

A CASKET FULL OF JEWELS —

William Miller's Dream

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Mention is made in *Early Writings*, page 48, about a “man with a dirt brush.” A footnote leads us to pages 81-83, where we are referred to a dream which William Miller had.

The dream itself is familiar to each of the faithful. But what does it mean?

In the dream, Miller saw a beautiful little box, which he called a casket, containing a great many “jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coin.” There is a wonderful lesson in this dream.

Just now, read the story again. It is reprinted on page two. Then return here and continue reading.

In reading the story of the dream, as presented in *Early Writings*, pages 81-83, we are happy that God sidesteps the foolishness of men and somehow restores the precious jewels.

But less often do we carefully consider the meaning of the dream. It is full of significance.

It has been suggested that the dream refers to the new discoveries in the Bible which William Miller found and proclaimed from 1831 onward to the autumn of 1844.

I here suggest that (1) the dream does, indeed, have a meaning; (2) it is an exceedingly important one; (3) the faith of the remnant will be strengthened by understanding that meaning; and (4) the explanation is so reasonable and comprehensive that the faithful—those who love God's Word, all of it—will recognize its validity.

The dream is far-reaching in its extent, and does not refer merely to the mid-19th century advent awakening and the midnight cry.

By the sin of Adam, earth was separated from heaven; and Satan hoped that God would abandon it to his devilish rule. But the plan of redemption was entered into by the Father and the Son. They were fully aware of the immense personal sacrifice it would cost them. Jesus would die for mankind and provide redemption.

However, it was not enough to provide a successful way out of this world or the grace by which it could be traversed. Humanity must also be shown the principles of the heavenly Kingdom so that, by overcoming grace, they could obey them—and their lives be transformed

and prepared for the heavenly mansions.

Just as a tree slowly grows into magnificence, God gradually gave mankind these principles over a period of time in the Hebrew Old Testament. This magnificent collection of spiritual insight was then followed by the teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the four Gospels, along with the rest of the New Testament writings.

But trouble lay ahead. As predicted in Revelation 12:12, thoroughly aroused when he failed to overcome Christ, Satan set to work in the centuries to blot the truths given in the Bible from the minds of the people.

Satan instructed his agents on a five-fold plan:

- All reading of the Scriptures was forbidden on pain of death.
- Copies of the Bible were searched for and burned.
- A few remaining copies were chained in monasteries in an unknown language and generally ignored.
- Translation of the Bible into the languages of the people was strictly prohibited.

As if a four-pronged onslaught was not enough, Satan added a fifth dimension to the attack on God's Holy Word. Through his agents, he built a massive edifice of error to take the place of the precious truths found in the Inspired Writings. One room was labeled prayers for the dead; another, the sign of the cross. Other rooms had images of dead people, Sunday sacredness, baptism of infants, and the exaltation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and our only intercessor. Still others had ministerial celibacy, papal infallibility, and the authority of church pronouncements above that of Scripture. Two of the worst were the fiendish doctrines of immortality of the soul and eternal damnation in hellfire.

God had provided a most beautiful casket of jewels; and Satan had worked with his agents, to scatter them everywhere! Most were covered by dirt while others appeared lost forever.

William Miller, in his day one of God's stalwart champions, was given a view of this. Upon seeing it, he sat down and wept.

Deeply concerned that the casket be restored and—especially—that the jewels might somehow be recovered, Miller pled with God for help.

Then a very significant event occurred.

In the dream, a man with a dirt brush immediately walked into the room and set to work. Within a remark-

ably short period of time, the jewels were restored to the casket,—which was now much larger. Indeed, there were more jewels in it than ever before! And they all shone with a far greater brilliance!

What had happened? Let us consider this carefully:

- Entering the room, the man with the dirt brush quickly set to work.
- Within a remarkably short time, he had recovered all the jewels.

- Having restored the jewels, not one was found to be missing.

- Upon walking over to the casket and examining it closely, William Miller made more discoveries:

- The casket itself was now decidedly larger.
- It contained more jewels than before.
- For some reason, all the jewels now shone with a far greater luster.

What had happened? Although not understanding

WILLIAM MILLER'S DREAM

I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiously wrought casket about ten inches long by six square, made of ebony and pearls curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a key attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, I found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coin of every dimension and value, beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket; and thus arranged they reflected a light and glory equaled only to the sun.

I thought it was not my duty to enjoy this wonderful sight alone, although my heart was overjoyed at the brilliancy, beauty, and value of its contents. I therefore placed it on a center table in my room and gave out word that all who had a desire might come and see the most glorious and brilliant sight ever seen by man in this life.

The people began to come in, at first few in number, but increasing to a crowd. When they first looked into the casket, they would wonder and shout for joy. But when the spectators increased, everyone would begin to trouble the jewels, taking them out of the casket and scattering them on the table.

I began to think that the owner would require the casket and the jewels again at my hand; and if I suffered them to be scattered, I could never place them in their places in the casket again as before; and felt I should never be able to meet the accountability, for it would be immense. I then began to plead with the people not to handle them, nor to take them out of the casket; but the more I pleaded, the more they scattered; and now they seemed to scatter them all over the room, on the floor and on every piece of furniture in the room.

