel who in public lectures had advocated a return of the Jews to Israel.<sup>117</sup> Litch also responded to questions about his view that had been expressed in the *Advent Herald*.<sup>118</sup> In addition, Litch questioned his previous view that the Euphrates, in the sixth plague of Rev 16:12,

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<sup>114</sup> Mutual Conference of Adventists at Albany,” *AH*, May 14, 1845, 106; Bliss, 300-309.

<sup>115</sup> Josiah Litch, “Philadelphia Conference,” *AH*, May 28, 1845, 128.

<sup>116</sup> Bliss, 303.

<sup>117</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “Who Are the Literalists?” *AH*, July 2, 1845, 167-168.

<sup>118</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “Reply to the Above Letter,” *AH*, August 20, 1845, 10. See also J[osiah] Litch, “Letter from Bro. J. Litch,” *AH*, August 27, 1845, 18; J[osiah] Litch, “Literalism,” *AH*, September 10, 1845, 38; J[osiah] Litch, “Remnant of Israel Saved,” *AH*, September 17, 1845, 43. The editors of the *Advent Herald* finally tired of the discussion over the return of the Jews to Israel, and stated that they would no longer publish articles about it. See J[osiah] Litch, “Who Are Literalists?” *AH*, September 17, 1845, 47.

referred to the Ottoman Empire,<sup>119</sup> a query that brought a worried response from William Miller, who warned against abandoning truth.<sup>120</sup>

Litch more fully articulated his views on the literal restoration of Israel to its land in fulfillment of Bible prophecy in *The Restitution, Christ's Kingdom on Earth: The Return of Israel* (1848).<sup>121</sup> Beyond 1850, Litch still held to the historicist approach to prophecy; he wrote in the *Advent Herald* that he believed that the 2300 days had already ended, he was simply holding out to find a “discrepancy.”<sup>122</sup> His change in theology with regard to Israel put him on a path that would eventually lead him to hold beliefs that paralleled very closely dispensationalist theology. In his later years, he attended what has been called “the most important and the most noticed” of a series of prophecy conferences that led to the promulgation of the dispensationalist movement in the United States.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “A Question: Is the Great Euphrates Dried Up?” *AH*, September 25, 1845, 50.

<sup>120</sup> William Miller, “Is the Great River Euphrates Dried Up?” *AH*, October 22, 1845, 82-83.

<sup>121</sup> Josiah Litch, *The Restitution, Christ's Kingdom on Earth: The Return of Israel* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1848).

<sup>122</sup> Josiah Litch, “Lectures on the 24th of Matthew,” *AH*, December 28, 1850, 381. See also J. Litch, “Letter from Philadelphia, Pa.,” *AH*, January 15, 1853, 23; idem, “Our Position on Time,” *AH*, June 4, 1853, 181. In *The Restitution*, Litch moved his interpretation of the ending date for the 2300 days to 1847. In the same work, he also wrote, “The idea that the 2300 days bring us to the second advent [*sic*] will probably be found erroneous.” Litch, *Restitution*, 92, 96.

<sup>123</sup> Donald W. Dayton, ed., *The Prophecy Conference Movement*, 4 vols. (New York: Garland, 1988), 1:v-vi, 14.

The wider Christian world recognized Litch as a leader in the Millerite movement. The second edition of a book recording the histories of denominations and religious bodies, published in 1850, contains a contribution by Josiah Litch describing the history of the Millerite movement. The article contained some references to the history of the movement, but was for the most part apologetic in nature. Litch stated that at the time of writing, there were somewhere “between fifteen and twenty thousand believers identified with the body.” At the end of the article, he summarized the actions taken at the Albany Conference.<sup>124</sup>

#### Ministry with Evangelical Adventists

In 1854, there was a movement toward a split among the Albany Adventists.<sup>125</sup> At the Fifteenth Annual General Conference of Adventists, held in Providence, Rhode Island, Litch moved that a committee be formed that would explore the possibility of forming a missionary society.<sup>126</sup> This action resulted in steps toward organization of a

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<sup>124</sup> Josiah Litch, “History of the Adventists,” in *History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States: Containing Authentic Accounts of the Rise and Progress, Faith and Practice, Localities and Statistics, of the Different Persuasions: Written Expressly for the Work, by Fifty-Three Eminent Authors, Belonging to the Respective Denominations*, ed. John Winebrenner and John S. Ebaugh (Harrisburg, PA: John Winebrenner, 1849), 37-41.

<sup>125</sup> For a history of the split in the Albany Adventists, see David T. Arthur, “‘Come out of Babylon’: A Study of Millerite Separatism and Denominationalism, 1840-1865” (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1970), 201-371; Knight, *Millennial Fever*, 267-293.

<sup>126</sup> “Conference Report,” *AH*, June 3, 1854, 174.

denomination, the first being the formation of the American Second Advent Missionary Society.<sup>127</sup>

Litch continued the steps toward organization in 1857, when he formed the Messianian Missionary Conference of Canada with three preachers formally assigned to circuits,<sup>128</sup> and the next year he formed the Messianian Society of Pennsylvania.<sup>129</sup> Litch argued that the society of churches in Pennsylvania and Canada should refer to themselves as Messiah's Church or Messianians, rather than Advent believers, because this would more accurately distinguish the group.<sup>130</sup> Later he would face criticism and have to answer questions from fellow Evangelical Adventists, as to whether the Messianians were a group within a group. This charge he denied, though, for unexplained reasons, it took some time before they were admitted to be evangelical Adventists.<sup>131</sup> By 1858, resulting from arguments over the immortality of the soul, a new organization was formed, called the American Evangelical Advent Conference.<sup>132</sup> During the same conference, they formed the American Millennial Association as the property-holding

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<sup>127</sup> "Conference Report," *AH*, June 10, 1854, 182.

<sup>128</sup> Josiah Litch, "Canadian Tour," *AH*, July 24, 1858, 235.

<sup>129</sup> William Prideaux and Thomas Wardle, "Report," *AH*, September 11, 1858, 294-295.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>131</sup> Josiah Litch, "'The New Sect,' Messiah's Church," *AH*, June 21, 1862, 198. In a report about the conference held July 1, 1862, in Pennsylvania, Litch outlined the doctrines held by Messiah's Church, or the "Messiannians." Josiah Litch, "'The New Sect'"—Messiah's Church," *AH*, July 5, 1862, 211-212; [Josiah Litch], "Editorial Tour," *AH*, June 7, 1864, 90.

<sup>132</sup> F. Gunner, "Adjourned Meetin [*sic*] of the Nineteenth Annual Conference," *AH*, November 20, 1858, 369.

body of the American Evangelical Advent Conference.<sup>133</sup> Litch was appointed the first president of the American Millennial Association.<sup>134</sup>

The conflict between the American Evangelical Advent Conference and the leaders of the group that would soon form the Advent Christians took place in a fairly public manner at the end of 1858. In November, Litch engaged in a public debate, for four nights, with an Advent Christian minister by the name of Miles Grant, over the issue of conditional immortality. This was later published in book form, having been “phonographically reported.”<sup>135</sup> The *Advent Herald* clearly championed Litch’s position in its commentary on the event,<sup>136</sup> thereby underscoring the divide over the issue of death.

In 1853, the *Advent Herald* was losing subscribers, and as a result was losing money. Litch chose to address the issue by submitting a series of unsolicited articles arguing that the periodical was needed and should not be allowed to disappear. Since he was part of the board that oversaw the business side of the paper, he felt that he was obligated to speak up on behalf of the paper.<sup>137</sup> Himes later thanked Litch for his articles,

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>134</sup> “The American Millennial Association,” *AH*, November 20, 1858, 373.

<sup>135</sup> Josiah Litch and Miles Grant, *The Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment* (Boston: Damrell and Moore, 1859), <http://books.google.com/books?id=qx8YAAAAYAAJ> (accessed April 1, 2009). See also F. L. Piper, *Life and Labors of Miles Grant* (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1915), 50-51, <http://books.google.com/books?id=gTrV2tFuZ2IC> (accessed April 1, 2009).

<sup>136</sup> “Discussion on the Death Question,” *AH*, November 20, 1858, 373.

<sup>137</sup> Josiah Litch, “Support of the ‘Advent Herald,’” *AH*, June 18, 1853, 198; June 25, 1853, 206; July 2, 1853, 214; July 9, 1853, 222.

and appealed to readers to assist in signing up new subscribers.<sup>138</sup> This support for the affairs of the *Advent Herald*, as well as his demonstrated ability to write prolifically, probably contributed to Litch's appointment as the editor of the paper in March 1863. Following Sylvester Bliss's death, Litch became the editor and remained in that capacity until 1867.<sup>139</sup>

Litch continued his opposition to slavery, even though he had been involved in the Millerite movement. During the formation of the Messianian Missionary Society of Pennsylvania in 1858, he suggested that the society adopt a resolution opposing slavery.<sup>140</sup> During Litch's tenure as editor of the *Advent Herald*, he had an opportunity to act upon his convictions. Richard Hutchinson, a fellow Evangelical Adventist minister, had been in England, working; he periodically reported on the Advent work via letters published in the *Advent Herald*. While Hutchinson was in Liverpool, he attended one of the debates of the issue of slavery, and England's involvement with the Confederacy during the American Civil War. Hutchinson became an unplanned participant, and swayed the mood of the meeting against the Confederacy. The result was a series of resolutions condemning slavery.<sup>141</sup> Litch took the opportunity to forward a copy of the

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<sup>138</sup> Joshua V. Himes, "The Herald Office," *AH*, September 17, 1853, 303.

<sup>139</sup> "Advent Herald," *RH*, May 5, 1863, 184; Wellcome, 577. Sylvester Bliss died on March 6, 1863; Litch took over provisional editorship of the paper for the March 10 issue, and then continued on as approved by the American Millennial Association Standing Committee. J[osiah] Litch, "Death of the Editor," *AH*, March 10, 1863, 60.

<sup>140</sup> Prideaux and Wardle, 295.

<sup>141</sup> For the resolutions see R[ichard] Hutchinson, "Foreign Correspondence," *AH*, March 31, 1863, 81-82. For information regarding the movements in Liverpool, see Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 152-153; James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States*

resolutions, along with a copy of the *Advent Herald* to Abraham Lincoln, in order to inform the president of Richard Hutchinson's participation in the passing of the resolutions.<sup>142</sup>

Josiah Litch's son, Josiah Lincoln Litch, followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a minister. Josiah L. Litch pastored with the Congregational church in Vermont<sup>143</sup> and at times worked with his father in evangelistic efforts in the area.<sup>144</sup> Despite his heavy schedule traveling and writing books, his son chose to follow in his footsteps and work in the ministry as well. Thus both his sons, each taking one aspect of his life, followed his example, with Wilbur Fisk Litch becoming a physician.<sup>145</sup>

Litch interacted with Seventh-day Adventists several times in the years following the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1863. Among the encounters recorded, one took place in 1877, when he was pastoring a church in Newburyport,

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*From the Compromise of 1850*, vol. 4 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), 349-356, <http://books.google.com/books?id=SpwSAAAAYAAJ> (accessed April 8, 2009).

<sup>142</sup> Josiah Litch to Abraham Lincoln, "The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress" Abraham Lincoln papers, Series 1 General Correspondence, 1833-1916, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:56:./temp/~ammem\\_yYtb::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:56:./temp/~ammem_yYtb::) (accessed March 30, 2009).

<sup>143</sup> John M. Comstock, *The Congregational Churches of Vermont and Their Ministry, 1762-1914, Historical and Statistical* (St. Johnsbury, VT: The Caledonian Company, 1915), 156-157, <http://books.google.com/books?id=obHRAAAAMAAJ> (accessed June 13, 2009).

