

## Editorial

The theme for this issue of *Historicism* is Esther. Siegfried H. Horn's excellent paper on this topic entitled, "Mordecai, A Historical Problem" (*Biblical Research* 9 [1964]: 14-25), became available to me only after the issue was complete.

Horn discusses a cuneiform tablet (Amherst 258), announced first by T. G. Pinches in 1904, which twice mentions a man named *Marduka-<sup>amel</sup>si-pir* (i.e., accountant or privy councillor) to the powerful Persian satrap *Uštannu*. If Marduka is Mordecai, then Amherst 258 conclusively demonstrates that he was not only a real person but that he was prominent in government by the time the events of the book of Esther occurred. This much is generally known (see "Esther and the Death Decree," p. 3).

But Horn goes on to point out that cuneiform sources during the reign of Darius I (522-486) seldom refer to persons with Jewish names. And in Egypt the contemporaneous Elephantine papyri show that Jews lived "in virtual isolation, hated and persecuted by the native Egyptians, and in need of protection from the Persian authorities" (Horn, "Mordecai," p. 24). Under Xerxes I (486-465), however, Jewish names appear in many tablets. Their bearers figure prominently in business by this time and are entirely free to pursue their commercial interests.

If the events recorded in the book of Esther did not bring about this result, something else did. What was it? By some means, Jews living in Persia were rendered notably freer under Xerxes than they had been under Darius anywhere in the Empire or in Egypt throughout the period in question. These facts require an explanation. Any effect so obvious must have an equally obvious cause. The historical veracity of the book of Esther is strongly supported by the above line of evidence.

My own interest in Esther is not historical, but prophetic. Esther's experience will yet be a type of our own. The remnant living just before Christ returns will see events take place like those in the book of Esther, but on a larger scale.

The passage of a national Sunday law is what puts God's people on notice that history is about to repeat itself in this regard. Sometimes the likelihood of such a law is questioned. This matter is addressed below not by a biblical scholar but by a member of the legal profession. Frank D. Coleman is a Seventh-day Adventist attorney and former prosecutor. In his paper entitled, "Just How Likely Is a National Sunday Law?" he argues that precedents for such legislation are in place now and that their constitutionality has already been tested. Given an appropriate shift in public opinion, nothing more remains that would keep current events from becoming last events.

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Editor