

# The Only Way to Life

## Description

### *The Only Way To Life*

by Trent Wilde

Heaven has now declared to us where things stand and what the crux of the matter really is. We must get to know Wisdom. We must receive Her, Her love, and the life She gives. This is the heart of the message. Give heed now to the practical instruction which follows, for it means your very life.

Since the purpose of this article is the same as that of *Proverbs*, we quote its introductory lines for your consideration:

<sup>1</sup> The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: <sup>2</sup> *To learn of Wisdom* and moral instruction, and to discern words of insight. <sup>3</sup> To receive moral instruction in wise living, in righteousness, justice, and uprightness. <sup>4</sup> To give shrewdness to the naive and knowledge and purpose to the young person. <sup>5</sup> Let the wise also hear and gain instruction, and let the discerning acquire guidance. <sup>6</sup> To discern the meaning of a proverb and a parable – the sayings of the wise and their riddles. – Proverbs 1:1-6

This is precisely what we all need. We should each spend time studying *Proverbs* as well as the contents of this article, for they both contain the instructions necessary to teach us the way to life.

<sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. – John 6:53

Right here we have the answer to our need. Christ tells us in unmistakable language that there is only one way. If we do *not* eat His flesh and drink His blood we have no life in us. If we *do* eat His flesh and drink His blood, we *have* life! He does not say, “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood *and/or* \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the blank].” No! Eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood *is the thing* which makes the difference. To emphasize this another way – if we have no life in us, it is because we have not eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of Man. If we want life, what we must do, and the only thing to do, is to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

So as to guard against mystical interpretations of these all-practical truths, let us refresh our minds on the truth of what this “life” is.

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with *the* God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with *the* God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> All things were made by him, and apart from him not one thing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> *In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind.* <sup>5</sup> And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it. – John 1:1-5

The life that was in Christ is said to be light. What is this light?

<sup>5</sup> Now this is the message we have heard from him and announce to you: God is *light*, and in him there is *no darkness* at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him *and yet walk on in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth*. <sup>7</sup> But *if we walk in the light* as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and *the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin*. <sup>8</sup> If we say we have no sin, *we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us*, <sup>9</sup> but *if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. – 1 John 1:5-9

Darkness is here defined as a place with no truth – a place of deception and sin. Light, on the other hand, is defined as a place of truth and pure righteousness. This light is the life of which Christ was speaking. Everyone to whom He was speaking in John 6 had mortal life, but they did not have the truth and the pure righteousness of Christ. This is what Christ was, and still is, offering. This is what we all must seek. The only way to receive this life – the light of truth and the righteousness of Christ, is to feed upon Christ. There is no need, then, to further seek out a way, for *the Way* has already been pointed out. The deceptions of the enemy which we must face at this time are those which seek to distort our image of who Christ is and what He meant. Feeding upon the wrong Christ, or doing something which we mistakenly think is eating the flesh and drinking the blood of even the true Christ, will avail nothing. In fact, the devil's false interpretations of Christ's words began from the moment he spoke them.

<sup>60</sup> Then many of his disciples, when they heard these things, said, "This is a difficult saying! Who can understand it?" <sup>61</sup> When Jesus became aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, he said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? ... <sup>63</sup> The Spirit is the One who gives life; the flesh doesn't do anything! The words that I have spoken to you, *they* are spirit-giving and life-producing! – John 6:60-61, 63

It is not the literal flesh and blood of Jesus that will save anyone. Jesus died, yes, but that fact in and of itself will not benefit anyone if they fail to receive His words.

Again, we are told that in Christ was life, and that life was light, and that light is truth and pure righteousness. From whence came this life?

26 ...just as the Father has life in himself, *just* so he has *given* to the Son to have life in himself. – John 5:26

The life, the light, the truth, the righteousness, which Christ had in Him, He received from the Father. Christ said,

<sup>16</sup> ..."My teaching is not from me, but from the One who sent me. – John 7:16

<sup>28</sup> ...I do nothing from myself, but I speak just as the Father taught me, these things I speak. – John 8:28

<sup>49</sup> I have not spoken from myself, but the Father Himself who sent me has commanded me what I should say and what I should speak. <sup>50</sup> And I know that his commandment is eternal life. The things I speak, just as the Father has spoken to me, thus I speak. – John 12:49-50

Christ was a prophet,<sup>1</sup> and thus, His words were not His own,<sup>2</sup> but the words of the Father, which He received from the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Again, Christ said it was the Spirit who gives life and that His words were life-giving. Consider the following:

<sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, She will teach you all things, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you. – John 14:26

Jesus' intention was that the Spirit would come and teach us the truth so that its principles would change our way of thinking and we would be enabled to walk as Christ walked – in faith and without sin. The solution to the problem of sin is thus far more simple than many suppose. It lies not with some mystical action or some unexplainable phenomenon. No! Our first parents sinned by accepting a lie in place of the truth and so we must be saved from sin by receiving the truth in place of the lie. The cause (accepting the lie) has had its effect (sin); remove the cause and the effect will cease. Again, it is the way that the principles of truth change our

thinking that enables us to walk even as Christ walked. This is plainly declared in the following scriptures:

<sup>22</sup> You were taught concerning your former way of life to lay aside the old man which is corrupt in accordance with deceitful desires, and <sup>23</sup> *to be renewed in the spirit of your mind*; <sup>24</sup> to put on the new man who has been created according to God *in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth*. – Ephesians 4:22-24

<sup>56</sup> The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. <sup>57</sup> *Just as the living Father sent me and I live by the Father, just so the one who eats me will live by me*. – John 6:56-57

<sup>5</sup> ...whoever obeys his *word*, truly the *love* of God is perfected in that person. By this we know that we are in him. <sup>6</sup> The one who says he abides in him ought to walk *just as that one [Jesus] walked*. – 1 John 2:5-6

<sup>5</sup> And you know that that one [Jesus] was manifested *to take away sins*, and *in him there is no sin*. <sup>6</sup> Everyone who abides *in him does not sin*; everyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him. <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you: the one who practices righteousness is righteous, *even as he [Jesus] is righteous*. <sup>8</sup> The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. *For this purpose the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil*. <sup>9</sup> Everyone who is born of God does not commit sin, *for his seed abides in him*, and *thus he is not able to sin*, because he is born of God. – 1 John 3:5-9

<sup>22</sup> You have purified your souls *by obeying the truth in order to show sincere brotherly love*. So, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. <sup>23</sup> You have been born anew, not from perishable, but *from imperishable seed*, through *the living and enduring word of God*. – 1 Peter 1:22-23

My friends, let your hearts be prompted by love. This is the way to life. Consider how it is that Christ lived by the Father. He kept the truth constantly in His mind which caused reason to dominate His thinking. With reason ruling His mind, He could never give in to temptation and thus fall into sin. Instead, truth, reason, and love dominated His every thought, prompting Him to surrender His will to the Father, making His character to be consumed in that of His Father's. He recognized His own weakness and thus fully depended upon His Heavenly Parents and allowed Them to guide Him in all His actions. He never made an independent move, but trusted in Them to make the way plain before Him and to give Him the strength to walk. And so it is said, "The just shall live by faith." (Hab. 2:4).

Christ pronounced the irrevocable truth that just as He lived by the Father, just so we can live by Him. And we can do so in the same way that He did, by having the truth constantly abiding in our minds, causing reason to dominate our thinking. With reason ruling our minds, we can never give in to temptation and thus fall into sin. Instead, truth, reason, and love will dominate our every thought, prompting us to surrender our will to Christ, making our characters to be consumed in that of Christ's. We will recognize our own weakness and thus fully depend upon our Heavenly Parents and allow Them to guide us in all our actions. We will never make an independent move, but trust in Them to make the way plain before us and give us the strength to walk. Thus it will be said, "The just shall live by faith." (Hab. 2:4). This is the truth *as it is in Jesus*. Let it be so in you.

Our Savior said,

<sup>28</sup> ...all the sins and blasphemies they may speak will be forgiven the children of mankind, <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin. – Mark 3:28-29

It has been said before and it must be said again – the Spirit is the One who gives life! To refuse Her is to refuse life itself.