<sup>144</sup> A. C. Bourdeau, "The Cause in Vermont," *RH*, September 8, 1867, 185. See also John Daggett, *A Sketch of the History of Attleborough From Its Settlement to the Division* (Boston: Samuel Usher, 1894), 310, <http://books.google.com/books?id=ikcLYYgXdBkC> (accessed April 8, 2009).

<sup>145</sup> "The Beloved Physician," *The Light-Bearer*, March 1893, 20. The earliest reference I found with Josiah Litch identified as a doctor is in an advertisement for medicine, in the *Advent Herald*. See "Dr. Litch's Medicines," *AH*, August 11, 1855, 262.



Massachusetts. C. W. Stone and D. M. Canright, two Seventh-day Adventist evangelists, held meetings there, and Stone invited Litch to close the meeting one night.<sup>146</sup> Litch attended the meetings several times, but expressed to Canright that he was now a futurist and doubted the prophetic interpretations of the 1844 movement.<sup>147</sup> Litch also published a series of questions in the local paper, challenging the Seventh-day Adventists' doctrines. Canright answered these in writing, and also in an evening meeting.<sup>148</sup> Several years later, Daniel Bourdeau held a series of meetings in Quebec, and two local ministers were unable to answer Bourdeau on the issue of the law and the Sabbath. The ministers invited Litch to come and provide an answer to Bourdeau,<sup>149</sup> and the exchange resulted in a pamphlet published by Daniel Bourdeau with the answers he had given Litch.<sup>150</sup>

In one of the last works published by Litch, he expressed his reflections on his life, "I am now in my seventy-seventh year—sixty of which (in an imperfect manner) I have spent in the ranks of Christ's soldiers, and forty-eight years in proclaiming the blessed gospel of the kingdom at hand. During that time a great company of those among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, and who received the word with

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I have been unable to locate any information regarding when and where he may have gone to medical school.

<sup>146</sup> C. W. Stone, "Newburyport, Mass.," *RH*, July 12, 1877, 22.

<sup>147</sup> D. M. Canright, "Newburyport, Mass.," *RH*, July 19, 1877, 30.

<sup>148</sup> C. W. Stone, "Newburyport, Mass.," *RH*, August 2, 1877, 46.

<sup>149</sup> Daniel T. Bourdeau, "Province of Quebec," *RH*, Dec. 2, 1880, 364.

<sup>150</sup> A. C. Bourdeau, "'Province of Quebec.'" *RH*, April 26, 1881, 266. See also D[aniel] T. Bourdeau, "Agitation on the Sabbath Question," *RH*, January 18, 1881, 48. See also Daniel T. Bourdeau and Josiah Litch, *Investigation of the Sabbath: Eld. J. Litch Opposing The Ancient Sabbath and Eld. D. T. Bourdeau Defending It* (Coaticook, Quebec: S. C. Smith, 1881).

gladness, have gone to their rest, and a goodly company are following on. But the whole family will soon ‘meet over there.’ ‘Be patient brethren, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’”<sup>151</sup> It is noteworthy that he marked the forty-eight years that had passed since he had first accepted Miller’s interpretations as the time he had spent in ministry, and did not consider his time as a Methodist Episcopal minister as a significant time to mention at the close of his life.

Litch died, January 31, 1886, in Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>152</sup> His was a life that exemplified decided action in the direction of whatever he was convinced of at the moment. Yet despite impulsiveness on the details, Litch had causes that he believed in throughout his whole life. His commitment to Jesus was unwavering, his scholarship steady, his interest in prophecy life-long.

Though the Evangelical Adventists disappeared as a denomination early in the twentieth century, the lessons that can be learned from Litch’s transition from a committed Millerite, to more or less a dispensationalist, are relevant and important to the Seventh-day Adventist church as it considers its place as an heir of the Millerite legacy. He many times moved with the minority, among his peers, out of conviction. Among his fellow Methodist ministers, he was the first to accept Miller’s message. Among the Millerites, he was the first to move out of New England and New York to preach the message more widely. Among the Albany Adventists, he was on the side of immortality, which was the minority. Among the Evangelical Adventists he formed the Messianians,

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<sup>151</sup> Orrock, 21.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.; “Eld. Josiah Litch . . . ,” *RH*, February 16, 1886, 112.

and abandoned the historicist approach to prophecy. His goal, along with the Evangelical Adventists, boiled down to promoting a millenarian view of the second coming.

At his death, his views, perhaps with the exception of the pre-advent judgment, were virtually indistinguishable from the dispensationalist movement that was growing in popularity. A man who had consistently gone with the minority among his peers, ended up with beliefs that now dominate evangelical eschatology. The denomination that he belonged to at the end of his life, ceased to exist because its teachings were no longer unique. Perhaps his legacy of contribution to the Millerite movement is that the one time he did not go with the minority, was following the disappointment in 1844. The group today that carries on Miller's legacy through having found meaning in 1844 came from the minority view, out of a commitment to Scripture over tradition. This group is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and had Litch maintained his willingness to follow Scripture over tradition—to adjust his views as he discovered more light in Scripture, as he did before 1844—the story of his life might have been different.

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Litch was no neophyte to the world of theological study. Having studied under Wilbur Fisk<sup>1</sup> at the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham, Litch had an inclination to study and research. Fisk was the “first Methodist preacher in New England . . . to have earned a college degree,” and he was a leader “in educational enterprise, ministerial culture, and public influence.”<sup>2</sup>

The Methodist movement as a whole, in fact, promoted the ideal of self-education and personal study. According to *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, the suggested schedule of the Methodist preacher when “not traveling, or engaged in Public Exercises” was “1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening . . . meditate, pray, and read the Scriptures with notes. . . . 3. From six in the morning till twelve, [*sic*] (allowing an hour for breakfast,) [*sic*] read, with much prayer, some of [the Methodists’] best religious tracts.”<sup>3</sup> With the influence of Wilbur Fisk, and the discipline expected of Methodist

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of Wilbur Fisk’s life and contributions to Methodist higher education see Williamson, 15-104; Holdich, 164-217.

<sup>2</sup> Williamson, 58-59.

<sup>3</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church, *Doctrines and Discipline*, 71.

preachers, the foundation was laid for Litch to contribute significantly to the Millerite movement.

### Scholarly Contributions

Litch's first original contribution to the Millerite movement's understanding of prophecy was the first work, on Millerism, written by someone other than William Miller. In *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ About A.D. 1843*, Litch presented his independent research, to solidify the same conclusions Miller had reached. In the preface, he recorded a long list of theological and historical authorities including, but not limited to, Bishop Newton,<sup>4</sup> Faber,<sup>5</sup> Rollin,<sup>6</sup> Gibbon,<sup>7</sup> Sabine,<sup>8</sup> Mosheim,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies: Which Have Been Remarkably Fulfilled, and at this Time are Fulfilling in the World*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, James Martin Stiles, 1813).

<sup>5</sup> George S. Faber, *A Dissertation on the Prophecies, That Have Been Fulfilled, Are Now Fulfilling, Or Will Hereafter be Fulfilled, Relative to the Great Period of 1260 Years; The Papal and Mohammedan Apostasies, The Tyrannical Reign of Antichrist, or the Infidel Power, and the Restoration of the Jews*, 3 vols. (Boston: Andrews and Cummings, Greenough and Stebbins, 1808).

<sup>6</sup> Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Grecians, and Macedonians*, 6 vols. (London: C & J. Rivington, 1828). When Litch gives the reference for a quote from Rollin, he refers to a vol. 8, meaning he used an alternate printing. See Litch, *SCC*, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 12 vols. (New York: J & J Harper, 1829).

<sup>8</sup> James Sabine, *An Ecclesiastical History: From the Commencement of the Christian Era to the Present Time* (Boston: James Sabine, 1820).

<sup>9</sup> John Lawrence Mosheim, *An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, From the Birth of Christ, to the Beginning of the Present Century*, 4 vols. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1824).

Milner,<sup>10</sup> Mignet,<sup>11</sup> and “Hawkins.”<sup>12</sup> His disclaimer was that “in some instances the writer has found reasons for dissenting from the views of all authors with whom he has met.”<sup>13</sup>

Litch’s first contribution to the organization of the prophecies was his distinction with regard to the purpose of the prophecies and the subsequent understanding by the interpreter. He organized the prophecies into two categories, one related to prophecies that were to be understood after their fulfillment, and another category of those related to judgment that were to be understood before the event foretold in order for those forewarned to be able to take appropriate action.<sup>14</sup>

With regard to the calculation of the 2300 days, Litch clarified Miller’s understanding of how to calculate the time. Miller simply asserted that Jesus was crucified in the twenty-second year of Tiberius, assuming that the last week of Dan 9 covered the time from Luke 3:1-3, when John the Baptist began to preach, until the time

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph Milner, *History of the Church of Christ* (Boston: S. T. Armstrong, 1822).

<sup>11</sup> François A. Mignet, *History of the French Revolution, From 1789 to 1814*, 2 vols. (New York: G & C. Carvill, 1827).

<sup>12</sup> Vincent Mignet, *The History of the Turkish, or Ottoman Empire, From its Foundation in 1300, to the Peace of Belgrade in 1740. To Which is Prefixed An Historical Discourse on Mahomet and His Successors*, 4 vols., trans. A. Hawkins (Exeter: R. Thorn, 1787). Litch listed the author as Hawkins when in fact the work was written by Mignet, and translated by Hawkins.

<sup>13</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.

of Jesus' crucifixion.<sup>15</sup> Miller then worked back from the twenty-second year of Tiberius, 490 years to arrive at 457 B.C. on the basis of Rollin's calculations.<sup>16</sup> Litch added clarity to the calculation in *Probability* by detailing how Miller had reached his conclusion, but did his calculation on the basis of Jesus' death at 33 years of age, and to that he added the balance of 2300 years, 1810 years, once he had subtracted the 490 years of the prophecy of Dan 9.<sup>17</sup>

A central piece to the Millerite understanding of the prophetic framework was the concept of "the time of end," connected with the arrest of the pope in 1798 as the end of the 1260 prophetic days. Miller held that this referred to "the end of the power of the pope." Litch took a broader view, reasoning that 1798 marked the unsealing of the book of Daniel, and that "the time of the end" was a time period stretching from 1798 until Christ's return.<sup>18</sup> These ideas would go on to be present as a part of the Seventh-day Adventist prophetic framework.<sup>19</sup>

Also, in regard to the 1260 days themselves, Litch added another reason for 538 to be the starting date. He contended that 538 was the date that the Ostrogoths were

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<sup>15</sup> William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ About the Year 1843 Exhibited in a Course of Lectures* (Boston: B. B. Mussey, 1840), 51-53, <http://books.google.com/books?id=xIgCAAAAYAAJ&> (accessed January 5, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 53; Rollin, 2:446-449.

<sup>17</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 19-21, 53. Litch gave his own list of Rollin's chronology, in *Prophetic Expositions*, where he pointed out how the calculations were reached. Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 135-136.

<sup>18</sup> J[osiah] Litch, "Discussion between Litch and Jones," *ST*, July 15, 1840, 59.

<sup>19</sup> P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 21.

expelled from Rome, thus allowing the bishop of Rome to assert political authority. This then marked the beginning of Rome's combination of political and ecclesiastical power.<sup>20</sup> This reason for the chosen date would go on to appear in several Seventh-day Adventist works on prophecy.<sup>21</sup>

Litch also solidified the connection of the seventy weeks of Dan 9, to the 2300 days of Dan 8 on the basis of the Hebrew word for "determined," used in Dan 9:24. He argued that the word could be translated, "cut off," and would thus make it part of a larger prophetic time.<sup>22</sup>

### **Millerite Apologetics**

Litch was the first, besides Miller, to produce a published response to critics of Miller's understanding of prophecy. He devotes the whole second chapter of *Probability* to answering the objections raised by Miller's opponents.<sup>23</sup> Litch also expanded on Miller's details regarding Dan 11 in his exposition in *Probability*. Miller simply referred readers to Rollin's *Ancient History* for Dan 11:5-13 "where he has not only given us the history, but applied the prophecy."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 89, 111, passim.

