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Edward Taylor's Boxes, Locks, and Keys

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EDWARD TAYLOR'S BOXES, LOCKS, AND KEYS

(TITLE)

BY

Virginia L. Evans

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Although vivid imagery pervades Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations, one of the clusters of images of particular interest is that of the box, the lock, and the key. Sometimes these images appear separately. Sometimes one finds two of them used together. But, quite often, all three of them seem necessary. They are actually companion pieces. When one has something of value, what is more logical than that one lock the valued item in a safe place, in a safe container, so that no thief can deprive the owner of the precious thing? A lock quite often, then becomes a necessity. But, to secure the lock, one must have a key. This also works in exactly the reverse order. A key needs must be employed to open a lock which keeps a box or other container a place of refuge. A lock must be in good working order so that the proper key can open it. And of what good is a locked box which contains nothing? The search for critical material reinforcing the ideas herein set forth based upon Taylor's use of the container theme and the box-lock-key imagery was not successful. The only reference available was in an article by Evan Prosser in The New England Quarterly just last year, and his words on the subject are meager, being only a recognition of the motif which runs through several of the Meditations. They were, however, eagerly seized and appropriated to the use of this paper.

According to Prosser

The "container" theme in Taylor's imagery is the most persistent one running through the poetry that serves

to create a closed-world atmosphere....this sort of very common imagery is that one is enclosed by and with Christ, united and forever living together....Another set of associated images having the same general function is that of box, lock and key...¹

It is true that Taylor, in his Preparatory Meditations, both Series One and Series Two, searches for a world wherein he and his God, his Lord, are one--that they contain one another and are contained by one another. At the same time, Taylor laments his unworthiness of God's concern for him and yet demands that concern for himself. He wants to be boxed in by God's love and grace and wants God's love boxed up within himself. The box is a container, and in various forms Taylor uses it in both series. The box is not always made of the same material, nor is it always in the same shape, but it is always a container of some Divine substance, or else it contains nothing of value--is quite void of all good. In the latter case, it deals almost exclusively with the human heart. The lock to the empty or corrupt heart usually has rusted and stands in need of oil, but if God will oil the lock, then surely one of God's keys will open the lock so that the container, whether it be a box, a chest, a cabinet, or some other form of container, can be opened and be made useful. The box, the container, will be the first image for study, followed by the lock, which must be followed by the key. And then, as has been mentioned, there are some poems which contain all three of the cluster of images--the box, the lock, and the key.

Meditation 50 in Series Two² contains the box image throughout

¹Evan Prosser, "Edward Taylor's Poetry," The New England Quarterly, XL (Sept., 1967), pp. 376, 377.

²Edward Taylor, The Poems of Edward Taylor, ed., Donald E. Stanford (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960). All references to Taylor's Preparatory Meditations are from this volume.

most of its eight stanzas. In it, the "Artists Hand," which is the hand of God, makes a "Box most lively" which is "More rich than gold Brimfull of Truth enleid." This box, which is, of course, man, "should forth a race of boxes send." But, sad to relate, "...this box of Pearle fell, Broke, undone." Taylor's Puritan belief caused his constant awareness of man's fall from God's grace. Sin entered into the world with this fall, and truth left. The box "was filld with Falshood: Boxes teend of Sory." And then the Artist made another man, "A Box of Pearle," which took Him four thousand years to create, and put into it "their glorious Truth to keep." So Taylor tells of Christ and his being sent into the world as a man, to bring the truth to the people.

"Thou givst thy Truth to them, thus true they bee.
 They bring their witness out for thee. Hereby
 Their Truth appeares embboxt indeed in thee:
 And thou the true Messiah shin'st thereby."

In stanza eight, Taylor speaks to Christ, calling Him "O Box of Truth!" and continuing, asks Him to "tenent my Credence in/The mortase of thy Truth: and Thou in Kee." Taylor wants to be so closely con-creted or cemented to Christ and His truth that they can never be parted. And, again, using the word "box" as a verb with the use of a prefix, Taylor tells Christ, "Embox my Faith, Lord, in thy Truth a part/And I'st by Faith embbox thee in my heart." He is, in effect, telling the Lord to keep His feith and Taylor will keep his. This would be their bargain.

Thus Meditation 50, Series Two, has dealt specifically with the box. Perfume boxes, boxes to contain sweet or fragrant smells, figure

also in the Meditations. On Adam's "farm," Taylor has a "Civet Box."

Here's Order Choice, Beds, Allies all in print.
 Here bud sweet blushing Blossoms, sparkling brave
 And Beautiful rich, spangled Flowers bepinckt
 Which White, Red, Blushie, Cherry Cheek't Smiles have,
 Making Celestiall aire their Civit Box
 Of Aromatick Vapors: Spirituall Drops.(2:83,13-18)

"Spirituell Drops" are in that perfume box, just as "Spiced Vapors"
 are the contents of another "Civet Box."