<sup>12</sup> For Wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense, but the excellency of knowledge is that *Wisdom gives life* to those that have Her. – Ecclesiastes 7:12

<sup>13</sup> Blessed is the one who finds Wisdom... <sup>18</sup> *She is a tree of life* to those who lay hold of Her. – Proverbs 3:13, 18

<sup>11</sup> I will guide you in the way of Wisdom... <sup>13</sup> Hold on to instruction, do not let Her go; keep Her, for *She is your life*. – Proverbs 4:11, 13

<sup>11</sup> I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence... <sup>19</sup> My fruit is better than the purest gold, and my produce is better than choice silver.<sup>4</sup> <sup>20</sup> *I lead in the path of righteousness*, in the pathway of justice. – Proverbs 8:11, 19-20

<sup>35</sup> *For the one who finds me finds life* and receives favor from Yahweh, but *the one who sins against me harms his own soul*. <sup>36</sup> *All who hate me love death*. – Proverbs 8:35-36

Wisdom is our only way to life. “She is a tree of life;” “She is your life;” “the one who finds [Her] finds life” – all these things, the Scriptures tell us. Because of this, they recommend Her above all else:

### ***An Inspired Plea to Seek Wisdom***

<sup>1</sup> My child, if you receive my words and store up my commands within you <sup>2</sup> by making your ear attentive to Wisdom, and by turning your heart to understanding, <sup>3</sup> indeed, if you call out for discernment – raise your voice for understanding – <sup>4</sup> if you seek Her like silver, and search for Her like hidden treasure, <sup>5</sup> *then* you will understand the fear of Yahweh, and you will discover the knowledge of Gods (Elohim). – Proverbs 2:1-5

O Branches, with all of the strength that you have, seek to understand this passage of scripture! Earnestly endeavor to grasp its meaning! Read it again. Notice, “if you receive my words and store up my commands within you;” this is something you can do. This is something within your God-given powers. Here are the words; they are the very words we are reading, the very words going through your thoughts right now. You can believe them, can’t you? You can store them up within you. And how? “by making your ear attentive to Wisdom, and by turning your heart to understanding;” Yes! What practical instruction. You can make your ear attentive to Wisdom. You know that She is speaking – you know where the fountain of Inspiration springs forth. Avail yourself of the opportunity to hear the words of the message as often as possible. Be as Mary who sat at the feet of her Lord eagerly seeking to be touched by any ray of light which might shine upon her. Mary would not miss any opportunity to hear the words of Jesus, for He spoke by the Spirit. “Make your ear attentive to Wisdom” – do not miss any opportunity to hear the words of this present message, for they are according to the Spirit. Seek the word and abide in it; hide it in your heart (Ps. 119:11).

“Indeed, if you call out for discernment – raise your voice for understanding;” What does this mean? Don’t sit back in indifference waiting for a revelation to fall on your lap. You must call out to our Heavenly Family. Engage with them. You cannot find Wisdom by looking within yourself or by trying to figure out your theology. No! Engage with the Living Gods! Call to Them, depending on Their word that They will hear you.

“If you seek Her like silver, and search for Her like hidden treasure;” You must engage your whole being in searching for Her. The few of us who have labored at the Branch center have gained a little experience in searching for rocks in the dirt. When doing so, your whole body and mind is engaged. You do not restrict your search to the surface, but you dig deep, seeking for the best stones. When nothing appears at first, you do not give up, but you press forward with confidence that you will find what you seek. The more precious substances, such as gold and silver, are usually deeper than rocks for their weight sinks them into the earth. Searching for precious metals is a serious task that requires a persevering will. Often, when first finding something under the surface you can only see a small spot, a tip of the iceberg, as it were. But when you keep digging and putting forth your efforts to obtain the stone, you may just find that it was bigger and more beautiful than you could have conceived. Difference in value between gold and rocks is no comparison to that between the most precious jewels and Wisdom.

Those who feel the constraining love of God do not ask how little may be given in order to obtain the heavenly reward; they ask not for the lowest standard, but aim at a perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With ardent desire they yield all, and *manifest zeal proportionate to the value of the object of which they are in pursuit*. What is the object? Immortality, eternal life.<sup>5</sup>

“*Then you will understand the fear of Yahweh, and you will discover the knowledge of Elohim.*” *If you do what has been given you to do (as described in verses 1-4), then you will understand the fear of Yahweh.* If you do not do what has been given you, you will find neither Wisdom nor life. The cause must exist in reality in order for the effect to take place, and *if the cause does exist, the effect most certainly will.* This is a promise.

