

## Editorial

Uriah Smith was one of Seventh-day Adventism's earliest and most influential expositors of prophecy. In his comments on Dan 11 he is perhaps best known for two positions. One is that the king of the North in vss. 40-45 is Turkey. The other is that vss. 23-28 should be applied to a time earlier than vs. 22. We will have occasion to discuss Smith's views on the final verses of Dan 11 in a future issue of *Historicism*. They do not concern us here. Let me say, however, that the two positions referred to have widely different sets of credentials. One was right for more reasons than we knew and one, by an equally wide margin, was wrong. The two need to be evaluated separately.

Here the topic is Dan 11:23-28 and on these verses Smith was overwhelmingly correct. Some have disagreed. In fact, without attempting to quantify the claim, I would speculate that more people have been open to Smith's views on Turkey than have been truly convinced by what he said about vs. 23.

Over the past century--during the years since Smith's first book on the subject, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel*, was published--there have been a number of attempts to avoid this distinctive interpretation, which C. M. Sorenson [1919 Bible conference] called "in railroad terms a 'switchback'--where the line runs on a certain distance, and then turns back" (Hardy, "An Historicist Perspective on Daniel 11," [M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1983], pp. 234-35).

It appeared that Smith had discarded the most fundamental characteristic of the historicist model by applying vs. 23 substantially out of sequence. There does not appear to be an even flow of history in his application. But the disruption is more apparent than real and maintaining an even flow of history is not the most fundamental characteristic of the model. Instead it is a willingness to place Christ's redemptive activity in a firm historical matrix of actual events. Smith is not the only historicist to interpret the "prince of the covenant" as a reference to Christ in vs. 22 but he is the only one to succeed in making what he says there follow naturally from what he says about adjacent verses (see *ibid.*, pp. 74-94).

Vindicating Smith is not so important as realizing that God was leading the church he was part of as it diligently studied the prophecies during the past century. The exegetical framework that served as a basis for Smith's study was and still is a useful one. If Dan 11 gives an overview of history from God's point of view, how reasonable it would be to claim that within it something is said about His Son. Smith was the first man to grasp this point and we can always be glad that he did. His work has its flaws but what he wrote about vs. 23 is not one of them.

Frank W. Hardy  
Editor