The Breathings of thy Spice beds Gardens Spot,
 And of thy sweet sweet flowers stowd in th'Aire
 This sweet breath breatht out from thy Garden knot
 Perfume the Skies and all their riches fair.
 Thy Garden Bed thy Civit Box gives vent,
 To th'Gales of Spiced Vapors, sweetest Sent.(2:130,7-12)

That Taylor enjoys the perfumes of the beauties of nature as exemplified in the above selections cannot be doubted. He glories in the aromas, the scents, the perfumes from God's natural world. But Jesus, too, is a "Civet box":

A Cabbinet of Holiness, Civit box
 Of Heavenly Aromatick, ...

 ...golden box
 Top full of Saving Grace, ...(2:163,43-44;49-50)

Not only is Christ a perfume box, but he is also a container of "Holiness" as well as a very valuable box made of gold which is crammed full of the grace that saves mankind. But the next example contains a twist. Now Taylor petitions his Lord and states that

My heart thy Spice box then shall breath sweet aire.(2:65,48)

Taylor hopes that his own heart can become a container of His spice, for only in this way can he become purified. He wants his heart to become a container of precious qualities of God as he further petitions Him.

And make my heart thine Alabaster Box.
Of my Rich Spickaard to perfume thy locks.(2:19,29-30)

But he will not be content just to hold in his heart the perfume, his heart must be of something precious. But it is not gold this time. He has asked that it be made God's "Alabaster Box." Alabaster, which is white, surely denotes purity. Taylor's heart must contain God, just as he desires God to contain or maintain and sustain him, according to these lines.

My heart, oh Lord, for thy Possider gain.
Be thou thyselfe my sweet Perfume therein.
Make it thy Box, and let thy Precious Name
My Precious Ointment be embord therein.
If I thy box and thou my Ointment bee
I shall be sweet, say, sweet enough for thee.(1:2,19-24)

Taylor's heart is the box for God's ointment, if he and God keep this agreement which Taylor is trying to make. But note that

A Box of Ointments, broke; sweetness most sweet.(1:3,7)

Jesus, whose broken body is symbolically partaken of in the Communion Service for which the Meditations serve to prepare Taylor, is the "Box of Ointments" which has been broken. Thus both man and Christ are the same thing--they are one, because each is a box of ointment. Further, in the same Meditation, Taylor says,

Lord, breake thy Box of Ointment on my Head.(1:2,37)

He wants his Lord to imbue him with the healing powers and the aroma that is His. But what kind of civit box is this?

...Was ever Heart like mine?
.....
...Civit-Box of Sins(1:40,2;6)

This civit box has anything but a good smell. Its aroma is foul. Yet all of the civit boxes mentioned heretofore have been filled with

sweet perfumes. One must conclude that these boxes may be filled with good or bad, but thus far the good predominates. However, there are temptations.

My Silver Chest a Sparke of Love up locks:
 And out will let it when I can't well Use.
 The gawdy World me courts t'unlock the Box,
 A motion makes, where Love may pick and choose.
 Her downy Bosom opes, that pedlars Stall,
 Of Wealth, Sports, Honours, Beauty, slikt up all.

 Her chest Unlocks;... (1:4,1-6;11)

Taylor's "Silver Chest" or "Box," is tempted by the world. Will he unlock his heart (box) to the world? The world tempts him with "slikt up" things from "that pedlars Stall" (which is a very intriguing metaphor). To clarify the above reference, it must be noted that the "Her" in line 11 which unlocks the chest refers to "Love" and not to Taylor's tempted heart.

The following lines indicate perhaps Taylor's tempted "Silver Chest" has succumbed to that temptation. A box is only one of the images.

What is my Title but an empty Claim?
 Am I a fading Flower within thy Knot?
 A Rattle, or a gilded Box, a Flame
 Of Painted Fire, a glorious Weedy Spot?
 The Channell ope of Union, the ground
 Of Wealth, Relation: yet I'm barren found? (1:37,13-18)

A "gilded Box" could indicate wealth, but it seems to indicate merely that the gold is on the surface--that it is painted, perhaps, the color of gold, and is therefore good for nothing except show. Such is not the case as Taylor excitedly and emphatically states as he ejaculates,

Oh! Wealthy Box: more Golden far than Gold
 A Case more Worth than Wealth: a richer Delph,
 Than Rubies; Cabinet, than Pearles here told

.....
 Thou art their Cabinet, and they thy Treasure.(1:27,13-15;24)

Jesus is the "wealthy Box" or "Cabinet" which contains the treasure of the unworldly abstract attributes of God that have far more worth than does gold. Thus, in the last two examples, Taylor is a gilded box perhaps, and God is an extremely truly precious box. But in the following lines, the "box of Wealth" is Taylor's heart.