<sup>21</sup> See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), 54. See also Damsteegt, *Foundations*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 1:133; Josiah Litch, "The Vision of the Ram and He Goat," *MC*, August 10, 1843, 197.

<sup>23</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 21-53.

<sup>24</sup> Miller, *Lectures*, 88. See Litch, *SCC*, 57-61. It is interesting to note that Litch varied slightly, though not significantly, from Miller's interpretation with regard to individual verses. See Miller, *Lectures*, 90; Litch, *SCC*, 67-70.



Just two years later, in Litch's *Address to the . . . Clergy*, he answered the objection that no one can know the day or the hour of Christ's return. He argued that he expected Christ's return sometime between 1840 and the end of 1843. Thus, he said, he was not setting a date for Christ's return; he was simply stating that Christ's coming was near, as in the parable of the fig tree. He also argued, on the basis of 1 Pet 1:10-12, that "the prophets . . . searched diligently, ' . . . *what manner of time*, the Spirit of Christ . . . testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.'" He pointed to Daniel as an illustration of the fulfillment of the text, because Daniel was given visions, and times, that he was unable to understand, despite his attempt to do so.<sup>25</sup>

Litch wrote responses to several relatively influential contemporary critics. He wrote a reply to Abel Stevens, his former New England Methodist colleague, and Methodist editor and historian, about Stevens' charges leveled at Millerism.<sup>26</sup> He also composed replies to Charles K. True and William C. Brown, two writers in *Zion's Herald*,<sup>27</sup> and John Dowling.<sup>28</sup>

True and Brown had accused Miller of using erroneous dates for the beginning and ending points of his interpretations of the time prophecies, that Michael was not Christ, that there will not be two resurrections, that all the Jews would be converted, that the gospel cannot go to the whole world in time, and that he contradicted himself with

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<sup>25</sup> Litch, *Address to the . . . Clergy*, 12-15.

<sup>26</sup> Wellcome, 307-310.

<sup>27</sup> Josiah Litch, *Eight Fundamental Errors in Miller's Theory Pointed Out by Charles K. True and William C. Brown in Zion's Herald, Mar., 1840*, Second Advent Tracts 1 (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1841).

regard to the spiritual state of the Protestant church. Litch crafted a reply that used logic, scriptural references, and appeals to his previous writings to refute them.

Dowling was a minister in New York who applied the historical-critical method to the interpretation of the Bible. He argued that the 2300 days should actually be figured as 1150 days, that Antiochus Epiphanes was the little horn, and that Christ was coming after the millennium. Litch wrote a small book, answering the objections Dowling had raised to Miller's, and his, understanding of prophecy.

### **Use of Work by Seventh-day Adventist Writers**

From the first publications by those who would go on to be Seventh-day Adventists, the writers sought to establish their interpretations as solid biblical truth. They looked to the leaders of the Millerite movement as having been led by God in their pursuit of Bible-based doctrine, and they sought to reach out to those who would generally have a more receptive ear to the message they had to share. Since they viewed themselves as a continuation of the Millerite movement, they saw their former companions in the Millerite movement as potentially open, and they wanted to use works that would carry certain validity for that audience.

Litch had provided a scholarly foundation for the work of the Millerites, and as such his writings were respected as reliable. The *Review and Herald* promoted his two-volume *Prophetic Expositions* as a work that provided a solid understanding of the prophecies. In the twelfth issue of the new periodical, *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, an author referred to Litch's interpretation of Matt 24:20. Litch argued

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<sup>28</sup> Josiah Litch, *Refutation of "Dowling's Reply to Miller": On the Second Coming of Christ in 1843* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842).

that when the text stated that Christians should pray that their flight not be on the Sabbath, it was referring to the time of trouble, at the end of probation. The author then stated that if this interpretation were accepted as a viable conclusion, it would establish that the Sabbath would still be kept throughout the Christian era.<sup>29</sup>

In many of the references to Josiah Litch, throughout the writings of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they referred to Litch as an authoritative Bible commentator. They did have their disagreements with him; the most frequently mentioned were the Sabbath, and some details of prophecy. To give a sampling, I will examine how three of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church used Litch's writings to determine how they viewed Litch's work, and what impact, if any, he had on the developing theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### James White

James White's use of Josiah Litch's published work is one of respect and promotion. As the first editor of the first and most prominent Sabbatarian Adventist periodical, White was aware of the influence of published works, and he clearly promoted Litch's work, with few exceptions.

White clearly promoted, with a little reservation, Litch's *Prophetic Expositions* as an important work on the subject of prophecy. The office of the *Review and Herald*, at one point, received a shipment of the books, and he advertised that they wanted to sell them.<sup>30</sup> In another advertisement, he wrote that Litch's *Prophetic Expositions*, and

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<sup>29</sup> "The Sabbath and Ten Commandments Taught and Enforced in the New Testament," *RH*, June 2, 1851, 89.

<sup>30</sup> J[ames] W[hite], "We Have Just . . .," *RH*, January 10, 1856, 120.

Miller's *Lectures*, were "old Advent works, containing a great amount of truth; also some things which time and the light of present truth, have shown to be incorrect."<sup>31</sup>

White not only promoted Litch's writings for purchase, he also provided them to his readers as part of his publication. He included an article by Litch in one issue,<sup>32</sup> and a second one in the following issue,<sup>33</sup> but did not recognize the articles as chapters from *Prophetic Expositions*, until the last page of the second issue.<sup>34</sup> White also reprinted Litch's "The Rise and Progress of Adventism" over a span of five issues,<sup>35</sup> and he published the section from *Prophetic Expositions* that dealt with the trumpets as a separate tract.<sup>36</sup> White reprinted several works from other Millerite writers, including "William Miller's Apology and Defense."<sup>37</sup>

There are only a few times that White quoted from Litch to establish an idea as true. In one issue, he quoted from Litch's "Rise and Progress" to establish that the Millerites did not wear ascension robes. In the same article, he went on to offer fifty

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<sup>31</sup> James White, "Books," *RH*, July 16, 1857, 88.

<sup>32</sup> "The Jews," *RH*, May 23, 1854, 137-140.

<sup>33</sup> "The Kingdom of God," *RH*, May 30, 1854, 145-147.

<sup>34</sup> [James White], "The Excellent Article . . .," *RH*, May 30, 1854, 152.

<sup>35</sup> Josiah Litch, "RPA," *Advent Shield and Review*, May 1844; reprint, *RH*, April 24, 1856, 9-11; *ibid.*, May 1, 1856, 17-19; *ibid.*, May 8, 1856, 25-27; *ibid.*, May 15, 1856, 34-35; *ibid.*, May 29, 1856, 42-43.

<sup>36</sup> Josiah Litch, *The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation VIII and IX*, ed. James White (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1859). See "This Article Commenced . . .," *RH*, July 8, 1858, 64.

<sup>37</sup> William Miller, "William Miller's Apology and Defense," *RH*, April 18, 1854, 97-99; *ibid.*, April 25, 1854, 105-106. See also [James White], "We Are the Adventists," *RH*, April 25, 1854, 101.

dollars to anyone who could offer irrefutable proof that any Millerite wore an ascension robe.<sup>38</sup> In another article, White quoted Litch, as well as other Millerite authors, to establish that the gospel had gone to the world during the Millerite movement, thus making the return of Christ imminent.<sup>39</sup>

### Uriah Smith

Uriah Smith was one of Seventh-day Adventism's leading writers on prophecy throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Since he shared an interest in prophecy with Litch, Smith made significant use of Litch's material for his work. In a series of articles published in 1857 entitled "Synopsis of the Present Truth," Smith, in four different articles, quoted from *Prophetic Expositions* and an article Litch wrote in the *Midnight Cry*, to establish his points.<sup>40</sup> Smith also quoted from *Restitution*, to establish his position that the United States could be the second beast of Rev 13.<sup>41</sup>

Smith also referred to Litch in his *Thoughts Critical and Practical on the Revelation*. In the chapter on Rev 9, Smith pointed to Litch's interpretation in *Probability*

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<sup>38</sup> James White, "Clerical Slander: Ascension Robes and the Like," *RH*, April 14, 1868, 281.

<sup>39</sup> James White, "Our Faith and Hope; Or, Reasons Why We Believe As We Do, Number Nine—The Signs of the Times," *RH*, January 18, 1870, 25.

<sup>40</sup> See Uriah Smith, "Synopsis of the Present Truth. No. 4," *RH*, December 3, 1857, 29; idem, "Synopsis of the Present Truth. No. 6," *RH*, December 17, 1857, 44; idem, "Synopsis of the Present Truth. No. 7," *RH*, December 24, 1857, 52; idem, "Synopsis of the Present Truth. No. 8," *RH*, December 31, 1857, 60.

<sup>41</sup> See Uriah Smith, "The United States in the Light of Prophecy: Chapter IV.—Chronology of the Two-Horned Beast," *RH*, November 7, 1871, 164.

from 1838, in which he calculated the time periods of the fifth and sixth trumpets, and then proceeded to outline Litch's interpretation.<sup>42</sup>

In 1880, Litch published a book entitled *Christ Yet to Come*, as a response to *The Parousia of Christ*, by J. P. Warren. Warren had posited that Christ would not literally return in the clouds of heaven, and the resurrection takes place each time a person dies. Smith recommended Litch's last work as a book "well calculated to neutralize the baneful effects of the heretical volume he has in hand."

Smith did publish one disagreement with Litch, that I could find, and this was after Litch's death. In 1887, the *World's Crisis* published an article by Litch in which he argued that the Ten Commandments were done away with, based on 2 Cor 3:7. Smith pointed out that Litch had misread the text in Greek, and that the text did not refer to the law being abolished.<sup>43</sup>

#### John N. Andrews

J. N. Andrews was a diligent scholar, and well respected for his work on topics in Seventh-day Adventist theology. His use of Litch is generally favorable; several times he cited Litch as an authoritative source, but occasionally he disagreed with Litch's conclusions.

In his work on the sanctuary, Andrews made several references to Litch's work. Andrews cited Litch's *Prophetic Expositions* to establish that there were "two

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<sup>42</sup> Uriah Smith, *Thoughts Critical and Practical on the Revelation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1881), 212-221.

<sup>43</sup> Uriah Smith, "What Was Done Away?" *The Gospel Sickle*, June 15, 1887, 93-94.

desolations” in Dan 8.<sup>44</sup> He also quoted Litch’s article in the *Midnight Cry*,<sup>45</sup> defining the word “determined” in Dan 9:24 as “cut off.”<sup>46</sup>

Andrews appealed to Litch’s interpretation of Rev 9 to establish the time for the placement of Rev 10. He interpreted the vision of the angel descending from heaven in Rev 10 as the Millerite, and subsequent Adventist, movement. But he did not limit his positive use of Litch to his works before 1844. He appealed to an *Advent Herald* article from 1850, and Litch’s *Restitution*, to make the point that the Millerite message had gone to the whole world.<sup>47</sup> When interpreting Rev 13, Andrews also favorably quoted Litch from the *Restitution*, though Andrews did point out that Litch had thought the second beast of Rev 13 was Napoleon, and had since changed his view.<sup>48</sup>

There were some instances in which Andrews differed with Litch. For example, Andrews was a leader in advancing the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the Sabbath, and it was in this area of study in which Andrews disagreed with Litch several times. He specifically took issue with Litch’s *Advent Herald* letter referred to above. In 1851, the *Review and Herald* reprinted the letter, and featured Andrews’ response right after it.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> J[ohn] N. Andrews, “The Sanctuary,” *RH*, January 6, 1853, 130.

