

Some Highlights of the Life of **William Miller** (1782-1849) (www.APLib.org)

See *Memoirs of William Miller*, by S. S. Bliss, 1853

<i>Date</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Event</i>
1782/02/15	0	Birth
1803	21	Married Lucy Smith
1812	30	War of 1812
1816	34	Converted

On the Lord's day following, it devolved on Captain Miller, as usual in the minister's absence, to read a discourse of the deacons' selection. They had chosen one on the "importance of Parental Duties." Soon after commencing, he was overpowered by the inward struggle of emotion, with which the entire congregation deeply sympathized, and took his seat. His deistical principles seemed an almost insurmountable difficulty with him. Soon after, "Suddenly," he says, "the character of a Saviour was vividly impressed upon my mind. It seemed that there might be a Being so good and compassionate as to himself atone for our transgressions, and thereby save us from suffering the penalty of sin. I immediately felt how lovely such a Being must be; and imagined that I could cast myself into the arms of, and trust in the mercy of, such an One. But the question arose, How can it be proved that such a Being does exist? Aside from the Bible, I found that I could get no evidence of the existence of such a Saviour, or even of a future state. I felt that to believe in such a Saviour without evidence would be visionary in the extreme. I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Saviour as I needed; and I was perplexed to find how an uninspired book should develop principles so perfectly adapted to the wants of a fallen world. I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God. They became my delight; and in Jesus I found a friend. The Saviour became to me the chiefest among ten thousand; and the Scriptures, which before were dark and contradictory, now became the lamp to my feet and light to my path. My mind became settled and satisfied. I found the Lord God to be a Rock in the midst of the ocean of life. The Bible now became my chief study, and I can truly say, I searched it with great delight. I found the half was never told me. I wondered why I had not seen its beauty and glory before, and marvelled that I could have ever rejected it. I found everything revealed that my heart could desire, and a remedy for every disease of the soul. I lost all taste for other reading, and applied my heart to get wisdom from God." {1853 SB, MWM 66.3}

1831	49	Began public ministry
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THE public labors of Mr. Miller, according to the best evidence to be obtained, date from the autumn of 1831. He had continued to be much distressed respecting his duty to "go and tell it to the world," which was constantly impressed on his mind. One Saturday, after breakfast, he sat down at his desk to examine some point, and, as he arose to go out to work, it came home to him with more force than ever, "Go and tell it to the world." He thus writes:- {1853 SB, MWM 97.2}

"The impression was so sudden, and came with such force, that I settled down into my chair, saying, 'I can't go, Lord.' 'Why not?' seemed to be the response; and then all my excuses came up - my want of ability, etc.; but my distress became so great, I entered into a solemn covenant with God, that, if he would open the way, I would go and perform my duty to the world. 'What do you mean by opening the way?' seemed to come to me. 'Why,' said I, 'if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I find in the Bible about the Lord's coming.' Instantly all my burden was gone, and I rejoiced that I should not probably be thus called upon; for I had never had such an invitation. My trials were not known, and I had but little expectation of being invited to any field of labor. {1853 SB, MWM 97.3}

"In about half an hour from this time, before I had left the room, a son of Mr. Guilford, of Dresden, about sixteen miles from my residence, came in, and said that his father had sent for me, and wished me to go home with him. Supposing that he wished to see me on some business, I asked him what he wanted. He replied, that there was to be no preaching in their church the next day, and his father wished to have me come and talk to the people on the subject of the Lord's coming. I was immediately angry with myself for having made the covenant I had; I rebelled at once against the Lord, and determined not to go. I left the boy, without giving him any answer, and retired in great distress to a grove near by. There I struggled with the Lord for about an hour, endeavoring to release myself from the covenant I had made with him; but I could get no relief. It was impressed upon my conscience, 'Will you make a covenant with God, and break it so soon?' and the exceeding

sinfulness of thus doing overwhelmed me. I finally submitted, and promised the Lord that, if he would sustain me, I would go, trusting in him to give me grace and ability to perform all he should require of me. I returned to the house, and found the boy still waiting. He remained till after dinner, and I returned with him to Dresden. {1853 SB, MWM 98.1}

"The next day, which, as nearly as I can remember, was about the first Sabbath in August, 1833,* I delivered my first public lecture on the Second Advent. The house was well filled with an attentive audience. As soon as I commenced speaking, all my diffidence and embarrassment were gone, and I felt impressed only with the greatness of the subject, which, by the providence of God, I was enabled to present. At the close of the services on the Sabbath, I was requested to remain and lecture during the week, with which I complied. They flocked in from the neighboring towns; a revival commenced, and it was said that in thirteen families all but two persons were hopefully converted. {1853 SB, MWM 98.2}

1833	51	Licensed to preach by his local Baptist church
1840	58	Signed name as head of group of ministers to call for a general conference on the Second Coming of Jesus, to be held in Boston [see <i>The First Report of the General Conference of Christians Expecting the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ</i> ; held October 14, 15]; couldn't attend because of typhoid fever; those who did: Joshua V. Himes, Henry Dana Ward, Henry Jones, Josiah Litch, Joseph Bates
1844/03/21	62	Time passed first expected Jesus to return (Jewish year March 21, 1843 to March 21, 1844)
1844/05/02	62	Letter "To Second Advent Believers"

Were I to live my life over again, with the same evidence that I then had, to be honest with God and man I should have to do as I have done. Although opposers said it would not come, they produced no weighty arguments. It was evidently guess-work with them; and I then thought, and do now, that their denial was based more on an unwillingness for the Lord to come than on any arguments leading to such a conclusion. {1853 SB, MWM 256.3}

"I confess my error, and acknowledge my disappointment; yet I still believe that the day of the Lord is near, even at the door; and I exhort you, my brethren, to be watchful, and not let that day come upon you unawares. The wicked, the proud, and the bigot, will exult over us. I will try to be patient. God will deliver the godly out of temptation, and will reserve the unjust to be punished at Christ's appearing. {1853 SB, MWM 256.4}

"I want you, my brethren, not to be drawn away from the truth. Do not, I pray you, neglect the Scriptures. They are able to make you wise unto eternal life. Let us be careful not to be drawn away from the manner and object of Christ's coming; for the next attack of the adversary will be to induce unbelief respecting these. The manner of Christ's coming has been well discussed. Permit me, then, to address you on the subject of {1853 SB, MWM 256.5}

1844/10/06	62	Accepts the date of 10/22
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FOR a few months previous to this time, the attention of some had been directed to the tenth day of the seventh month of the current Jewish year, as the probable termination of several prophetic periods. This was not generally received with favor by those who sympathized with Mr. Miller, till a few weeks previous to the time designated, which, on that year, following the reckoning of the Caraites, fell on the 22nd day of October. Mr. Miller had, a year and a half previous, called attention to the seventh month as an important one in the Jewish dispensation; but as late as the date of his last letter (September 30) he had discountenanced the positiveness with which some were then regarding it. On the 6th of October he was first led to favor the expectation which pointed to that month, and thus wrote: "If Christ does not come within twenty or twenty-five days, I shall feel twice the disappointment I did in the spring." {1853 SB, MWM 269.4}

1849/12/17	67	Death
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 *The printed article from which this is copied was written in 1845. By an examination of his correspondence, it appears that he must have begun to lecture in August, 1831. So that this date is a mistake of the printer or an error in Mr. Miller's memory. As no mention is made of this in the letter to Elder Hendryx, from which the previous extract is made, he could not have gone to Dresden before the second Sabbath in August, 1831. [footnote in original]