And make my heart unlock its box of Wealth
 And thence its Love, thy treasure, send thyselfe.(2:123B,41-42)

The treasure in Taylor's heart is "Love," which is God's treasure. This again brings forth the paradox that man must contain something of God within him, just as God must contain man within his care. The love in Taylor's heart is his own, but it is of God, and when God has it sent back to Him He receives a part of man which is, in reality, His already. The image of the chest as being God's heart is inherent in the following lines.

The Spring of Life, and all life's Sweetness Choice
 Watcht in thy Heart. (Oh! how sweet is this Chest?)
 (2:126,7-8)

One notes that Taylor has used the word "Chest" as a pun, a typical device for Taylor. But, a chest is a container, a box.

Taylor employs the image of the box for different items in several of his Meditations. He speaks of this world as a "Silver Box of Winde,"(2:93,16) and states that "Words spoken are but breezing boxed Winde."(2:158,2) Any seamstress should be familiar with this next box image.

But oh! alas my pin box is too small
 To hold praise meet for such praiseworthiness.(2:160,37-38)

But it does not take a seamstress to own this kind of "pin box" because it refers to the head and mouth, but, more specifically, to the brain and possibly the heart. It sets forth the insignificance of man in reference to God. Taylor's pin box will not hold enough praise for his Maker. But he does have some praise within it. He can praise God a little. To further illustrate Taylor's versatility and his avoidance of monotonous repetitions as he meditates upon the sacrament he uses another kind of box, a box that holds a product that is not always looked upon by the strictly professing Christians as being good for the earthly "temple of God":

My Soul would gazing all amazed stand,
To see the burning Sun...

.....

Ly buttend up in a Tobacco box.(2:24,1-4)

What a ridiculous picture! How could the burning Sun be contained in as small a thing as a tobacco box? Taylor has made a play on the word "Sun," for it also refers to the "Son" of God who is also the light or "Sun" of this world. And yet this is not unlike the keeping of God or the love of God in one's heart. This would, then, make the heart a tobacco box. The poem, indeed, does proceed to assert that the great spirit of God can be held inside of an insignificant man. And thus Taylor has reiterated his constant theme of the unity of God and man. In another of his Meditations, speaking to God as is his wont, he says, "And strike thy sparkes within my tinderbox."(1:49,4) He seems to want God to "set him on fire" in His cause. He wants to be "red hot" for Christ. The same image becomes prominent again when Taylor says, "Thou knowst the Case, and Cases of my Soule./A Box of tinder:..." (2:25,2-3) In this case (and there is doubtless a pun intended on

the words "Case, and Cases," perhaps referring to "cases of conscience"), the "Box of tinder" is Taylor's heart, which is smouldering with passions. He is not worthy of God. There is no room in his box for God. The learned Edward Taylor also reaches into Greek mythology for a box--"Pandora's Box" from which she let trouble fly into the world.(2:79,4)

The versatile Taylor believes that the next two boxes can prevent trouble or cause trouble, be the most or least valuable possession or part of man. They are somewhat different from those containers mentioned thus far.

An head, my Lord, an honourable piece;
 Nature's high tower, and wealthy Jewelry;
 A box of Brains, furl'd up in reasons fleeces:
 Casement of Senses: Reason's Chencery:
 Religions Chancell pla-mster'd ore
 With Damask Roses that Sweet wisdom bore.(2:36,1-6)

A "box of Brains"! And yet does this not describe the human head? It should contain the very things which Taylor names. In this instance, at least, the human head has considerable value. This box is precious because of its function, which is primarily reason. In the next selection, which refers also to a head, the word "box" operates as a verb, and the head, of course, is Christ.

Thou art an Head, the richest, that e're wore
 A Crown of Glory, where the Kirnell lies
 Of deepest Wisdom, boxt in Brains, that sore
 In highest Notions, of the richest Sise
 Comper'd whereto man's Wisdom up doth rise
 Like Childrens catching speckled Butterflies.(2:37,7-12)

Man's wisdom amounts to little when it is compared to the wisdom "boxt in Brains" which is the Lord's. Here are two instances, then, in which "boxes of Brains" figure. Man's reason is little in comparison

to that of God. Both man and God have these boxes, but man cannot hold in his box what God contains in His. God can contain all that man knows and can give to man's "honourable piece" more knowledge and sweetness than he has had heretofore. Man can know some of God while God can enfold all mankind. And Taylor has again reinforced his paradoxical proposition of God in man at the same time that man is in God.