What is the fear of Yahweh? It is the opposite of breaking the third commandment. To take the name of the Lord in vain is for someone to come to you in the name of the Lord, but rather than receiving it “as it is in truth, the word of God,” (1 Thess. 2:13) you receive it as “the word of man.” We quote the following selections from the writings of Ellen White to highlight this principle:

Now if those to whom these solemn warnings are addressed say, “*It is only Sister White’s individual opinion, I shall still follow my own judgment,*” and if they continue to do the very things they were warned not to do, they show that *they despise the counsel of God*, and the result is just what the Spirit of God has shown me it would be—injury to the cause of God and ruin to themselves... that which questions their course of action, or which does not coincide with their views, *they pronounce Sister White’s opinion, denying its heavenly origin and placing it on a level with their own judgment.*<sup>6</sup>

The position that has been taken by some of the erring brethren *makes my words simply the expression of an opinion* and this view has been advocated and has had leavening influence in our ranks.<sup>7</sup>

While some will openly say that the words of a prophet are the mere opinions of man, others will think so in their hearts, but refrain from saying it openly. Still others are self-deceived into thinking they are receiving the word as “the word of God” but manifest by their actions that they do not. Consider this important testimony:

<sup>30</sup> “But as for you, son of man, the sons of your people (who are talking about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses) *say to one another, ‘Come hear the word that comes from Yahweh.’*<sup>31</sup> They come to you as people do, and they sit in front of you as my people. They hear your words, *but do not do them.* For they lust with their mouths, and their heart is set on their own advantage. <sup>32</sup> Behold, *to them you are as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument. They hear your words, but they do not do them.* <sup>33</sup> When all this comes to pass—and it certainly will—then they will know that a prophet has been among them.” – Ezekiel 33:30-33

My dear Branch family, “Put yourselves to the test to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (2 Cor. 13:5) lest you be among those of whom it may be said, “but the message they heard did them no good, since they did not join in with those who heard it in faith.” (Heb. 4:2). To have the fear of the Lord means that when a message comes to you in the name of the Lord, you hear it as from the Lord – you do not account the name in which it comes as useless, or vain.

<sup>10</sup> The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of Wisdom... – Proverbs 9:10

Understood in the light in which we have just beheld it, we can see that this is simply the practical application of the truth as expressed by Peter:

<sup>20</sup> *Knowing this first*, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one’s own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for no prophecy has ever come about by the will of man; rather, men moved upon by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. – 2 Peter 1:20-21

Thus,

<sup>1</sup> ...if you receive my words and store up my commands within you <sup>2</sup> by making your ear *attentive* to Wisdom, and by *turning* your heart to understanding, <sup>3</sup> indeed, if you call out for discernment – raise your voice for understanding – <sup>4</sup> if you seek Her like silver, and search for Her like hidden treasure, <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of Yahweh, and you will discover the *knowledge* of Elohim. – Proverbs 2:1-5

Mark; true knowledge is always experimental.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Whoever abides in him does not sin; everyone who sins *has neither seen him nor known him*. – 1 John 3:6

<sup>4</sup> Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. – 1 John 2:4

<sup>3</sup> By this we can be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments. – 1 John 2:3

Now that we have heard the words of the wise admonishing us to earnestly seek Wisdom, let us hear

### ***Wisdom’s Own Cry***

<sup>20</sup> Wisdom calls out in the street, She shouts loudly in the plazas; <sup>21</sup> at the head of the noisy streets She calls, in the entrances of the gates in the city She utters Her words: <sup>22</sup> “How long will you love naivete, O you naive ones? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? <sup>23</sup> If only you will respond to my rebuke, then I will pour out my thoughts to you and I will make my words known to you. – Proverbs 1:20-23

What we need is the thoughts and words of Wisdom, for that is what can renew our minds. But how can we expect Her to pour out Her thoughts and Her words if we indicate from the very beginning that we will not listen if it does not agree with us? Wisdom tells us the truth of ourselves – that we are naive, mocking fools who hate knowledge. But She tells us as a plea, asking, “How long will you love naivete... [and] delight in mockery... [and] hate knowledge?” If we say, “O, but you have misunderstood me, I don’t delight in mocking;” or, “I don’t hate knowledge;” then how can She tell us anything? If we can’t hear earthly things, how will we hear heavenly things (John 3:12)?

It is only pride that keeps men and women from hearing Wisdom’s rebuke. People trust in their own understanding (Prov. 3:5) of them-selves rather than acknowledging that our Heavenly Family is supreme and that They know us better than we could possibly know ourselves. Rebuke is Heaven’s appointed means to shake us from the dust that we may arise (Isa. 52:2).