<sup>45</sup> See Litch, “The Vision of the Ram and He Goat,” 197.

<sup>46</sup> J[ohn] N. Andrews, “The Sanctuary,” *RH*, December 23, 1852, 122-123.

<sup>47</sup> J. N. Andrews, “The Three Angels of Rev. XIV, 6-12,” *RH*, February 6, 1855, 169-171.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, March 20, 1855, 193-195.

<sup>49</sup> J. N. Andrews, “The Sabbath Question,” *RH*, September 16, 1851, 32.

With regard to the time prophecies, specifically the 2300-day prophecy, Andrews disagreed with Litch, as Litch moved away from the positions he held before 1844. In one article in which Andrews had quoted Litch as an authority earlier in the article, Andrews then quoted Litch's more recent statements that he was holding out to find "a discrepancy" regarding the time. After several paragraphs, Andrews quoted from Litch's article "The Rise and Progress of Adventism," in which Litch had stated that the connection of the 490 days and the 2300 days was a "grand principle" of interpretation. Notably, Andrews did not cite Litch as the author of the article.<sup>50</sup>

### **Summary**

Litch was a leading scholar among Millerites, adding more data to attempt to provide a solid foundation to the movement's interpretation of Scripture. He influenced the Millerites in their understanding of when to start the 2300 days, as well as the 1260 days. He also provided the linguistic basis on which to connect the 70 weeks of Dan 9 to the 2300 days of Dan 8.

Litch provided responses to critics who tried to refute the Millerite movement. In these answers, he used some of his prior work to address the issue raised by the skeptics.

Though there were several points of interpretation that carried over to Seventh-day Adventism, White, Smith, and Andrews tended to use Litch's writings to add credibility to their writings. White republished a number of Litch's works. Smith quoted Litch to substantiate his interpretations of the prophecies, and used Litch's interpretation of the trumpets in his work on Revelation. Andrews pointed to Litch's work, particularly

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<sup>50</sup> J. N. Andrews, "The Sanctuary," *RH*, December 23, 1852, 124.



on the pre-advent judgment, to add credibility to the Seventh-day Adventist position. Andrews did do more to refute Litch's statements that did not agree with his understanding of the Bible.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE YEAR-DAY PRINCIPLE AND THE FALL OF THE OTTOMAN

#### EMPIRE ON AUGUST 11, 1840

The Millerite movement, and historicism in general, depends on one important prophetic hermeneutical key, the “year-day principle.”<sup>1</sup> This principle has been attacked from multiple directions, in an attempt to undermine the historicist approach to apocalyptic prophecy. During the Millerite movement, however, a noteworthy fulfillment of prophecy gave substantial momentum to Miller’s teachings, and in the eyes of the Millerites and many of their contemporaries, vindicated the year-day principle of prophetic hermeneutics.

The principle of applying a year to a day, as expressed in Bible prophecy, was already present among many Protestant interpreters, and they applied it prominently to the prophecy of 1260 years of prominence of Antichrist. There was disagreement over when the prophetic time began, but there was agreement that the year-day principle

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion and defense of the year-day principle, see William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1 (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1982), 56-93; Alberto R. Timm, “Miniature Symbolization and the Year-Day Principle of Prophetic Interpretation,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42, no. 1 (2004): 149-167.

should be applied.<sup>2</sup> The principle had been applied at least since the third century B.C., and had been used by different interpreters through portions of the Middle Ages, beginning with Joachim de Fiore.

### **Litch's Study of Revelation 9**

In the particular concern of Rev 8-9, William Miller had already done his study on the topic. He shared the view of a number of interpreters in his day, that the first four trumpets referred to the invasions of the tribes from northern Europe on Rome. Miller interpreted the fifth and sixth trumpets as referring to the Muslim invasions of Europe. The difference that Miller added was his interpretation of the time prophecies. He saw the five months of the fifth trumpet as commencing with the establishment of Ottoman power in Bithynia in 1298, and thus 150 years later would put the end of the prophecy in 1448.<sup>3</sup> He then interpreted the time prophecy of the sixth trumpet as beginning in 1448 and extending 391 years and 15 days forward to 1839. Miller apparently did not have a clear starting date, and as a result he did not apply the 15 days, but he expected the Ottoman Empire to fall sometime in 1839.<sup>4</sup>

Litch read Miller's *Lectures*, found his overall argument to be biblical, and, as a result, decided to join Miller in preaching the soon return of Jesus. In 1838 Litch wrote a book outlining Miller's views, but from his own perspective, using his own arguments. In this book, entitled *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ about A. D. 1843*,

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<sup>2</sup> See Froom, 4:530. Wellcome gives a history of the different times suggested around the expected return of Jesus in 1843. See Wellcome, 460-488.

<sup>3</sup> Miller, *Lectures*, 119-120.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

Litch recalculated the time periods associated with the fifth and sixth trumpets and concluded that Miller had miscalculated by a year and that the time prophecy was actually meant to begin a year later in 1299.<sup>5</sup>

Litch's recalculation was based on the fact that he interpreted the phrase "and they had a king over them," in Rev 9:11, as indicating the starting point for the five months that appear in the previous verse. He figured that if he could determine when the Ottoman Empire first began to be ruled by a monarch, and under that monarch began to attack enemies, then this would mark the start of the time prophecy that would stretch to the end of the fifth trumpet. According to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the first time that the Ottoman Empire, united under their new king Othman, invaded the Eastern Roman Empire was at the Battle of Nicomedia on July 27, 1299.<sup>6</sup> This date has been disputed by several scholars; the first, a scholar by the name of Joseph Von Hammer who, fifty years after Gibbon's book was released, argued that Gibbon has been inaccurate in his calculations and had miscalculated by two years, and that the battle of Nicomedia actually took place in 1301. It is interesting to note that the source that the Millerites accepted as their authority on the first four of the seven trumpets, and the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets to Islam,<sup>7</sup> referred to this recalculation by Von

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<sup>5</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 153-154.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 5 vols. (Chicago: Thompson and Thomas, 1900), 5:281. Gibbon even stated that "the singular accuracy of the date seems to disclose some foresight of the rapid and destructive growth of the monster." Gibbon cited two Latin sources in the footnotes.

<sup>7</sup> See Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 2:133. In *SCC*, however, Litch interpreted the first four trumpets in a symbolic way with application to periods of time in the history of the Christian church. They were as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet: persecution under Nero, 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet: Persecution from Domitian to Constantine, 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet: The Arian

Hammer. Alexander Keith, in his work *Signs of the Times*, points out the change in time by Von Hammer,<sup>8</sup> but Litch was apparently not aware of this work at the time he wrote *Probability*. Litch did not mention Keith's work among those he consulted in preparing *Probability*, making it likely that he was not aware of the work, since Miller did not mention the work either.

One author has criticized Litch's use of Gibbon, writing that "Litch's prediction rested entirely on a single date in the writings of a cultured despiser of religion, Edward Gibbon. To believe Litch's theory, in other words, one had to accept the accuracy of this historian and this particular fact, as well as the accuracy of the Bible. In actual practice, the Millerite interpretation of prophecy strayed from the ideal of letting the Bible interpret itself."<sup>9</sup> Under careful analysis, the first charge is a non sequitur, as the reliability of the historian is not determined by their attitude toward Christianity, but rather their adherence to the truths of history, and in this instance there is no apparent reason for Gibbon to distort a date on the basis of his personal bias. The date has in fact

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heresy, 4<sup>th</sup> Trumpet: Rulership of the bishop of Rome and resulting prohibition of the reading of the Bible. See Litch, *SCC*, 146-149. William Miller understood the first four trumpets to have found their fulfillment in "the destruction of the Jews and their dispersion, in the fall of imperial Rome, in the overthrow of the Asiatic kingdom, and in the taking away of Pagan rites and ceremonies." Miller, *Lectures*, 115.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Keith, *The Signs of the Times as Denoted by the Fulfilment of Historical Predictions, Traced Down From the Babylonish Captivity to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (New York: Jonathan Leavitt, 1832), 1:311.

<sup>9</sup> See Eric Anderson, "The Millerite Use of Prophecy: A Case Study of a 'Striking Fulfillment,'" in *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Jonathan M. Butler and Ronald L. Numbers (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 334-335.

been confirmed by further research, and Von Hammer's recalculation disproven.<sup>10</sup> With regard to the charge that the date has its origin outside the Bible, and thus violates the Millerite principle of letting the Bible interpret itself, this charge reveals a clear bias against the method of biblical interpretation, and thus any faith in the Bible. The Millerites understood this principle to refer to interpreting the Bible's symbols and statements, not establishing historical dates from the Bible. Thus the author reveals this as an ad hominem critique based on an inaccurate understanding of the Millerite use of terms, in an attempt to discredit them.

Having established the starting date, Litch then looked at 1449, 150 years later, for the close of the five months connected with the fifth trumpet. He found that 150 years after the initial Turkish invasion, the Byzantine Empire lost its sovereignty to the Ottoman Empire. When John (VIII) Paleologus, the Greek Emperor died, his brother Constantine (XI) Deacozes was to succeed him; rather than ascending directly to the throne, he sent an ambassador to Amurath (Murad II), the Ottoman emperor, to seek his approbation to rule.<sup>11</sup> In this way, the Eastern Empire lost its sovereignty to rule, when it recognized Ottoman supremacy, which took place before the final fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Empire, in 1453.

Keeping the same starting date in mind, marked by the Ottoman Turks beginning to "torment" the Eastern "Christian" Empire in July 1299, and the date of the Eastern

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the accuracy of Gibbon's calculation, see Grace Edith Amadon, "A Landmark of History—July 27, 1299," *Ministry*, June 1944, 18-20; *ibid.*, July 1944, 12-15, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 154-155; Gibbon, 1194. See also Mignot, 113.

Empire's loss of sovereignty, Litch applied the "hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" or 391 years and fifteen days of prophetic time to the remaining time. When applied to the end of the five months of the fifth trumpet, the time stretched to August 11, 1840. At first Litch did not specify what would happen at the close of the time period, nor did he narrow down the prediction to a specific day, but left it as "some time in the month of August."<sup>12</sup>

He wrote of the date of the prophecy that it was "the most remarkable and definite, (even descending to the days) of any in the Bible, relating to these great events. It is as singular as the record of the time when the empire rose."<sup>13</sup> He later wrote of the expected event: "We may expect that when the second period closes, with it will close the reign of the Ottomans in Constantinople. If the time for commencing the periods was at the time of the first onset of the Ottomans upon the Greeks, July 27th, 1299, THEN THE WHOLE PERIOD WILL END IN AUGUST, 1840."<sup>14</sup>

In the weeks before August 11, he also wrote that on August 11, 1840, "the Ottoman power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken." He did acknowledge that he still did not have "positive evidence that the first period was exactly to a day, fulfilled; nor yet that the second period began, to a day, where the first closed. If they began and ended so, the above calculation will be correct. If they did not, then there will

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<sup>12</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 157.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-158.

<sup>14</sup> Litch, *An Address to the . . . Clergy*, 116-117. As noted before, the first edition of this work was finished in May 1840, according to the date written in the "Address to the Clergy" that forms the initial section of the book. It is important to note that as he reprinted the work, he did not revise the earlier statements of interpretation indicating the fall of Constantinople.

be a variation in the conclusion; but the evidence is clear that there cannot be a year[']s variation from that calculation.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Prelude to August 11, 1840**

Litch had first published his interpretation in 1838, and had subsequently published it in several different books and periodicals. It is safe to assume that he included the study in his lectures, for Litch later wrote:

As the Spring opened, and the Summer came, the entire community were excited, and expectation on tiptoe, in reference to the 11th of August and its anticipated events, the fall of the Ottoman empire, &c., &c. Many were the predictions that when that day should have passed by, as it certainly would do, without the event being realized, that then the spell would be broken, and Adventism would die.<sup>16</sup>

In Litch’s recollection, critics of the Millerite movement held that the interpretation of the first and second woes would be a test case to prove whether or not the method of interpreting prophecy was valid.

