

in the very beginning of the year 538, *Belsarius* put an end to the Empire and Dominion of the Goths at Rome.^20

In King's calculations, apparently, the end of the domination by the Goths meant the beginning of the ascendancy of papal Rome, which had now suffered a deadly wound, just 1,260 years later! Previous students had selected various dates for the beginning of the evolution of papal power, but this interpretation seemed convincing.

In the prophetic interest and excitement which followed, British millenarianism revived. "The Albury conferences [of 1827 and 1828], more than any other event, gave structure to the British millenarian revival, consolidating both the theology and the group of men who were to defend it."^21

In 1829, Henry Drummond summarized the conclusions reached in the two prophetic conferences. The sixth of these is: "The 1,260 years of Dan 7 and Rev 13 ought to be measured from the reign of Justinian to the French Revolution. The vials of wrath (Rev 16) are now being poured out and the second advent is imminent."^22 In this setting, "futurism" was adopted by Darby, Newton, and the Plymouth Brethren.^23

Henry Drummond went so far as to state that all of the first fifteen chapters of Revelation had already been fulfilled and that in 1827 European history was hovering somewhere between the twelfth and seventeenth verses of Revelation 16. The futurists believed that none of the events predicted in Revelation (following the first three introductory chapters) had yet occurred and that they would not occur until the end of this dispensation. Associated with this rejection of the historicists' harmonizing of Daniel and Revelation was the futurists' attack upon the day/year theory, so vital to the dating of the 1,260 years to 1798. At the first Powers Court Conference the announced topic for Wednesday was "proof if '1,260 days' means days or years...."^24

With the posing and answering of that question, the elements of a consistent futurist position were in place.

Futurism

Futurism has been suspect in some quarters because of its association with J. N. Darby. It is not possible here to discuss the intricacies of the Darbyite system. I would simply argue that the futurity of Daniel's seventieth week, with the millennium following, is a significant development of biblical theology and is not dependent on the intricacies of Darbyite exegesis.

In any case, the present argument is that the consistent futurist position is in full agreement with the basic biblical demand that the time of the end is not calculable by human wisdom. That futurist position, I would argue, was the position of Irenaeus which was rejected by Tyconius and Augustine. The intervening development between Augustine and consistent futurism was motivated by the belief in the authority of Scripture, and that belief was the leverage which made the church-historical and postmillennial day/year theory viable, until its inherent date-setting broke down at repeated points in church history, culminating in the failure of the 1798 date. It was at that point, as Sandeen recounts, that students were ready to consider the consistent futurist position.