Speaking still of the head, but using a slightly different metaphor, that of another container, a till or drawer, Taylor prays

My Only Dear, Dear Lord, I search to finde
 My golden Arck of Thought, thoughts fit and store:
 And search each Till and Drawer of my minde
 For thoughts full fit to Deck thy kindness o're,
 But find my foreheade Emptie of such thoughts
 And so my words are simply ragged, nought.(2:141,1-6)

This certainly is not the "box of brains" spoken of above. This head has nothing in it. Each nook and cranny is bare. Taylor simply cannot find words or ideas to express himself as he would like to express himself in God's behalf. There seems to be nothing of God in this man's head that is worthy of God. In another of his Meditations, Taylor says

My head, my Lord, that ivory Cabinet
 'S a nest of Brains dust, dry, ne're yet could Ware
 The Velvet locks of Vertue for its deck
 Or golden Fleece of Wiedoms virdent hair.
 The Scull without, not fring'd with Wisdom fleece.
 The pan within a goose pen full of geese.(2:45,1-6)

Taylor's container is here not a box, but a container of another sort for the most part, a cabinet. Surely a cabinet made of ivory is extremely precious. Ivory represents both wealth and good taste. This, however, is not so in this particular instance. The "ivory

Cabinet" contains no wisdom; it is dry and contains only dust. Taylor thus complains to God or tries to excuse himself for his poor poetry by letting him know that his mind is dried up. It reiterates the idea of the empty "Till and Drawer" of the previous allusion in which Taylor proclaims and bewails his empty headedness in connection with his inability to write and sing God's praises satisfactorily. He has nothing of value in his ivory cabinet. When he speaks of the "pen" (another container), the inside of the head, as "a goose pen full of geese," he indicates also a confused state of affairs. God is not within him, and he needs God's presence there.

Taylor tells here of a vile container that holds quite worthwhile things, which is in direct contrast with the last two passages quoted.

 Ney Shining Angells in an holy fret
 Confounded are, to see our Bodies Vile
 Made Cabinets of Sparkling Gems that far
 Out shine the brightest shining heavenly Star.(2:75,3-6)

Man came from Clay from the Master Artist's hands which created him in His own image. Perhaps the angels were astounded to see creatures formed from such lowly material become containers of worthwhile Godly attributes. Taylor here implies that the angels just may be a little jealous as well as dismayed and astonished. They surely do not fear that man may take their place with God because they know that man, because of his origin, does not deserve to receive God's gifts!

 That these dark Cells, and Mudwalld Tents defild,
 With nastiness should Cabinets be made
 For th'Choicest Pearls in Glories ring enfold
 Out shining all the shining starry trade.
 Its glorious Wonders, wrought by Graces hand,
 Whereat bright Angells all amazed stand.(2:75,49-54)

Note that these last two passages originate in the same poem.

Taylor says that

The Richest Jewell in the Cabinet
Of Nature made, this Spirituall Life is set. (2:89,47-48)

He calls the heart "His Jewells Cabbinet," (1:40-14) the "His" referring to God. Taylor also designates the heart as being "Loves Cabbinet."

I faile the Choicest Love my soule Can get,
Would to thy Gracious selfe a Gift present
But cannot now unscrew Loves Cabbinet.
Say not this is a Niggards Complement.
For seeing it is thus I choose now rather
To send thee th'Cabbinet, and Pearle together. (1:85,31-36)

Taylor finds himself incapable of opening his heart to God. He feels the need to send his love to God, but since he cannot open the container of that love he feels that he must send that container and the jewel (the Pearle) that it contains. Is the word "Cabbinet" used the second time in a double sense? Perhaps Taylor wishes to die and go to Christ. This does seem to be a possibility, although the whole heart being sent to God seems to be the primary idea. He desires to be with and contained by God, just as his heart, his cabinet, contains that pearl of love. He yearns to be one with God. Taylor speaks again of worth in "Nature's Cabinet" in another Meditation.

Love borrows Wisdom's Eyes and with them lookes
O're Nature's Cabbinet of Jewells bright
And then attempts th'Accounts down in Gods Books
If Credit may be made and they made right.
But here she findes the Sums so greate, the Debt
Exceed the Worth in Nature's Cabinet. (2:92,25-30)

Taylor has given the image also of a bookkeeper's ledger and deals with credit and debt as Love assesses the worth of the "jewells" in

Nature's Cabinet. The books do not balance. Man owes a big debt to God's love.

This next cabinet holds something different from jewels, a thing which only God dispenses--grace.

Faith doth ore shine all other Grace set in
 The Soule that Cabinet of Grace up fild
 As far as doth the Shining Sun in'ts run
 Walking within its golden path ore gild
 The little pinking Stare playing bee peep.
 As walking in their Azure room they keep.(2:154,21-26)

The soul is a "Cabinet of Grace" above, and that soul belongs to man. Note the fact that the following "Cabinet of Grace" belongs to Christ. The same image refers either to man or God as Taylor sees fit to employ it as he works with the thought of being enveloped by Christ and in turn enveloping Christ in his heart.