Among nineteenth-century Protestant interpreters, it was fairly well accepted that the fifth and sixth trumpets referred to Islam and its attacks on Europe. Alexander Keith wrote: “There is scarcely so uniform an agreement among interpreters concerning any part of the apocalypse as respecting the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets, or the first and second woe, [*sic*] to the Saracens and Turks. It is so obvious that it can scarcely be misunderstood.”<sup>17</sup> The difference that Litch brought was that he presented an

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<sup>15</sup> Litch, “Fall of the Ottoman Power in Constantinople,” 70.

<sup>16</sup> Litch, “RPA,” 61.

<sup>17</sup> Keith, 267. Even critics of the Millerite movement still saw Islam as the application of the First and Second Woes; they simply differed on the application of the time. For an example see David Campbell, *Illustrations of Prophecy; Particularly the*



interpretation of the time element of the prophecy in the proximate future, whereas most contemporary scholars saw the prophecy as applying to a past event, while a few in the early nineteenth century had applied the beginning to 1453 and the fall of Constantinople, and thus the end to 1844.<sup>18</sup>

The anticipation of the fall of the Ottoman Empire, in August of 1840, led to questions over whether or not the prophecy indeed referred to an event that was yet in the future. In the days before August 1840, Litch wrote two articles for the *Signs of the Times* narrowing the fulfillment date to August 11, 1840.<sup>19</sup>

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*Evening and Morning Visions of Daniel, and the Apocalyptic Visions of John* (Boston: David Campbell, 1840), 326-339.

<sup>18</sup> L[e Roy] E. F[room], "Time Phase of Fifth and Sixth Trumpets," *Ministry*, June 1944, 24-25. See also Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:1124-1125.

<sup>19</sup> Litch, "Fall of the Ottoman Empire," 70; idem, "Events to Succeed the Second Woe," *ST-M*, August 1, 1840, 70. In the second article, Litch responded to individuals who asked him whether he thought August would mark the close of the "day of grace." A critic has claimed that Litch believed that probation would close on this day, but his response in the article is that the close of probation would be soon. He states that he did not know how long a time there would be after August 11. "Every one [*sic*] must be his own judge on this point. But this I affirm, it will be a fearful experiment for any one [*sic*] to try to put off the work of salvation until the 11th of August, or any other time. There is no safety except in Christ." Litch's concern was individuals procrastinating with regard to their salvation. See Anderson, 84-85; "Misrepresentation of Mr. Miller's Views Relative to the Day of Grace; By the Editor of Zion's Herald," *ST-M*, September 15, 1840, 92. Even considering Litch's first reference to his interpretation of Rev 9, he was ambiguous regarding the close of probation, placing it between the sixth and seventh vials of Rev 16, in a view that attached the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the drying up of the Euphrates River under the sixth vial. See Litch, *SCC*, 188-190. The view that the day of grace would end with the seventh trumpet was present in the writings of contemporaries, and some expositors the Millerites endorsed, specifically Joshua Spalding whose lectures Litch and Himes wrote a preface for and republished. See Spalding, 29-53.

### The Aftermath of the “Fulfillment”

The first published reference Litch made to August 11, 1840, after the date, was in a letter to Himes, in the November 1, 1840, issue of the *Signs of the Times*. In the letter, Litch began by writing “the news from the east is most thrilling on the public mind, so far as I have opportunity of witnessing.” He went on to reference a news story that stated that the European powers had given an ultimatum to the Pacha of Egypt on August 15, and this “striking fulfilment” was only four days off. “The like singular accuracy in the fulfilment of a prophetic period cannot be found in history.”<sup>20</sup>

News of the change in the political situation of the Ottoman Empire did come and was published in the January 1 issue of the *Signs of the Times*. The editors highlighted that the *London Morning Herald* had editorialized “WE FEAR THE SULTAN HAS BEEN REDUCED TO THE RANK OF A PUPPET; AND THAT THE SOURCES OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE’S STRENGTH ARE ENTIRELY DESTROYED.”<sup>21</sup>

After there had been time for boats to bring the details about what had actually taken place on August 11, Litch wrote a lengthy article in the *Signs of the Times* reviewing his interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets, and included references to the periodicals that explained the concession of the Ottoman Empire to the powers of Europe. He began the article, “The time and event above named have excited deep interest in the public mind for more than a year past.” He then queried, “*Has, then, or has not, THE*

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<sup>20</sup> “The Battle Begun!!,” *ST-M*, November 1, 1840, 117-118. See also Litch, *Address to the . . . Clergy*, 123-124.

<sup>21</sup> “Progress of the Battle,” *ST-M*, January 1, 1841, 151-152. For information regarding the events surrounding August 11, 1840, see Andrew James McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Ramadan War*

ORIGINAL CALCULATION IN REFERENCE TO THE 11TH OF AUGUST AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?” He anticipated that some would question the timing of his interpretation. “Let it be borne in mind,” he wrote, “this was not written in 1840 and after the 11th of August, and so adapted to meet the events of that day; but was written in May, 1838.” He touted his book *Probability of the Second Coming of Christ* as evidence that he had written about it two years earlier.<sup>22</sup>

In the same article, Litch makes perhaps the most compelling argument with regard to the fulfillment, “What termination of Ottoman power were we to expect, in view of the manner of the origin of the Ottoman power in Constantinople? *Most certainly, if we reason from analogy, a voluntary surrender of Turkish supremacy in Constantinople, to Christian Influence.*”<sup>23</sup> Litch reasons that if the time period of the sixth trumpet began with an acknowledgment of supremacy on the part of the “Christian power” of Eastern Europe, then it would stand to reason that the time would close with the acknowledgement on the part of the Ottomans of the sway of the “Christian powers” of Europe. Litch wrapped up the article, writing, “In conclusion: I am entirely satisfied that on the 11th of August, 1840, *The Ottoman power according to previous calculation,*

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(Wesport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 116-117, <http://books.google.com/books?id=QZpWx-dgbYcC> (accessed April 14, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Josiah Litch, “The Eleventh of August, 1840,” *ST-M*, February 1, 1841, 161-162. A critic has referred to this article stating, “By early 1841, it was clear that a general war was not in the offing, and Litch shifted ground again.” Anderson, 85. It is likely that if Litch was truly shifting ground he would not have referred to his earlier work, and included the publisher and page numbers for a reader to verify the reference. He also would have at least acknowledged the “mistake,” if not altered the wording in his *Address to the . . . Clergy* when it was republished in 1841 and 1842.

<sup>23</sup> Litch, “The Eleventh of August, 1840,” 161-162.

DEPARTED TO RETURN NO MORE. I can now say with the utmost confidence, ‘The second woe is past and behold the third woe cometh quickly.’”<sup>24</sup>

A year later, Litch finished compiling *Prophetic Expositions* in which he acknowledged that he was simply compiling what had been written in other places. He recounted the events that had transpired, using the same reasoning he used previously, in the February 1, 1841, article of the *Signs of the Times*. He referred to his earlier interpretation of the prophecy by writing: “When the foregoing calculation was made, it was purely a matter of calculation on the prophetic periods of Scripture.”<sup>25</sup> He then proceeded to include references from different sources that confirmed his interpretation, even using the words of one of Miller’s critics to substantiate the fact that the Ottoman Empire had been “*re-organized [sic]* by the European kingdoms.”<sup>26</sup> Litch pointed to sources that pinpointed the day that the Empire capitulated as August 11, 1840.

He closed the section with a reflection on the meaning of the event,

I do not expect another sign equal in strength and conclusiveness to the one now spread out before us in the present article. The present calculation was before the world two years and more before the time of fulfilment; [*sic*] and the attention of the whole community was turned toward it. There are few persons, in New England at least, whose minds were not arrested and turned to the 11th of August; and vast multitudes were ready to say, ay, did say, If this event takes place according to the calculation, at the time specified, we will believe the doctrine of the *advent near*. But how is it with them now? Why, just as it was with the old Jews in the days of Christ; when he was every day performing the most stupendous miracles in their sight, they said to him, ‘Master we would see a sign of thee.’ So now: men desire a sign from heaven. But let them be assured they can never have a more convincing one than this;—the last great prophecy with which a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>25</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 189.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 191.

prophetic period is connected, except the concluding period, when Christ will come.<sup>27</sup>

From Litch's statement, the interest had been present before the event, but there had not been a large number who had acted on what they had said they would do before, when Litch had first published and preached his interpretation of the woes. Litch does not intimate any attempt to rework his previous interpretation, based on his statement he thought that his previous understanding had been confirmed by the events of August 11, 1840.

Even Millerite critics, in 1842, viewed the fall of the Ottoman Empire as a sign of the end, and one, quoting one of the same sources Litch used, wrote, "None can be ignorant of the rapid progress of dissolution which is now going on in the Turkish empire." "The Ottoman is reduced to the rank of a puppet among the sovereigns of Europe, and Turkey now survives only through their forbearance and mutual jealousies."<sup>28</sup> This would indicate that the disagreement was not over the year-day principle, as the same author used it to interpret other prophecies,<sup>29</sup> nor was the disagreement over the interpretation of the trumpets and woes, as has been indicated earlier. Instead, the issue among critics was the application of the dates, and simply an attempt to discredit the Millerites.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

<sup>28</sup> George Duffield, *Dissertations on the Prophecies Relative to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ* (New York: Dayton & Newman, 1842), 390, 391, <http://books.google.com/books?id=jG1LAAAIAAJ> (accessed April 7, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 388-389.

<sup>30</sup> See Campbell, 326-339.

The Millerites defended the interpretation against other critics, specifically a Mr. Bellamy, a pastor of a Baptist church in New York, by pointing out that newspapers, and even the *Baptist Advocate*, were referring to the Ottoman Empire as a bygone entity.<sup>31</sup> As 1844 approached, the Millerites saw the events of August 11, 1840, as the proof that their position was secure.

### **Litch's Views after 1844**

In later years, Litch abandoned the year-day principle as he moved toward a futurist view of prophecy. In 1853 he wrote, "I am unable to see with some of my brethren on the prophetic times."<sup>32</sup> Nelson H. Barbour—a former Millerite, and later Advent Christian, who would be involved with Charles Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, but then distance himself from Russell—said he went to visit Litch in December 1860. Barbour was convinced that Christ was going to return in 1873, based on the 1290 days from Dan 12. Since he "looked upon [Litch] as one of God's mighty men, in the first movement," Barbour went to share what he had found. Barbour thought Litch would listen "with greedy ears," but instead Litch cut him off and "informed him that all these prophetic periods were literal days, still in the future, and hence to listen would be a waste of time."<sup>33</sup>

Litch revealed his movement away from the principle when he asserted that "each prophetic period should be decided on its own merits." In the same article he argued that

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<sup>31</sup> "Ottoman Supremacy Gone," *MC*, February 3, 1843, 8. See also "The Turkish Government Is a Corpse," *MC*, March 3, 1843, 31.