I then saw that among the genuine jewels and coin they had scattered an innumerable quantity of spurious jewels and counterfeit coin. I was highly incensed at their base conduct and ingratitude, and reproved and reproached them for it; but the more I reproved, the more they scattered the spurious jewels and false coin among the genuine.

I then became vexed in my physical soul and began to use physical force to push them out of the

room; but while I was pushing out one, three more would enter and bring in dirt and shavings and sand and all manner of rubbish, until they covered every one of the true jewels, diamonds, and coins, which were all excluded from sight. They also tore in pieces my casket and scattered it among the rubbish. I thought no man regarded my sorrow or my anger. I became wholly discouraged and disheartened, and sat down and wept.

While I was thus weeping and mourning for my great loss and accountability, I remembered God, and earnestly prayed that He would send me help.

Immediately the door opened, and a man entered the room, when the people all left it; and He, having a dirt brush in His hand, opened the windows, and began to brush the dirt and rubbish from the room.

I cried to Him to forbear, for there were some precious jewels scattered among the rubbish.

He told me to "fear not," for He would "take care of them."

Then, while He brushed the dirt and rubbish, false jewels and counterfeit coin, all rose and went out of the window like a cloud, and the wind carried them away. In the bustle I closed my eyes for a moment; when I opened them, the rubbish was all gone. The precious jewels, the diamonds, the gold and silver coins, lay scattered in profusion all over the room.

He then placed on the table a casket, much larger and more beautiful than the former, and gathered up the jewels, the diamonds, the coins, by the handful, and cast them into the casket, till not one was left, although some of the diamonds were not bigger than the point of a pin.

He then called upon me to "come and see."

I looked into the casket, but my eyes were dazzled with the sight. They shone with ten times their former glory. I thought they had been scoured in the sand by the feet of those wicked persons who had scattered and trod them in the dust. They were arranged in beautiful order in the casket, every one in its place, without any visible pains of the man who cast them in. I shouted with very joy, and that shout awoke me.

— *Early Writings, 81-83*

8 the meaning of the dream, Miller rejoiced that the jewels had all been recovered, were in their proper setting in an even larger casket, and that there were even more jewels than before.

Does this restoration of the jewels refer to the work accomplished through William Miller?

Decidedly not. His faithful efforts provided an excellent beginning, and we are thankful for what he did. Yet he neither taught nor even accepted the Sabbath truth. In spite of the fact that a number of his own children did, Miller never accepted the truth about the state of the dead.

So then, we must consider this dream more closely. What had happened?

- All the jewels were recovered.
- More were added to them.
- A new, more magnificent and larger casket had been provided, which now contained this larger collection.
- Many of the new jewels were larger than those in the former casket.
- All the jewels shone with a far greater luster than ever before.
- The jewels were all perfectly arranged. Although some were large and others small, they all perfectly matched into a marvelous whole.
- There was now a perfect, complete number of jewels; not one was missing.

Consider, for a moment, how many truths were lost during the Dark Ages. A terrific loss had occurred.

Martin Luther, Ulric Zwingli, John Calvin, William Farel, John Wesley, Count Zinzendorf, and others tried to recover the lost gems of truth; yet there was so much dirt covering them! The traditions of men had obscured the truths which mankind needed.

But when the man with the dirt brush set to work, he did His work with remarkable speed. Consider how long it took to prepare the Bible. Forty writers, over a span of 1,500 years, were guided in its formation.

In contrast, the restoration of all those truths—plus many more facets of truth—occurred in one person's lifetime!

We do not know the date of William Miller's dream; yet it is likely that it occurred during his preaching ministry or prior to his death, when he felt so disappointed. Although he laid a good foundation, an important one, he brought to light relatively few, new truths.

In the providence of God, it was the weakest of the weak, little Ellen, through whom came the restoration of the casket in its entirety. If you have not, you will want to read the whole story in my book, *Prophet of the End*; in the early spring of 1845 that seventeen-year-old girl traveled to her first speaking appointment while lying down under a blanket in the back of a wagon. The

girl did not have the strength to sit up, and had to be helped into the home where she was to speak. (Throughout her lecture, she spoke with clarity and strength; but as soon as she was done, the former exhaustion returned.)

How can anything come from such a frail source? Yet, over the following seventy years, God worked through this dedicated instrument to restore all the gems!

First, through this agency, the dirt of human error covering the precious Bible truths were fully brushed away.

Second, those who daily read and accept the precious truths in the Spirit of Prophecy will agree when I say that, through Ellen White, God gave us more light in the pages of the Spirit of Prophecy than we had before!

I here refer to the detailed clarification. As she herself said, the basic principles are all in the Bible. However, through her, God gave us an immense amount of light on Bible prophecy, last day events, health reform, true education, personal ministry, public evangelism, medical practice, interpersonal relationships, courtship and marriage, and a complete inspired commentary on the entire Bible! Thousands of articles, dozens of books were provided—more written information than by any other woman in history, and more than nearly any man in history has ever penned.