“If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye ... not sons.” Our Lord has said: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father’s tender love, “that we might be partakers of His holiness.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Does not Wisdom call out? Does not Understanding raise Her voice? <sup>2</sup> At the top of the elevated places along the way, at the intersection of the paths She takes Her stand; <sup>3</sup> beside the gates opening into the city, at the entrance of the doorways She cries out: <sup>4</sup> “To you, O people, I call out, and my voice calls to all the children of mankind. <sup>5</sup> You who are naive, discern wisdom! And you fools, understand discernment! <sup>6</sup> Listen, for I will speak excellent things, and my lips will utter what is right. <sup>7</sup> For my mouth speaks truth, and my lips hate wickedness. <sup>8</sup> All the words of my mouth are righteousness; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. <sup>9</sup> All of them are clear to the discerning and upright to those who find knowledge. <sup>10</sup> Receive my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.” For Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired cannot be compared to Her. – Proverbs 8:1-10

All of Wisdom’s words are love, knowledge, righteousness, reason, and truth! She here calls out for us to hear Her. We are called to give up all our searches for earthly pleasure. Gold and silver will avail nothing; seek Wisdom rather than these things, for nothing compares to Her.

## ***The Mystery of Wisdom***

Some may have noticed that in the passages just quoted, Wisdom does not relate the wonderful truths of which She speaks. She tells us that She has much to say and that She wants to pour out Her thoughts and words to us, but She stops short of telling us what these truths actually are. In these passages, Her aim has been to plead with us to hear Her rebuke so that we might be able to hear all the rest of what She has to say. The rest, She left as a mystery.

<sup>7</sup> But we speak of the Wisdom of God in a mystery – the hidden One, Her<sup>10</sup> Who God ordained before the world unto our glory. – 1 Corinthians 2:7

<sup>8</sup> For behold, you loved truth. You made manifest to me the secret and hidden things of your Wisdom. – Psalm 50:8 (LXX), Psalm 51:6 (MT)

Evidently, both David and Paul understood that Wisdom is associated with “mystery” in one way or another. Again though, in neither instance does Paul or David explain exactly what that mystery is. In fact, looking through all of the 66 books of the Protestant Bible, it becomes apparent that there is no clear exposition of what this mystery is. We are not, however, left with no place to turn. Wisdom has invited us to hear Her, and we have been instructed by Inspiration to make our ears attentive to Her and to search for Her as for hidden treasure.

In past studies,<sup>11</sup> we have learned that, in 1 Corinthians 2, Paul bases his discussion of the mystery of Wisdom on the so-called apocryphal book, *The Wisdom of Solomon*. A little known fact is that this book, along with other “apocryphal” books, was actually quite popular among early Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>12</sup> We shall take a few pages to discuss this issue in its Adventist context, for that will help us to bring out certain aspects of truth which will greatly aid in understanding the mystery of Wisdom. First, let us quote from an old *Review and Herald* article from 1858:

Concerning the Apocrypha, *we regard portions of it as containing much light and instruction*. If we were asked to specify, we should mention *2 Esdras*, *Wisdom of Solomon*, and *1 Maccabees*. Concerning the Wisdom of Solomon, Sears’ History of the Bible thus speaks: “Although the fathers of the church, and particularly Jerome, uniformly considered this book as apocryphal, yet they recommended the perusal of it, in consideration of the excellence of its style. The third Council of Carthage, held in the year 397, pronounced it to be a canonical book under the name of ‘The Fourth Book of Solomon,’ and the famous Council of Trent confirmed this decision.” Concerning the first book of Maccabees, it also says, “The first book of Maccabees is a very

valuable historical monument, written with great accuracy and fidelity, on which even more reliance may be placed than on the writings of Josephus.” The question of the inspiration of these books – the reasons that might be adduced in favor of such an opinion, and the objections that might lie against it, we have never made a subject of particular study, and are not therefore prepared to discuss.<sup>13</sup>

A more contemporary Adventist, Ronald Graybill,<sup>14</sup> wrote an article in *Adventist Heritage*, called, *Under the Triple Eagle: Early Adventist Use of the Apocrypha*.<sup>15</sup> Here is how he introduces his subject:

“The 2<sup>nd</sup> book of Esdras, contains very important truths,” wrote Joseph Bates in 1849. He was not the only early Adventist who felt that way, even though he knew Esdras was part of the Apocrypha. O.R.L. Crosier, whom Adventists look to as one of the original framers of the church’s Sanctuary doctrine, believed that Esdras was an inspired book which elucidated the prophecies of Daniel. When James White published Ellen White’s early visions in *A Word to the Little Flock* in 1847, he supplied scriptural footnotes for her visions. Tucked in among the references to the canonical books of the Bible are three citations of 2 Esdras and one of the Wisdom of Solomon.