Thy Will Christs Cabinet of Rich Grace Wares
 Top full of Grace of Every Sort and Size.(2:135,9-10)

Thus both man and Christ own cabinets of grace. Taylor also uses cabinet imagery when referring to the heart as a container of love.

I fain would give thee all my Love and all
 Its Cabinet wherein it keeps its Case.(2:158,13-14)

"Cabinet" could refer not only to the heart but also to the whole human frame. If it does, then "Case" could refer to the heart. Or, "Case" may be used in a legal sense rather than as a container, the heart. But, even in the legal sense, it could be called a container of whatever the case consisted. Taylor questions his Lord.

What wilt thou, Lord, deny mee this, that would
 Not once deny to lay thy Choice Life downe?
 To make a Cabinet of't more worth than gold,
 To give to thine, and buy them Glories Crowne.(2:32,55-58)

The "Cabinet" of Christ's life, which is priceless, He gave to redeem

mankind. Taylor fails to see why One who has given so much for man will deny him the boon he requests. Indeed, Christ's statement was of more "worth than gold."

Christ as a cabinet also dominates the following stanza.

Oh! Choicest Cabbinet, more Choice than gold
 Or Wealthist Pearles Wherein all Pearls of Price
 All Treasures of Choice Wisdom manifold
 Inthroned reign. Thou Cabinet most Choice
 Not scant to hold, not stained with cloudy geere
 The Shining Sun of Wisdom bowling there.(1:13,7-12)

Taylor praises the Lord, the most perfect of all beings, the "Choicest Cabbinet." The idea of His being full of wisdom is similar to the poems cited earlier in this paper about the head of man being a "box of brains" and Christ, the head, containing infinite wisdom. And again Christ is a cabinet.

All always as transcendent Stones bright, set,
 Encabin'd ere in thee their Cabbinet.(2:46,23-24)

As always, Christ as the cabinet contains that which is above price. In the next two selections, the word "cabinet" functions as a verb, as Taylor questions God.

...How poore am I of Love
 To thee, when all this Glory at my Doore
 Stands knocking for admission: and doth shove
 To ope't, and Cabbinet in't all her Store?(2:6,37-40)

He laments his dearth of love for Christ when he cannot open the door of his heart to let Christ's love enter and remain. God's love would fill his heart and contain it, but he finds himself unable to answer the knock at his heart's door. He wonders that his soul and will are so weak and puny that he cannot take advantage of his opportunity to take in God's love so that God can hold him and his love. Taylor specifically, and man generally, need this exchange of love. But his

problem seems to be that he has little love of his own. He meditates and allows his fertile imagination full play:

Suppose this Earthy globe a Cocoe Nut

.....

But be it so, who then could breake this Shell,
To pick the kirnell, wald within this Cell?

Should I, my Lord, call thee this nut, I should
Debase they Worth....

.....

And it Encabbineting Jewell wise
Up in thy person, be'st night Deified?
It lay as pearle in dust in this wide world,
But thou it tookst, and in thy person firld.

.....

This bit of Humane Flesh Divinizd in
The Person of the Son of God; the Cell
Of Soule, and Blood, where Love Divine doth swim
(2:34,5-8;18-18;25-27)

First of all, Taylor compares the world to a nut and then compares Christ to a nut. He refers to "cells" and pearl-making oysters. All of the things to which he refers contains something precious; a jewel is "encabbineted" in them.

The able Taylor chooses to use the coffin in his attempts at variety in expressing himself and God. Can a coffin, that box for the dead, contain anything precious? Perhaps. Taylor writes that "my Soule would Coffin'd ly,/sithin my Body." (1: "The Return," 39-40) The soul is precious, and yet it is but seldom that any man would think of his own body as being a coffin for his soul. But it is possible for one to possess a dead soul. If so, there is hardly a more appropriate name to designate the owner of that soul, the container of that soul, than "coffin." When Taylor compares Jonah, the Biblical character who was swallowed by the huge whale, as a type of Christ, he relates that the whale's "...Chest/Became the Prophets

Coffin for the best."(2:30,29-30) Taylor compares Jonah's interment in the whale's interior to that of the interment of the Christ in Joseph's tomb, and of the subsequent regurgitation of Jonah by the whale to the emerging of Christ from his tomb. In either case, the body has been contained in something box-like. Both Jonah and Christ, boxes created by the Master Artist, regained life (each of a different kind) after their coffining. Taylor makes some mention of the death of his son, whom he dearly loved, by asking the question, "Must th' Cure arise/Out of the Coffin of a pious son?"(2:40,9-10) And indeed the cure for man's ills, as Taylor sees it, has come from the emerging from the container of death of the Son of Man--another Father gave up His Son to save the sons of man. In the use of the image of the coffin, that box for the dead, one perceives a shutting away from the eyes of others the thing that is buried or hidden in the coffin. Taylor tells God to