<sup>32</sup> J[osiah] Litch, "New Year's Gift to the Herald," *AH*, December 17, 1853, 404.

the time of Dan 7 should be taken as years, but the times of Dan 12 should be taken to be days. He addressed the editor Bliss and explained, “Some of your readers will say I have changed my views on this subject of time. Certainly I have, and for good reasons.” In his explanation, he pointed out that he anticipated the end of the 1335 days to be 1843, with the resurrection of the just; when this did not happen, his confidence in the year-day principle was lost and he wrote, “Why should I adhere to an exploded theory?”<sup>34</sup>

During the time, however, that Litch was editor of the *Advent Herald*, a fellow minister in the American Millennial Association wrote a series of articles focused on the “woe trumpets.” Not only did O. R. Fassett state that historically “there is, and has been, an almost universal agreement among Christian expositors,” but then he wrote that the fifth and sixth trumpets point to Islam. With regard to the time periods, he applies the same reckoning as Litch’s previous understanding.<sup>35</sup> He pointed to the events of August 11, 1840, as the fulfillment and the fact that Litch had interpreted it two years earlier.<sup>36</sup> In the same issue, another writer drew attention to the seventh trumpet and repeated Litch’s

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<sup>33</sup> Nelson H. Barbour, *Evidences for the Coming of the Lord in 1873: or The Midnight Cry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Rochester, NY: Nelson H. Barbour, 1871), 34.

<sup>34</sup> J[osiah] Litch, “Do the Days of Dan. 12th Chapter Represent Years?” *AH*, July 12, 1862, 222. In follow-up letters, Litch explained further why he considered the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan 9 to be yet future, and that he saw the time periods of Dan 12 as referring to events during that 70<sup>th</sup> week. See idem, “Are the Periods in Daniel 12th Chapter Contemporaneous?” *AH*, July 26, 1862, 238; idem, “Is the ‘Daily Sacrifice’ of Daniel 12:11 Paganism, or Pagan Worship; and ‘the Abomination Which Maketh Desolate’ Popery?” *AH*, August 2, 1862, 246-247; idem, “For What Should the Church Now Watch?” *AH*, August 9, 1862, 254.

<sup>35</sup> O. R. Fassett, “The Three Woe Trumpets,” *AH*, December 15, 1863, 377-378. See also idem, “The Three Woe Trumpets,” *AH*, December 22, 1863, 385-386.

<sup>36</sup> Fassett, “The Three Woe Trumpets,” December 22, 1863, 385-386.

interpretations of the times.<sup>37</sup> Given an opportunity to comment or explain himself with regard to this part of his past, Litch did not provide any indications of his stance on the matter.<sup>38</sup> In fact, it becomes clear that he did not give up entirely on the year-day principle, but rather applied it selectively, when he argued that the 1260 days applied to the time period from 538 to 1798.<sup>39</sup>

In a book written in 1867, discussing the application of the year-day principle, Litch argued that the examples of Numbers and Ezekiel were typological and did not apply to prophecy, and the weeks of Dan 9 were an established Hebrew understanding in light of the sabbatical year in Lev 25:8. “The burden of proof, therefore, that some other rule has been given, falls on those who maintain the year-day theory, not on those who reject that theory. It is an easy matter to assume and assert a proposition, but quite another to prove it.”<sup>40</sup>

He repeated the rejection of the year-day principle, in 1873, even more emphatically when he wrote, “We have no confidence whatever in the ‘year day theory,’ as it is called, and regard all *prophetic periods* as meaning literally just what the words express.” After explaining again that Numbers and Ezekiel were typological references, he wrote, “We therefore utterly repudiate the [year-day] principle, and adopt the literal

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<sup>37</sup> G., “The Third Woe,” *AH*, December 22, 1863, 387.

<sup>38</sup> The Center for Adventist Research holdings of the *Advent Herald* from 1864 are missing the issues from the month of January. Therefore I have been unable to determine what the immediate reaction was in the following issues.

<sup>39</sup> [Josiah Litch], “The New Year,” *AH*, January 3, 1865, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Significance of Eastern and European Movements; Being a Plain, Literal, and Grammatical Construction of the Last Five Chapters of*



sense of the periods.”<sup>41</sup> Later in the book, he wrote that the year-day principle “has been the great stumbling-block in the way of a correct interpretation of prophecy for these hundreds of years, and should be utterly repudiated by all lovers of the simple truth,” and he called it “as positive an *innovation* on the faith of the early fathers from the days of the apostles downward for hundreds of years, as the doctrine of the world’s conversion and temporal millennium, and is part and parcel of that theory.”<sup>42</sup> In the same work, he went on to reject the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets to the activities of the Muslims.<sup>43</sup>

In *Complete Harmony* he gave his reason for abandoning the year-day principle. Because the papacy had lost its temporal power in 1870, and “now possesses no power by which he can make war on the saints,” the papacy would not be around as a political power until Christ’s return, and therefore could not be the power typified by the little horn and the beast.<sup>44</sup> Even though he identified the first beast of Rev 13 with the horn of Dan 7, he did not apply the wound to the head, and its subsequent healing, to the events of 1870.<sup>45</sup>

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*Daniel, Applied to Passing Events Showing Conclusively That a Syrian Prince, Not Napoleon III, Is the Antichrist of the Last Days* (Boston: Josiah Litch, 1867), 16.

<sup>41</sup> Josiah Litch, *A Complete Harmony of Daniel and the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remson & Haffelfinger, 1873), 12-13.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 292.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-168.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 203. He had earlier interpreted the deadly wound of one of the heads, and its healing, to the time period when Rome was under the control of the Goths, before they were expelled in 538, as well, in a more obscure way, to the time period between the loss of Imperial Rome’s power in the west to the Lombards in 483, and its subsequent revival

## The Influence on Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine

In 1849, James White started to publish the *Present Truth*, a periodical that would soon become the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. As Seventh-day Adventists began to develop their understanding of what happened in 1844 and began to share it with the world, one of the integral parts of their message was prophecy. Their understanding of prophecy led them to accept Litch's interpretation, and subsequent fulfillment, of the time periods of the first and second woes. Joseph Bates first pointed to the prophetic interpretation of the anticipated fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1840 in the publication of his tract in the *Advent Review*. He referred to the Second Advent Conference in June of 1841, where Josiah Litch presented his interpretation, and Joseph Bates was there to hear it.<sup>46</sup>

The first Sabbatarian Adventist to seek to draw prophetic conclusions from the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* appears to have been John N. Andrews when he wrote: "Prior to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1840, it had been shown by those who were preaching the immediate Advent of Christ, that the hour, day, month, and year of Ottoman supremacy would expire the 11th of August, 1840. When the event verified the truthfulness of this calculation, the way was prepared for the Advent message to go with mighty power. The prophecies were not only unsealed, but in the providence of God, a demonstration of the truthfulness of the mode of

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through Justinian's decree asserting the primacy of the bishop of Rome. See Litch, *SCC*, 88-89, 177-178. Then he changed his interpretation to Berthier's capture of the pope in 1798, and Napoleon's subsequent reinstatement of the pope. See Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 107.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Bates, "Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps," *Advent Review*, September 1850, 53.

calculation respecting the prophetic times was given to the world.”<sup>47</sup> In the rest of the article, Andrews seeks to demonstrate that the fulfillment of the time periods of the first and second woes, as calculated by Litch, was connected to the event that followed in Rev 10. He interpreted the angel with the little book as the Millerite movement, which he also tied to the first angel of Rev 14, thus pointing to the time factor as an indicator of when the angel was active.<sup>48</sup> This connection of the time periods, in the chronological order of the trumpets, gave the Sabbatarian Adventists a proverbial anchor in the prophetic chronology, and added to their confidence in the prophetic understanding they were developing.

The *Review and Herald* included its own series of articles on the seven trumpets in 1858, and though it is not clear who the author was, they used Litch’s interpretation, and fulfillment, of the time periods in 1840 as the fulfillment of the prophecy.<sup>49</sup>

The *Review and Herald* continued to embrace Litch’s interpretation in its pages. In 1859, an advertisement ran indicating that the portion of Litch’s *Prophetic Expositions* on the trumpets was for sale in pamphlet form.<sup>50</sup> In an 1859 article, J. H. Waggoner favorably mentioned Litch’s interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets.<sup>51</sup> A double issue dedicated entirely to prophecy repeated again the time periods associated with

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<sup>47</sup> J[ohn] N. Andrews, “The Three Angels of Rev. XIV, 6-12,” *RH*, February 6, 1855, 169.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> “The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets,” *RH*, July 29, 1858, 82-84; “The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets,” *RH*, August 5, 1858, 89-90.

<sup>50</sup> “New Works,” *RH*, March 31, 1859, 152.

<sup>51</sup> J. H. Waggoner, “Present Truth,” *RH*, February 23, 1860, 105-106.

Litch's interpretation.<sup>52</sup> In response to critics of the Millerites, and the 1843-44 movement, R. F. Cottrell wrote an article arguing that when events that were prophesied took place, they were confirmation of the system of interpretation, and time was the test of the interpretations. As an example, he pointed to Litch's interpretation in 1838, and the subsequent fulfillment in August 1840. He reasoned that "time demonstrated the truth of this [the interpretation of the time periods of Rev 9], and at the same time, demonstrated that the prophetic numbers could be understood."<sup>53</sup> His stance was that the events of August 1840 confirmed that the angel of Rev 10 pointed to the Millerite movement, and gave the foundation for the acceptance of the message that the sanctuary is in heaven.<sup>54</sup> Cottrell even argued the fact that "the prophetic numbers were unsealed[,] and understood[,] was demonstrated, in 1840, by the close of the sounding of the sixth trumpet. The argument on time was so clear that even the opposition declared it to be our strongest point."<sup>55</sup>

J. B. Frisbie sought to sum up the evidence for Christ's soon return, and amongst a list of a number of evidences, he pointed to the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding

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<sup>52</sup> "Revelation VIII & IX," *RH*, May 29, 1860, 4-5. Though the explanation of the last three trumpets is limited, the following statement regarding the seventh trumpet is included. "This is not the last trump which wakes the dead (1 Cor xv, 52), as some have supposed. But it is like the two preceding it, a woe trumpet. Solemn and fearful events are located under its sounding." This demonstrates that the understanding was developing some.

<sup>53</sup> R. F. Cottrell, "Time Has Demonstrated This Fact," *RH*, April 5, 1864, 149.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-150. See also R. F. Cottrell, "The Time Message." *RH*, March 26, 1867, 181-183; *idem*, "'God Is Not the Author of Confusion.' No. 1," *RH*, March 14, 1865, 117.

<sup>55</sup> Cottrell, "'God Is Not the Author of Confusion.' No. 1," 117.

the fall of the Ottoman Empire on August 11, 1840, as one of the signs.<sup>56</sup> Another unnamed author pointed to the dependence of the Ottomans on other nations, since their fall in 1840, as evidence that skeptics should consider as pointing to the Adventist message.<sup>57</sup>

In Uriah Smith's estimation, the fall of the Ottoman Empire constituted "the most definite of all" of the prophetic time periods.<sup>58</sup> During the late 1870s and through the 1880s, because he saw the Turkish Empire as the Euphrates River in the sixth plague in Rev 16:12 and as the King of the North in Dan 11:40-45, he wrote a number of articles on the condition and sovereignty of the Ottoman empire. He outlined how he saw the pieces all fit together when he wrote, "It is well known that, ever since the summer of 1840, when the Ottoman Empire fell, that power has been sustained by the influence and arms of other nations."<sup>59</sup> He referred to the time periods repeatedly in his books.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> J. B. Frisbie, "Evidences Summed Up," *RH*, December 1, 1863, 7.

<sup>57</sup> "Without Excuse," *RH*, December 13, 1870, 204; see also "War in Europe," *RH*, May 24, 1870, 181. The article "Without Excuse" was later reprinted in *The Gospel Sickle* where Uriah Smith was given as the author. See U[riah] S[mith], "Without Excuse," *The Gospel Sickle*, October 1, 1887, 148.

<sup>58</sup> U[riah] S[mith], "The Second Coming of Christ," *RH*, May 13, 1875, 157.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, "Without Excuse," 148.