Consider just one topic: the guidance and raising of children. How much information will you find on this in the Old and New Testament? Yes, we agree that the underlying principles are there; but hundreds upon hundreds of detailed principles are given in the Spirit of Prophecy. If you question this, read *Child Guidance* and count how many divinely given principles you come across.

How much information on last-day events is in the Bible? How much is given in the Spirit of Prophecy?

William Miller's dream has been fulfilled to the letter.

- The jewels were rapidly restored—21 times faster, in fact (1,500 years divided by 70).
- All the jewels were restored, plus so many more—that a much larger case had to be provided to hold them all.
- Some of the new jewels were much bigger than the earlier ones.
- As a result of the restoration, all the jewels—old and new—shine with a far greater luster.
- The jewels were perfectly coordinated and arranged. God's principles never disagree with one another.
- Not one jewel was missing; they are all in the new, larger casket!

Those who love God's Word—all of it—will recognize that the Spirit of Prophecy is the fulfillment of William Miller's dream. Thank God for what He has given us! Value it! Read it carefully every day! Share it with

others! Doing both will reveal how much you value it.

And doing so will change you! Your own countenance will glow as you gaze down upon the radiant light streaming from the jewels in the case.

Now for four definitions:

- *What is the casket?* It is the precious manuscripts and books of prophets and apostles, containing the divinely given Word of God. With the lid closed, it is the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy on your shelf, before you open the covers. Remember that, unopened, the casket does you little good.

- *What are the jewels?* They are the truths of God's Word. The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy are equally inspired, and Heaven's gift to you. Value them enough to read them both every day! Put them into practice in your own life, and share their sweet messages with others. Hand out the books which contain these truths.

- *What is the dirt?* It is the sayings of men, intended by Satan to warp the truths or eliminate them altogether. And herein is a warning to us today, since "traditions" are the clever sayings of churchmen and ecclesiastical councils, as well as the customs and superstitions of the people. Beware lest, having bought the truth, you sell it in a cheap market of approval by some man; perhaps some itinerant preacher who passes through your area. Stay with God's Word! Refuse to accept smooth-tongued theories which appear so beguiling.

- *And who is the man with the dirt brush?* He would be the angel who, especially, guided Ellen White in the preparation of her writings.

The man with the dirt brush cleared away the errors of the Dark Ages. When did this man start His work? When does it end?

Are the efforts of Huss, Luther, Wesley, and others included in the restoration of truth? Yes; but note that, in the dream, the man with the dirt brush did His work rapidly. I suggest that this primarily refers to the foundation laid by Miller, but especially to the framework of truth erected through Ellen White.

But could it not be that the man with the dirt brush completed His work before Ellen came on the stage of action? We have a direct statement which clarifies that point:

"I saw that some of the people of God are stupid and dormant and but half awake; they do not realize the time we are now living in, and that the man with the 'dirt brush' has entered, and that some are in danger of being swept away. I begged of Jesus to save them, to spare them a little longer, and let them see their awful danger, that they might get ready before it be forever too late."—*Early Writings*, 48.

The dirt brush was moving during Ellen White's ministry; that is what the above passage says!

Those not willing to let the truths of God's Word clean the dirt off their lives—will perish in their sins. That is another fact mentioned in the above quotation. It was with the publication and distribution of the Spirit of Prophecy writings that the dirt brush could properly clean God's people.

Think not that the "man with the dirt brush," mentioned on page 48, has some other application than William Miller's dream. The footnote at the bottom of the page provides a clear connection.

The dirt today is not on the jewels; it is on us! Our minds are clouded by worldliness. All about are those who are bound by the cords of family relationships and false religious systems (see *Early Writings*, pages 240-242). Only an acceptance of the truth can free them.

Early Writings, pages 74-76, speaks about the "scattering time" and the present "gathering time." Page 74 explains the two terms. God's people were scattered and now are being gathered.

Yet, to a lesser degree, there could be a secondary application to Miller's dream. For long centuries, God's Word was scattered. Through the Spirit of Prophecy, it has been gathered again. Let us now feast upon it. The promise is given that, in the larger casket, all the jewels are present—all of the "new light" is in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy! None will be found apart from them!

Let us now conclude this brief study:

William Miller began a good work, which Ellen White finished. I say "finished" advisedly; for though the truths are all now in the Spirit of Prophecy, they are not entirely in our minds and experience. We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy to keep searching for the "new light"; yet we are repeatedly told the "new light" will only be found in God's Inspired Writings, and will be clearly stated. Apart from God's Word, there is no light.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."—*Isaiah 8:20*.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—*Psalms 119:105*.

Open the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy—and read in them every day! Please: Do it more than once every day! Gaze upon the diamonds, the sapphires, the precious stones, the emeralds, the onyx stones. Examine the precious gold and silver coins.

Let the glorious vision transform you! For, indeed, it will—if you will submit your life anew to God with every viewing.

You are beholding the character of God; and, through the working of the Holy Spirit and your own diligent efforts, the view can remold you into His image.

The God of heaven gave us a precious gift. Do not let it be offered for you in vain. —Vance Ferrell