Drive hence my Sin and Darkness greate profound
And up them Coffin in Eartha Shade below
In darkness gross, on th'other side the ground.
(2:68A,50-52)

He feels the necessity of having all that is not good in his life taken far from him and placed so that it can never again be inside of him. He wishes never to see or to know it again, and the manner he suggests to God of hiding it is the only method he knows and has chosen to make his desire workable. The image of the coffin, used as a verb, an active verb, works quite well to convey this idea. In the same vein, he says that

Thy Cross planted within thy Coffin beares
Sweet Blossoms and rich Fruits, Whose steams do rise
Out of thy Sepulcher end purge the aire
Of all Sins damps an fogs that Choake the Skies.(2:110,25-28)

He has used again the idea of Christ's resurrection, and good has come from this coffin, infinite good to benefit mankind. Taylor shows that evil can be hidden in a coffin or that good can be contained therein. He employs the word "Casket" in one of his Meditations as he refers to "My China Ware or Amber Casket bright,/Filled with Ambrosian Spirits..."(2:67A,1-2), and while it denotes a container, it does not seem to be a coffin for the dead. It is, rather, a container that seems to be the whole man, or at the very least his heart, and holds spiritual treasure fit for the old Greek gods. He seems to use this idea to reveal the high quality of the contents of the casket (and, perhaps, to let one know that he has a good classical education). But Taylor has many other containers, by means of which the key comes into prominence.

He speaks of "...a Locker of a Hugane frame/With richer than Corinthian tiles/And Shelves of Emeralds."(2:45,19-21) A "locker" could refer to the key itself, or it could be used in the sense (as it seems to be used here) of a holder of precious commodities. And every locker that holds such items as "Emeralds" must have a lock with a key.

Unlock they Locker, make my faith Key here
 To back the Wards, Lord ope the Wicket gate
 And from thine Emerald Shelves, sad Pinchase there
 A beame of every sort of Wiedom take
 And set it in the Socket of my Soule
 To make all day within, and night controle.(2:45,37-42)

This second "Locker" belongs to God, not man. The precious contents of the locker is God's wisdom. Taylor realizes that man can only gain that wisdom if his faith performs the act of becoming the key to open that store. Thus man is responsible for obtaining that which God

contains, for he holds the key to the locker. If he wishes to obtain the rewards there, he alone can open and take from it and contain the good within his own locker. Taylor speaks of the "Keyes" of the "Priest, Prophet-King-Hood too" which will "open us" God's "Mysterics." (2:40,31-34) There are so many varieties of keys about which Taylor speaks.

And make thy Beauty Lord, thy Golden key
 For to unlock and open right my Chest
 Loves Cabinet and take the best thyselfe
 Of all my Love therein. Its all thy wealth. (2:116,39-42)

God's beauty, then, is the "Golden key" which will open Taylor's "Chest" or heart and allow God to take all of his love, which belongs to God; all He must do is take it. Man's love shall be contained in God; God's love is contained in man. This makes for unity. Another key opens "Christ's Ivory Box."

Christ's Key of grace this Cabinet unlocks
 And offers thee. Why then art thou so sad? (2:123,3-4)

Why should not man be happy when such a key exists to open the place wherein God's love reposes so that man may gain access to it and earn it for himself? Very much along this line one finds mention of another key.

Shall not that Wisdom horded up in thee
 (One key whereof is Sacerdotal Types)
 Provide a Cure for all this grieffe in mee (2:14,7-9)

Man contains grief, but there exists a key to open God's wisdom and rid man of his grief. Thus man would have God's wisdom wrapped up in him.

A Divine key unlocke these trunks to lay
 All spirituall treasures in them open Cleare. (2:103,22-23)

Most of the keys used by Taylor could qualify as "Divine" keys. He pleads to the "holy Eliakim" to lend him his key "T'unlock the doore untill thy glory shine." (2:113,25-26) Later, in the same Meditation, a poem which puzzles the riddle of David being one of Christ's ancestor and yet Christ is "David's root," Taylor feels that he has found the "key unto the Lock." (2:113,31) He knows the answer to the paradox, for he has found the key. Although one probably would not think of the blood of the Covenant as being a key, Taylor does.

Here's Covenant blood, indeed: and 't down the banks
Of this dry Pit breakes: Also 'tis a key
T'unlock the Shackles Sin hung on their Shanks
And wash the dirt off: send them cleane away. (2:78,37-40)

The foregoing lines are reminiscent of the lines quoted earlier concerning the confining of sin far away from the light, the sun. Covenant blood is the only hope for salvation--the atoning blood of the Son of God. Taylor writes of another golden key which is God's "Holy Word" and will work upon his soul.

