

the loosing of Satan in Mohammed and the Papacy. Therefore, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were already in the "little time" of Satan's release before the end. Tudor Protestants thus had a theological explanation for the oppression of Rome. They were sustained and encouraged by Heinrich Bullinger's commentary on Revelation, by the assurance that even in suffering and persecution, God was in control.⁸ Thus, according to Richard Bauckham, the theory of putting the thousand years before the Parousia continued in the time following Joachim of Flora, even up into the Tudor era.

For various reasons, the belief that the end was near began to recede and a more optimistic view began to prevail. Only at the end of the sixteenth century, as Bauckham says of postmillennialism:

... genuine millenarianism, an optimistic outlook with strong theological roots in apocalyptic exegesis, came to prevail over a large part of English Protestant theology and had popular repercussions which have been the object of much scholarly attention. The problem of the origins of this millenarianism is a significant historical problem which has scarcely been tackled because it has rarely been sharply perceived.⁹

Bauckham has in mind here the emergence of both postmillennialism and premillennialism in the seventeenth century. This development was a decisive step in the removal of the mechanism of date-setting, which had originated in the assumption that the 1,000 years of Rev 20 "recapitulated" the 1,260 day/years of Rev 12, and invited Joachim's conversion of 1,200 days into 1,260 years.

As we shall later show, a consistent futurism, which completely removes the necessity for calculating the times, did not emerge until the early nineteenth century. Hence, the fundamental mechanism of date-setting, the 1,260 day/years of Rev 12, continues to operate in both the newly-emerging premillennialism and the modified Augustinian scheme of Puritan times.

Bauckham shows that seventeenth century millenarians looked forward to the millennium of Rev 20 as a period of future bliss for the church on earth. Continually accompanying this expectation was the prediction by both parties of the time of its beginning. The non-occurrence of the projected beginning is, of course, the proof of the fallaciousness of the theory. The ongoing of history tested this exegesis and found it wanting. The position of the seventeenth century English Puritans may be represented by Joseph Mede (1586-1638), who took the premillennial view under the influence of a contemporary Biblical writer in Germany, John Henry Alsted.¹⁰

The reasons for Alsted's adoption of premillennialism are obscure. The rediscovery of the last five chapters of Irenaeus about 1570 may have contributed to Alsted's formulation of premillennialism, since he and others used the writers of the ancient church. We may feel that the intensive Bible study of the Reformation, combined with the knowledge of antiquity, was beginning to swing the pendulum back to the primitive premillennialism of Irenaeus which had been rejected by Augustine.

Though both Mede and Alsted broke with the traditional Augustinian model, putting the 1,000 years of Rev 20 after the resurrection of the