

This book focuses on Historicism, which validates itself by comparing Bible predictions with events as they unfold through the centuries, and is therefore fully credible. This is not true of any other method, like Idealism, Preterism, or Futurism. Of these, the last mentioned is very popular today. It is Catholic eschatology, which has given birth to Protestant Dispensationalism.

Although these three methods differ widely from one another, they have one thing in common. In contrast with Historicism, they all deny that the papacy is the Antichrist. Preterism as well as Futurism in silence pass over many centuries of history, especially the European Middle Ages. Idealism is sheer speculation and also ignores the claims of Daniel and Revelation that point to a God who can foretell the future.

Among the many treasures of this book is a passage written by Hippolytus, who lived only about two hundred years after Christ. He explained the image of Daniel 2 and the four beasts of Daniel 7 in much the same way as Uriah Smith, eighteen centuries later. Astonishingly, Hippolytus wrote before the division of the Western Roman Empire and the rise of the papacy to prominence among them. Yet, simply on the basis of these two prophecies, he said: "The toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst."

Sometimes, Historicism has, under Catholic influence, been eclipsed by one or the other of these alternative schools. But it has always made a vigorous comeback. Today it is still taught by Seventh-day Adventists, the only major church that has clung to it.