Lord, make thy Holy Word, the golden Key
My Soule to lock and make its bolt to trig
Before the same, and Oyle the same to play
As thou dost move them off and On to j&g. (2:115,13-16)

The image of the lock is just as important to the above lines as is the idea of the key. In the following lines the idea of the lock is present as it necessarily must be when one speaks of keys, for a key can do nothing except to lock or unlock a lock.

But thou, sweet Lord, hast with thy golden Key
Unlocked the Doore, and made, a golden day.
(1: "The Reflexion," 23-24)

The use of God's "golden Key" has brought daylight, brightness, knowledge, and perhaps even security to man just by unlocking the right

door. Taylor speaks to his Lord and tells him that

Thou hast the golden key, that doth unlock,
The heart of God: Wisdoms bright Counsills Tower
(2:53,19-20)

Christ has this golden key that opens God's heart. But all of Taylor's keys are not golden. He speaks of "...a Poppy key, black, sad,"(2:69,3) and "Melancholy's Key" which locks love up in his heart.(2:73,46-47) They are not good keys because they do not function to benefit man or God. Taylor even has "Clayey faces" as keys.

Oh! Lovely thou: Oh! grudge my Soule, I say,
Thou streitend standst, lockt up to Earths fine parts
Course matter truly, yellow earth, Hard Clay.
Why should these Clayey faces be the keyes
F'lock, and unlock thy love up as they please?(2:115,8-12)

Taylor thus questions God and his wisdom for giving man the right to choose whether he accepts or rejects God's love.

The image of the lock comes into focus with the use of the verbs "open" and "lock." And Taylor gives this idea variety also by his choice of words. He requests that the Lord "unhasp" the door to His Storehouse of riches so that he can receive "a pardon,"(1:36,37-39) and later in the poem asks Him to "ope/The Doore so wide that Love may Scip and play."(1:36,75-76) Whenever the Lord opens the door, Taylor will be His, for there will be intermingled love--that of God and that of man, each contained in the other. The Lord "Doet ope the Doore lockt fast 'gainst Sins that so/These Holy Rooms admit them may thereto."(2:95,35-36) The gates of heaven are kept locked so that sin cannot get in, but Christ opens the way to the "Holy Rooms" for the dead in Christ, the Elect. Taylor says that "Desires

lockt in an heart of Steel/Or Adament, breake prison, nothing
 feel."(1:14,41-42) A lock, then, is not absolute insurance against
 the breaking out of imprisoned desires. Taylor's effections "will
 fly in Flocks" to God whenever His warm sun shall unlock (melt) his
 "frozen Lake" which is his heart.(1:14,47-48) Christ is a "glorious
 Arke! Life's Store-House full of Glee!" And Taylor asks, "Shall
 not my Love safe lockt up ly in thee?"(1:33,29-30) There is the
 idea again which persists throughout this imagery--that man's love
 shall be contained in God's care. Taylor says that Christ is "Heir
 of all things lockt in natures Chest:/and in thy Fathers too..."
 (2:2,23-24) Again referring to the Meditation concerning David and
 his relationship to Christ, Taylor, after giving the answer to the
 paradox contained therein says that this answer

...doth unbolt the Doore, and light impart
 To shew the nature of this wondrous thing.(2:113,39-40)

He asks the Lord to "tap mine Eyes, seeing such Grace in thee,"(1:26,31)
 and to "Untap Loves Golden Cask"(1:11,29) to let love run out of it.
 Taylor says that

Whole Buts of this blesst Nectar shining stand
 Lockt up with Saph'rine Taps, whole splendid Flame
 Too bright do shine for brightest Angells hands
 To touch, my Lord. Do thou untap the same.(1:10,25-28)

The "blesst Nectar" is Christ's shed blood which is partaken of sym-
 bolically in the Communion Service. It will, as before noted here,
 take away sin and aid the partaker of the cup to become more pure.
 Taylor needs some of this saving fluid, as do all men, he believes.
 He speaks of

Gods Love thus Caskt in Heaven, none can tap
 Or breake its truss hoops, or attain a Scrap.(2:8,11-12)

and laments the fact that such love is unattainable, while it is locked up there. But God's love can come down to man, and it does and will. In fact, Taylor states later in the same poem:

And What else Love thou dost mee there commend,
I'll lay up safely in my Soules best till. (2:8,39-40)

And that, of course, takes one back to the container idea as well as indicating a lock, which in turn indicates a key.

