

day/years, it has given the impression that date-setting is an exclusive and necessary premillennial error.

Jonathan Edwards used the 1,260-year scheme, starting at 456 A.D., a date after Genseric had taken the city of Rome. He also used 606 A.D. as the time when civil power confirmed the universal bishopric of the Pope.<sup>15</sup>

According to Nathan Hatch, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the American development added to rationalism and pietism the conception "that in America God had founded a new Israel, a people who would point the way to the millennial Kingdom."<sup>16</sup> No such idea could have arisen without the overruling idea that somehow the church had replaced Israel in the divine counsels, combined with the prevailing Whitbyan theory. This in turn rested on the long-standing day/year theory which gave a calculus for the events of the Christian era.

Two influential minds in prophetic matters of the eighteenth century, Daniel Whitby and Jonathan Edwards, do not appear to have very precise forecasts of the future, though both expected the millennium to come before the end of the world. Edwards relies on Lowman for his scheme of interpretation. The fifth vial of Rev 16 spoke of God's judgements on the throne of the beast at the Reformation. He apparently anticipated the sixth vial as something "immediately preparing the way for the destruction of spiritual Babylon."<sup>17</sup>

### The 19th Century

The nineteenth century witnessed the demise of date-setting. With the failure of prediction in the fifties and sixties of the seventeenth century, there did not appear to have been a precise date for the end of the 1,260 years which met with general acceptance until the events of 1798. However, when General Berthier entered Rome on February 10, 1798, students of prophecy felt that they could now recognize the end of the 1,260-year era of the papacy.<sup>18</sup>

The enthusiasm and unanimity with which the idea was seized that the papacy had received its "deadly wound" made it clear that the longstanding mechanism for calculating the times was still in place. The day/year theory was operative, seeking only an appropriate occasion. That hour seemed to have come when French troops under Berthier marched on Rome, established a republic, and sent the Pope into banishment. Ernest Sandeen describes the reasoning involved:

Commentators were quick to point out that this 'deadly wound' received by the papacy had been explicitly described and dated in Revelation 13. Although prophetic scholars had previously been unable to agree on what dates to assign to the rise and fall of papal power, it now became clear, after the fact, that the papacy had come to power in 538 AD.<sup>19</sup>

Sandeen continues citing Edward King:

Is not the *Papal power* which was once so terrible, and so domineering, at an end? But let us pause a little: was not this end, in other parts of the Holy Prophecies, foretold to be at the *END* of 1,260 years? And was it not foretold by Daniel to be at the *END* of a time, times, and half a time? which computation amounts to the same period . . . *THIS IS THE YEAR 1798*. Just 1,200 years ago,