<sup>60</sup> See Uriah Smith, *Thoughts Critical and Practical*, 211-223; idem, *Synopsis of the Present Truth: A Brief Exposition of the Views of S. D. Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1884), 214-218.

In both editions of the *Great Controversy*, Ellen White mentioned the events of 1840, without giving the details. She mentioned only that Litch had interpreted the prophecy, and its fulfillment brought interest to the movement.<sup>61</sup>

As the church moved into the twentieth century, many Adventist expositors of prophecy continued to maintain the view that the fifth and sixth trumpets referred to Islam, but some chose to minimize the emphasis on the time prophecies. In W. A. Spicer's *Beacon Lights of Prophecy*, he maintained the same interpretation of the Muslims as the fulfillment of the fifth and sixth trumpets, but did not mention the time prophecies associated with them.<sup>62</sup> This tendency among Adventist interpreters of prophecy is what prompted Le Roy Froom to write a forceful editorial in *Ministry* in which he penned:

The advent movement has every reason . . . to feel that it stands on tested ground when it maintains the dual time period of the 541 years (150+391) for the combined fifth and sixth trumpets, as from A. D. 1299 to 1840. . . . Truth has nothing to fear from thorough investigation. . . . It is superficial investigation that is overawed by the glitter of a few names of modern scholars who have largely abandoned the canons of sound Biblical interpretation.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1888), 334-335; idem, *The Great Controversy*, 1950 ed., 334-335. The 1911 edition contains a quote from Litch's article in the *Signs of the Times* as well as a reference in the appendix to the historical sources associated with the event. See *ibid.*, 1950 ed., 691.

<sup>62</sup> See W. A. Spicer, *Beacon Lights of Prophecy* (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald, 1935), 225-245.

<sup>63</sup> Froom, "Time Phase," 46.

Some recent Seventh-day Adventist commentators have acknowledged the time periods associated with the fifth and sixth trumpets,<sup>64</sup> but have not used it as evidence for the year-day principle. Others have abandoned the time application altogether.<sup>65</sup> The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* presents the view taken by Miller and Litch as a possible interpretation, but does not settle on it definitively. The outline of Litch's view is included as part of a supplementary note at the end of the section of the commentary on Rev 9.<sup>66</sup> Since the late 1800s the emphasis shifted from using this event in history as evidence of the year-day principle to textual evidence and other sources of evidence. Litch himself, in later years as he was transitioning to a dispensationalist view of prophecy, did not consider the anticipated fulfillment in 1838, and the events of August 11, 1840, as proof enough for him to maintain the year-day principle.

For Litch, and perhaps for many other prophetic expositors, the application of the year-day principle to Bible prophecy, on a wide scale (beyond the 70 weeks of Dan 9), leads one inevitably to grapple with the 2300 days of Dan 8:14. Since those who accepted the year-day principle prior to 1844, for the most part, put the fulfillment somewhere between 1830 and 1850, the fact that no supernatural, visible manifestation on earth

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<sup>64</sup> C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 2 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), 262-265. Maxwell applies the time period of the fifth trumpet to events closer to the time of Mohammed, but he applies the time period of the sixth trumpet to either 1453-1844 or 1449-1840. See also Stephen Dickie, *Islam: God's Forgotten Blessing* (Kasson, MN: Strawberry Meadow Association, 2006), 59-72.

<sup>65</sup> See Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 301, 311; Hans K. LaRondelle, *Light for the Last Days: Jesus' End-Time Prophecies Made Plain in the Book of Revelation* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1999), 93-94.

<sup>66</sup> See "Revelation," *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 7:792-796.

occurred at that time led Litch, and others, to question the year-day principle and the historicist approach to prophetic interpretation. This glaring issue is the insurmountable obstacle for expositors, and the other examples of time fulfillment before 1844 are lost in the perceived lack of an earth-based fulfilling event in 1843-1847. The *a priori* of geocentrism and other presuppositions are what inevitably led away from the year-day principle, specifically the time periods of the fifth and sixth trumpets.

In a limited sense, Litch personifies the transition in the broader evangelical world to alternative prophetic interpretations, and away from historicism. His journey of prophetic interpretation illustrates why the Seventh-day Adventist Church remains the only major Christian group to hold to the historicist interpretation of prophecy, because the Seventh-day Adventist church developed an understanding and explanation of what took place in 1844 in fulfillment of Dan 8:14.

### **Summary**

In Josiah Litch's first book advocating the Millerite understanding of prophecy, written in 1838, he interpreted the time periods associated with the fifth and sixth trumpets of Rev 9 as pointing to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in August 1840. Two weeks before the actual date, he narrowed the date down to August 11, 1840. When the Ottoman Empire requested assistance from European powers, he and a number of his fellow Millerites understood this to be the fulfillment of the prophecy.

The Millerites pointed back to this fulfillment from time to time as evidence of the certainty of their approach to prophetic interpretation. Though Litch later abandoned the year-day principle, due to the fact that historical events did not validate his prior



interpretations of prophecy, the Seventh-day Adventists continued to promote his original interpretation of Rev 9.

Some Adventist writers used the interpretation to situate the Millerite movement and the Adventist Church in the flow of prophetic history, using the time periods of Rev 9 to pinpoint the setting of Rev 10. Others pointed to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, in August 1840, as evidence that the year-day principle was applicable to 1844 as well.

In recent times, some Seventh-day Adventist commentators have moved away from a focus on the time elements of Rev 9, while others have revived an interest in the historical dates, as interpreted by Josiah Litch, for missiological purposes, connected with a revival of interest in Islam's role in last-day events.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE “TRIAL”: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE PRE-ADVENT JUDGMENT AND THE CLOSE OF PROBATION

Josiah Litch’s penchant for new and different ideas was demonstrated by espousing a concept that would explain, for the group that would eventually become Seventh-day Adventists, what happened in 1844. The remarkable fact is that as close as Josiah Litch came to putting the pieces together, he did not see light in fusing the parts that appeared to be disparate to him. It is on this point, the issue of the nature of the judgment, that Litch did not go with a new and different view, and thus ended up with the “open door” Adventists following the 1844 disappointment.

#### **Litch’s Understanding of the “Trial” Judgment**

Litch viewed the idea of a pre-advent judgment as a common sense issue.<sup>1</sup> As early as his first book outlining the Millerite understanding of prophecy, he already argued that the judgment needed to take place before the first resurrection, at Christ’s Second Coming.<sup>2</sup> The foundation of Litch’s understanding was the Millerite perspective

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<sup>1</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 1:50.

<sup>2</sup> Litch, *SCC*, 189-190. In this explanation, Litch placed the pre-Advent judgment between the sixth and seventh vials of Rev 16. He tied the event to the gathering of the nations before God, as outlined in Matt 25:31-45, but he clarified what he meant. “Not that the general resurrection will then take place, but all nations which are alive at that

on the millennium. In Litch's *An Address to the Clergy*, first written in 1840, he argued that, as he saw it, the foundational question for prophetic expositors at his time was: "Is the millennium of the Scriptures to be in a *temporal*, or an *eternal* state?"<sup>3</sup> Some in Litch's day believed there would be a millennium of peace on earth, and during that time the Jews would be restored to their homeland. Litch, however, following William Miller's lead,<sup>4</sup> taught that Christ would return at the beginning of the millennium and would reign on earth for a thousand years.<sup>5</sup>

From this understanding of the millennium, he next moved to the fact that the millennium is opened and closed by a resurrection. The first resurrection is for the righteous, and the second resurrection, at the end of the millennium, is for the unrighteous.<sup>6</sup> This would mean that there is "a retribution in the resurrection" and "there can be no general judgment or trial after the resurrection."<sup>7</sup>

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time will be judged. This must take place, that is, the moral character of each individual must be decided, in order to his admission to the blessedness of the first resurrection, or to his destruction." Ibid., 189-190.

<sup>3</sup> Litch, *An Address to the . . . Clergy*, 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, *Lectures*, 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> Litch, *An Address to the . . . Clergy*, 20-23, 29-30. This was a shift from his beliefs before encountering Miller, when he believed in a spiritual return of Christ and the universal conversion of the world. See Litch, *SCC*, 197. He later reversed his opinion on the Jews returning to their homeland. In *Restitution*, he argued that the Jews would indeed return, at Christ's Second Coming, to the land they had previously inhabited. Litch, *Restitution*, xii-xiv, 46-57, 100-112.

<sup>6</sup> Litch, *An Address to the . . . Clergy*, 31-35. He stated that the millennium should not be understood as a literal thousand years, but that it referred to an "indefinite period." Ibid., 33.

<sup>7</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 51.

He then focused on the last five verses of Rev 20 where the great white throne of judgment appears. He maintained that vv. 11-12 took place before the first resurrection, because there is not “a text which presents the judicial scene of judgment after the resurrection.” “There is not . . . a single text in the Bible which teaches the doctrine that all mankind shall stand before the judgment . . . in their resurrection bodies.”<sup>8</sup> The trial judgment took place “in the invisible and spiritual world, before Jesus Christ comes in the clouds of heaven.”<sup>9</sup> From this assertion, he argued that if the angels were to go forth and gather the elect at the Second Coming, then the decision regarding who comprised the elect would have to be made before the resurrection of the elect.<sup>10</sup>

Litch based his reasoning on the basic understanding of the proceedings of a trial here on this earth in which there is a time of investigation before a verdict is rendered. He also applied the logic of what order decisions needed to be taken, in order for the resulting actions to be taken. He did not evaluate the purpose of the judgment, specifically in light of the fact that God already would know whom would be saved and would be lost.

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<sup>8</sup> Litch, *An Address to the . . . Clergy*, 37-39. A book review in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, a prominent Methodist Episcopal periodical, mocked Litch’s understanding of the idea of a pre-advent judgment by characterizing Litch as having contradicted himself. The author argued that Litch had outlined three instances of “burning,” the first at the second coming, the second at the “general judgment *before* the resurrection,” “and the third *after* the resurrection.” The reviewer quoted the statement from Litch’s book referenced here and then called Litch’s understanding a “strange system” and wrote that “with the exercise of a little common sense, [the reader] will certainly come to a different conclusion.” C., “An Address to the Public . . .,” *Christian Advocate and Journal*, June 29, 1842, 183.

<sup>9</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 51.

<sup>10</sup> Litch, *An Address to the . . . Clergy*, 39.

In connection with the pre-advent judgment, Litch also maintained that probation would need to close before the judgment of the living took place. He argued that the silence in heaven for a half-hour, under the sixth seal, marked the time when Jesus stopped mediating for sinners and worked on judging the living.<sup>11</sup> During this time, the plagues of Rev 16 would fall, preceding Jesus' return.<sup>12</sup>

Litch understood the sanctuary to be the place where God dwells, both in the Old Testament as "Mount Zion," or the "mountain of the Lord's inheritance; the place he has made for himself to dwell in" (see Exod 15:17; Pss 78:54, 67-69; 132:13, 14).<sup>13</sup>

For Litch, the Day of Atonement, along with the other Old Testament feast days, was typical of an event connected with the plan of salvation. He applied it, however, to the close of probation and Christ's second coming rather than to an investigative judgment.<sup>14</sup> This disconnect, between the Day of Atonement and his understanding of the necessity of a pre-advent judgment, is where he differed from the Seventh-day Adventists.

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<sup>11</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 1:53.

<sup>12</sup> Josiah Litch, "The Seven Last Plagues," *MC*, August 17, 1843, 205. In 1842, he believed the plagues would fall after the second coming, but he later changed his view. See Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 1:175-177.

<sup>13</sup> Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, 1:117-118; idem, *Restitution*, 73-75. This is in contrast to Miller who understood the sanctuary to mean the church and the earth. See William Miller, *Letter to Joshua V. Himes, on the Cleansing of the Sanctuary* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 7, 8.