In Series One of the Preparatory Meditations, one finds that the first four stanzas of Number 42 uses all three of the images of the particular cluster which has been the subject of this paper--the box, the key, and the lock. "Loveliness in Lumps...Brings forth a birth of Keyes t'unlock Loves Chest." A chest, being a container, especially for something precious, must be opened with a key or keys. "Chest" also functions to denote the part of the human anatomy wherein the heart lies, just as it also denotes the heart itself. "But what strang thing/Am I become?" No key will work in a lock that is rusted "all o're." Out of some ten thousand keys, "scarce one, is found, unlocks the Doore." But when it is open, "...my Love, crincht in a Corner lies" and is so puny and retiring that it can scarcely rise, let alone function. Taylor tells the Lord to "ope the Doore: rub off my Rust, Remove/My sin, and Oyle my Lock." If the Lord will clean up the lock by ridding it of its rust, which represents his sin and his inability to love God as he should, and oil that lock, too, on his heart, then "My Wards will trig before the Key." Taylor's heart will open easily to God's key and his entrapped and ineffective love will "leape...on thyselve." He says that it must be this way. In stanza four he tells

God to "Unkey my Heart; unlock they Wardrobe: bring/Out royall Robes: adorne my Soule..." He plays on the words, turning from the wards of a lock to God's wardrobe. But first God must remove the key from his heart. Or perhaps it means for Him to remove the tension from his heart when Taylor says to "Unkey my Heart." At any rate, Taylor has included a variety of conceits in this Meditation. He has started with a picture of "Apples of gold" and ended with an image of God as his landlord to whom he will pay rent if he only provides the wardrobe of royalty and lets him at least peep into God's palace to see the many glorious and radiant sights there. The image of the chest, the "Keyes," and the Lock is part of the path that he has used to get from the picture of apples to the plea to be God's tenant even though he only has a "Peephole" at the "threshold."

All three of the image cluster play a part in the following stanza.

A Lock of Steel upon my Soule, whose key
 The serpent keeps, I fear, doth lock my doore.
 O pick't: and through the key-hole make thy way
 And enter in: and let thy joyes run o're.
 My Wards are rusty. Oyle them till they trig
 Before thy golden key: thy Oyle makes glib.(1:49,7-12)

The stanza is self-explanatory, in view of the other instances presented heretofore. To conclude the examples of this particular imagery, in which the key is not specifically mentioned, but is noted to be a necessity (unless there is a combination lock), one finds:

Thy Ivory Chest with Saph'rine Varnish fine
 Ope Lord, give me thy Bowells Gem all deare.
 My lumpish Lookes shall then yield smiles and shine.
 Thy brightsomness shall make my looks shine cleare.
 If that love in thy Ivory Chest is mine
 My Countenance thy bowells Love shall Chime.(2:123A,19-24)

Thus, as has been noted, one finds that the boxes or containers may be made of most any material. They are all containers, and yet Taylor has avoided monotonous repetition by varying them. Some of them are ivory, some are golden, some are only gilded, and others have no specific material mentioned. They may refer to either God or man, paradoxically, and more often than not, when they refer to man, the box is the heart, the cabinet of the affections. The containers range from simple boxes to chests, cabinets, lockers, trunks, or coffins. They may be containers for perfume, tobacco, or pins. Most often, however, they contain God's love in some form, or, if they belong to man, the box may be void of love or full of sin and passions. The locks to the boxes may be rusty and need oil to make their wards work smoothly so that they may be opened by a key. And Taylor has employed the use of many different keys. There are golden keys, divine keys, keys to wisdom, the Holy Word, "Christ's Key of grace," the "Lord's Beauty," the keys of the prophets, and one must not forget the "sad keys," those of the poppy and melancholy.

Taylor employs these images in his meditative poetry which is so vivid with common imagery in his effort to bring God and man closer together. Man needs God. God made man and then made another Man to save all mankind by sacrificing His life for them. This Man's death and resurrection occasions the Communion Service, for which Taylor wrote each of his Preparatory Meditations. Taylor uses the image of the tree which is the tree of life with its idea of branches and grafting in much the same way that he uses the box, lock, and key imagery. Man may be nothing, and yet he can obtain and contain the great love of

God within his heart or he may lock that heart so that nothing can penetrate it. Or that heart, which should hold love for all mankind as well as love for God and of God, may be full instead of passions and sin. When man allows God's keys to work, when God unlocks his love to man and man receives that love, then man contains so much love that he needs must return that love in his box to his God for His box. Perhaps, in the language of today, man simply needs security, the security he finds when God unlocks man's heart and lets His love enter into it. Man needs something greater than himself. He must be a container of a faith and a love greater than he is. He withers and dies if his heart is locked against God and His love. He is fit for nothing. He must be a part of something bigger than himself, and God's love will enfold him. Man must be in God, and in turn God must be in man. Taylor has used the lock, the box, and the key as a part of his vivid imagery to reveal his own need to have God's love in his heart and know that he in turn is a part of God's plan. He sends his love up to God, but it is already His. And the two co-exist with man having the better of the bargain in that he gains a deep sense of security from his dependence in and upon his God. The boxes, locks, and keys function as an integral part of Taylor's imagery as unworthy man confronts his God and seeks to gain worth and stature.

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