

Editorial

With this issue the *Historicism* project is complete. Over the past seven years we have studied Daniel extensively (two years of introductory material, then four years on Dan 11) and now conclude with one year on the book of Hebrews. Both of these books have had a crucial formative influence on Adventism.

Dan 11 has received special attention in these pages because of its inherent significance and because, from a historicist point of view, it has proven difficult to interpret. The key to understanding Daniel's final prophecy and the reason why it has taken us so long to grasp is quite simple. It is so simple in fact that it is hard. What we must do is leave aside every apology and view Dan 11 from a perspective wholly focused on what the chapter says about Christ. Uriah Smith was substantially right in vss. 16-28 because his interpretation revolves around the "prince of the covenant" in vs. 22. He was wrong in vss. 29-39 because he missed the reference to Christ in vs. 37 ("the one desired by women") and vss. 40-45 suffered as a result. He was right again in 12:1-3 because he saw Christ's role there but was unable to relate Michael's standing up (12:1) directly to the last king of the North's downfall (11:45).

Smith would say that Michael's standing in Dan 12:1 corresponds to the stone striking the image on its feet in 2:34-35 and 45. But he could not have seen any link between the king of the North's downfall in 11:45 (one verse earlier) and the destruction of the image after it was hit. The one event merely followed the other and the sequence was wrong for any such comparison. From this we can only conclude that he did not understand 11:40-45.

So Seventh-day Adventists have had some learning to do over the past century. And yet the differences I have pointed out are mere details. Time and again in various papers I have been led to conclude that the foundation of Adventism does not need to be revised. Some of the superstructure we have built on it might. But the foundation itself is firm.

What I have said about Daniel applies equally to the book of Hebrews. There have been misunderstandings and mistakes in our interpretation of individual passages. There has been room for further growth. And yet the sanctuary theology of Hebrews is consistent with that of Daniel when we understand what both books say on that topic. Having reviewed a broad spectrum of evidence in what I believe all will agree is a detailed manner, the thing about our message that impresses me most is its cohesiveness. So let us draw the pieces together and believe what God is telling us, one part of which is that He is not just talking to us. We must share what we learn. Now is not the time to give up our confidence. Christ will come. Let us be found ready to meet Him, with the wedding garment on (see Matt 22:11-12).

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