<sup>14</sup> J[osiah] Litch, "The Discussion," *AH*, February 4, 1854, 38. By 1854 Litch applied the Day of Atonement to the second half of the seventieth week of Dan 9, which he situated at the end of time, separate from the other 69 weeks.

As late as 1864, Litch continued to argue that the judgment would take place in connection with the first resurrection, and for an indefinite period of time. But in his description of the trial, he was ambiguous with regard to when it would take place. In response to an article in *Zion's Herald*, in which the author stated that all the dead would be resurrected at the same time, and thus be judged at once, Litch argued that there would be two resurrections. With respect to the judgment he wrote, "We do not pretend to know how long a time will be required or taken. . . . [We do not] believe he will hurry in the proceedings of the judgment."<sup>15</sup>

His understanding of the periods of the judgment continued to maintain a two-phase approach to the judgment; until the later part of his life, he still maintained that there would be a "judicial" or trial phase, and an "executive" phase. He argued that in Dan 7 and Rev 20 it is God who is reviewing books, and therefore, the judicial phase of the judgment is "the work of God." He pointed to the second phase of the judgment in John 5:27 and Jude 14-15 where both refer to Jesus executing judgment.<sup>16</sup> He placed the resurrection in the executive phase of the judgment, and from this conclusion argued that "the *trial* or *judicial* work must precede the *executive*, and hence also the advent of Christ, who comes to *execute judgment*. The *judicial* proceedings will be held in heaven,

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<sup>15</sup> [Josiah Litch], "Order of the Resurrection of the Dead," *AH*, July 5, 1864, 106.

<sup>16</sup> Litch, *Complete Harmony*, 13. See also idem, *Pre-Millennial Advent Vindicated, Being a Review of David Brown's Post-Millennial Advent of Christ* (Boston: American Millennial Association, n.d.), 101-120, <http://www.archive.org/details/premillennialadv00litcuoft> (accessed May 26, 2009). Though the book does not have a copyright date, the title page lists one of his previous books as *A Complete Harmony of Daniel and the Apocalypse* which was published in 1873.

and be *executed* on earth.”<sup>17</sup> He later clarified his position by writing, “The judgment session is to be *in heaven, invisible* to us on earth.”<sup>18</sup> Litch attributed confusion in the theological world to a misunderstanding of the order of the judgments: “It is the overlooking of the two revealed parts of the judgment which has produced so much confusion in the theological world.”<sup>19</sup>

In Litch’s last book on prophecy, he repeated many of his previous arguments. In addition, he argued that the two-phase judgment was similar to human court trials on the basis of Jesus’ description of the sequence of events in Matt 5:25.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Influence on the Millerite Movement and Seventh-day Adventist Doctrine**

Among the Millerites, there is evidence that some adopted the idea that there would be a pre-advent judgment. The first noted is Apollos Hale, another Methodist Episcopal minister from New England, who argued that prophecy required that there logically be a “trial” before the resurrection of saved.<sup>21</sup> There was also a group in Maine

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<sup>17</sup> Litch, *Complete Harmony*, 13-14. Litch also argued that the “Great White Throne Judgment” of Rev 20:11-15 had to harmonize with the judgment scene in Dan 7:10 and therefore took place before the resurrection of the dead before the millennium as part of the “judicial” phase. See *ibid.*, 269-272. Though this was a later development, in his earlier writings Litch was uncertain with regard to the judgment at the end of Rev 20. See Litch, *SCC*, 201.

<sup>18</sup> Litch, *Complete Harmony*, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Litch, *Pre-Millennial Advent*, 111.

<sup>20</sup> Josiah Litch, *Christ Yet to Come: A Review of Dr. I. P. Warren’s “Parousia of Christ”* (Boston: American Millennial Association, 1880), 84.

<sup>21</sup> Apollos Hale, *Herald of the Bridegroom! In Which the Plagues that Await the Enemies of the King Eternal are Considered; and the Appearing of our Lord to Gather His Saints* (Boston, Joshua V. Himes, 1843), 22-24.

that came to believe that they were already living in the time of judgment, before October of 1844.<sup>22</sup>

Later William Miller, in his attempt to explain what took place on October 22, 1844, argued in a letter dated March 20, 1845, that the order of the judgment, as outlined in the Bible, was that first the judgment would sit, and then Christ would return in the clouds.<sup>23</sup> Another writer conceded that as far as he knew Litch had been the first to teach the idea of a judgment before the second coming, specifically as found in Rev 20:11, 12. He said that “Adventists generally, as well as myself[,] embraced it.”<sup>24</sup> Just ten days later, Enoch Jacobs acknowledged that there were some who held that Christ had gone from the Father’s throne to the seat of judgment, and he argued that they should be given a hearing.<sup>25</sup>

The understanding of the pre-advent judgment doctrine took place independently of direct influence from Litch in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist church.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Joshua V. Himes, “The Present and the Past,” *MC*, October 31, 1844, 140.

<sup>23</sup> William Miller, “Letter from Bro. Miller,” *Day-Star*, April 8, 1845, 31.

<sup>24</sup> [J. W. Rutledge], “The Thousand Years of Revelations [*sic*] 20,” *Day-Star*, December 20, 1845, 51. A short comment on the series of articles, presumably written by Enoch Jacobs as editor of the *Day-Star*, notes that “the writings of all second advent believers hitherto, have been verry [*sic*] dark and cloudy about the work of this 1000 years.” He also notes that Rutledge is from Philadelphia, which would put Rutledge in close contact with Litch, and would have created the impression for Rutledge that this was widely accepted among Millerites. See “Correspondents,” *Day-Star*, November 22, 1845, 29.

<sup>25</sup> “Intolerance,” *Western Midnight Cry*, December 30, 1844, 30.

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed study of the early development of the sanctuary doctrine among the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church see Merlin Burt, “The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White’s Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844



It was later that as the leaders who would eventually form the Seventh-day Adventist church looked back they identified the presence of Litch's teaching regarding the pre-advent judgment in the writings of the Millerites, and they appealed to him as an authority to back up their understanding of the concept of a pre-advent judgment.

The earliest reference I found by Seventh-day Adventist writers to Litch's view of the pre-advent judgment was in 1869-1870 when J. N. Andrews penned a series of articles in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* entitled "The Order of Events in the Judgment." This series of articles dealt specifically with the topic being considered, but Andrews does not mention Litch until the fourteenth installment, and there he quotes extensively from *Prophetic Expositions* as an authoritative source. Andrews seems to appeal to them as a means of solidifying the teaching in the minds of his readers, as one more "proof" that what he is teaching was already present in the Millerite movement. He attributes the inability of Litch, and Bliss whom he also quotes in the article, to see the timing and place of the pre-advent judgment to the fact that they "did not see the heavenly sanctuary, and therefore had no clear idea of the concluding work of human probation, as presented to us in the Saviour's [*sic*] ministration before the ark of God's testament."<sup>27</sup>

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to 1849" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2002). See also C. Mervyn Maxwell, "The Investigative Judgment: Its Early Development," in *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: A Historical Survey*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 5 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 119-157; Damsteegt, *Foundations*, 115-132, 165-176.

<sup>27</sup> [J. N. Andrews], "The Order of Events in the Judgment, Number Fourteen," *RH*, February 8, 1870, 52. This same article was reprinted under a different title, fifteen years later. See idem, "The Judgment of the Great Day," *RH*, March 24, 1885, 184.

In a later article, J. H. Waggoner refers to the same two references from Litch and Bliss, and uses them in much the same way. The appeal is again to confirmation that others outside of and preceding Seventh-day Adventists believed in a pre-advent judgment.<sup>28</sup> In 1887, Uriah Smith makes the same appeal to Litch's previous work pointing to a pre-advent judgment.<sup>29</sup>

The same use of Litch's view of the pre-advent judgment appeared in an article written by Desmond Ford in which he quoted from Litch. His lead into the quote was, "Let it be noted that also others besides ourselves have seen in Daniel and Revelation an investigative judgment."<sup>30</sup> Later, after Ford had changed his position with regard to the pre-advent judgment, the Seventh-day Adventist theologians appealed to Litch again to answer Ford's accusation that "the doctrine of the investigative judgment was born, approximately thirteen years after the event supposed to have marked its opening," and "it seemed to emerge to fill the gap made by the collapse of the first interpretation of the shut door."<sup>31</sup>

### Summary

From his first book outlining the Millerite understanding of prophecy, Litch pointed to the necessity of a pre-advent judgment. He reached this conclusion both on the

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<sup>28</sup> J. H. Waggoner, "The Judgment," *ST-SDA*, January 31, 1884, 68.

<sup>29</sup> Uriah Smith, "The Judgment of the Great Day," *The Gospel Sickle*, January 1, 1887, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Desmond Ford, "Some Reflections on the Investigative Judgment," *Ministry*, October 1965, 8.

<sup>31</sup> "Methodology," *Ministry*, October 1980, 62-63.

basis of attempting to reconcile the doctrine of two resurrections and the millennium, and on the logic of the proceedings of a trial.

The Seventh-day Adventists developed their understanding of the pre-advent judgment independently of Litch's reasoning. Starting about twenty-five years after the disappointment of 1844, however, they appealed to his understanding as evidence that the pre-advent judgment was not an unknown doctrine that had no basis in Scripture.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Josiah Litch was a pioneer, in both a positive and negative sense. When he saw what he believed to be true, he was quick to accept it and share it. When he saw something that he found to be false, he was willing to denounce it as wrong, or abandon it if he held that particular idea. These characteristics, in and of themselves, are not bad traits.

Where Litch encountered problems was during the time approaching October 22, 1844. From the time that he accepted William Miller's teachings, he had left open the possibility that Jesus could return at any point during a window of time. He was reluctant to narrow the prophecy down to a particular day, but this did not indicate that he was reluctant to set dates. In 1838, he had picked a month for the fall of the Ottoman Empire. In July 1840, he narrowed his interpretation down to a day. When events occurred on August 11, 1840, he found the confirmation that he needed to solidify his stance with regard to prophecy.

Whatever the reason was, that finally convinced Litch to accept the seventh-month movement and look for Jesus on October 22, 1844. It was this that turned his life in a different direction. There were ideas that he continued to hold to throughout his life; for example, the validity of the Bible, the logic of the pre-advent judgment, things that in Scripture simply made sense in his mind. His view of prophecy, however, could never

move past the disappointment in 1844, and his actions as a pioneer led him to pioneer himself back into the mainstream of Protestantism, at the end of the nineteenth century.

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church were certainly affected by his ideas and writings, both subtly by his contributions to the Millerite movement's foundational arguments, and through the scholarship of his writings, which they appreciated and cited. The attitude of the early Seventh-day Adventist writers, toward Litch, provides a good example for the interaction of current Seventh-day Adventists with those who do not share our beliefs—even with those who at one time shared many of the same beliefs, but with time have changed them. There is a place for disagreement where needed, but Christian courtesy and recognition of meaningful contributions have their place as well.

Litch became a personification of the transition of the greater evangelical world away from the historicist perspective on prophecy, to the current preterist and dispensationalist approaches. His life is an explanation of what happened in prophetic interpretation.

There is more to discover about Litch's life and contributions. Due to time and distance constraints, I did not have access to Litch's Methodist Episcopal writings. He referred to some of his writings in the *Zion's Herald*, and he probably wrote in other publications as well. Generally, one does not sit down and write a 200-page book—as Litch did in 1838, with the publication of *Probability of the Second Coming of Christ: About A.D. 1843*—without some previous experience.

His influence on his children is another potential area of study. Why Josiah L. Litch chose to join the Congregational Church would provide a deeper insight into his

father's theological decisions. There is also limited information with regard to his work as a physician, and when and why he chose to acquire a medical degree.

These areas afford the opportunity for further study into the life of Josiah Litch, and his contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist church.

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