

saints, yet they retained that part of the familiar inherited structure based on the day/year theory. Alsted used the inherited day/year scheme to predict that the millennium would begin in 1694.¹¹ Mede, more cautious, rejected the precise dating, but looked for the future kingdom of Christ.¹²

The Puritans, outstanding Bible students as they were, held that God promised a glorious future for His church in England and Europe -- a time of latter day glory or millennial bliss. Thus the millennium had been thrust into the future, but the view of the 1,260 days/years was retained and widely used to set the time of the end.

Edmund Calamy's sermon, "Trembling for the Ark of God," has a curious illustration of the effect of date-setting.¹³ Calamy was ejected from his pulpit but continued to attend services at Aldermanbury. On the 28th of December, 1662, the preacher failed to appear and Calamy preached that famous sermon concluding with these words:

We must not pry into the ark. This was the sin of the men of Bethshemesh.... Be not too curious in searching where God has not discovered or revealed. For example, there are great thoughts of heart as to when God will deliver his people, and set His churches at liberty; and many men talk much of the year 1666. Some say that shall be the year in which Antichrist shall be destroyed. And there are strange impressions upon the hearts of many learned men as to that year. Some go by the year 1669. and others pitch upon other times. But, truly, if you will have my judgement, and I am glad of this opportunity to tell you, this is to pry too much into the ark. Remember the text. "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." (Acts 1:7) And thus to fasten upon any particular time, if you find that you are deceived, this is the way to make you atheists, and thus afterward you will believe nothing. Those ministers do no service, or rather ill service, to the church of God, that fix upon the times and seasons.

A popish author says that in the year 1000 there was a general belief over the Christian world that the day of judgement should be that year, but when they saw it did not happen, they fell to their old sinning again, and were worse than before, and believed nothing. Well, God's time is the best, therefore let us not pry too much into the ark.¹⁴

The time of the end cannot be calculated. The experience and disappointment of the seventeenth century refuted the exegesis of those who tried to fix a specific date.

The 18th Century

Date-setting and the prediction of the time of the destruction of Antichrist continued through the eighteenth century in both Britain and America. Though both premillennialism and postmillennialism clung to the technique of calculating the times by the use of the day/year theory, we remark in anticipation that for the premillennialist this was no longer necessary. He had broken with the original Tyconian model of putting the 1,000 years before the end, and it only remained to abandon the day/year theory, put the seventieth week of Daniel in the future before the millennium, and thus remove the last remaining means of calculating the times. It is one of the ironies of history that premillennialism is completely free in theory from the means or need to calculate the time of the end, and yet, by clinging to the technique of calculating the times with the 1,260