That early Adventists should use the Apocrypha may seem odd to modern Adventists until the historical backgrounds of the practice are understood.<sup>16</sup>

Later in Graybill’s article, he explains some important aspects of the historical context behind the early Adventist use of the Apocrypha, which includes a significant statement from Ellen White. Before quoting further in his article though, we want to take a look at Ellen White’s statement in its own right along with a couple other statements to which it is intimately connected.

I then saw the Word of God pure and unadulterated, and that *we must answer for the way we received the truth proclaimed from that Word*. I saw that it had been a hammer to break the flinty heart in pieces, and a fire to consume the dross and tin, that the heart might be pure and holy. *I saw that the Apocrypha was the hidden book, and that the wise of these last days should understand it*. I saw that the Bible was the standard book, that will judge us at the last day. I saw that heaven would be cheap enough, and that nothing was too dear to sacrifice for Jesus, and that we must give all to enter the kingdom. I heard an angel say, think ye God will place His seal where there is an idol? No, no.<sup>17</sup>

This statement is more important than many realize, and this will only become more clear the more we examine it. Notice that she refers to the Apocrypha as “the hidden book.” The context of this phrase can be found by looking at a record of a vision Ellen had only a few months before making this statement. The following words are from Arthur L. White:

In a report signed by three early believers reference is made to the hidden book as Ellen White uttered certain words in vision. Here is the account:

“At another time at a meeting held at Brother Curtis’ in Topsham, Maine, she was taken off in vision, and arose to her feet, took the large family Bible from the table, and held it on her hand some time at an angle of forty-five degrees, and said *the hidden book was not there*. When someone asked if the Apocrypha was not in the Bible, Brother Curtis remarked *it was not*. She talked sometime about *the hidden book*. No one knew but Bro. Curtis’ family that the Apocrypha [Apocrypha] was not there.<sup>18</sup>

Now, here are remarks made by Ellen White while in vision, September 23, 1849:

(Taking the large Bible containing the apocrypha:) Pure and undefiled, a part of it is consumed, holy, holy, walk carefully, tempted. The Word of God, take it (Marion Stowell), bind it long upon thine heart, pure and unadulterated. How lovely, how lovely, how lovely. My blood, My blood, My blood. O the children of disobedience, reprov’d, reprov’d. Thy word, thy word, thy word, a part of it is burned *unadulterated*, a part of *the hidden book*, a part of it is burned (*the apocrypha*).

Those that shall despitely tread [treat?] that remnant would think that they are doing God service. Why? because they are led captive by Satan at his will. *Hidden book, it is cast out. Bind it to the heart (4 times) bind it, bind it, bind it*, (laying the Bible on Oswald Stowell) *let not its pages be closed, read it carefully*. Snares will



beset on every side, *take the straight truth bind it to the heart* (3 times) let everything be cast out.<sup>19</sup>

These statements together make it quite clear that the Apocrypha is the hidden book, that it was removed from the Bible, but that it is to be bound to the heart and studied carefully; indeed, “the wise of these last days should understand it.” For the purposes of our study, we will focus now on the meaning of the idea that “the wise” should understand the Apocrypha, keeping in mind the subject of Wisdom. On this note, let us return to Graybill’s article:

Joseph Bates, a reader and financial supporter of the *Voice of Truth*, in which Pinney and Fassett’s article<sup>20</sup> had appeared, made use of the Apocrypha in several of his pamphlets. In *The Opening Heavens*, he quoted 2 Esdras 7:26, then remarked: “But perhaps you do not believe that Esdras is a true prophet; well then, will you believe St. Paul?” Bates thus recognized that there were differences of opinion among his readers on the subject. Nevertheless, the next year he cited Esdras again, right along with Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

In 1849 he suggested that while 2 Esdras contains “very important truths for those that keep God’s law and commandments, they will probably benefit no others.” Then he cited 2 Esdras 8:37, 38,<sup>21</sup> in which the author of Esdras is instructed to “write all these things that thou has seen in a book, and hide them: And teach them to the wise of the people.”

This text, about a hidden book to be revealed only to the wise, appears again in a rare Ellen White comment on the Apocrypha, a comment which neatly summarizes the early Adventist position: “I saw that the Apocrypha was the hidden book, and that the wise of these last days should understand it. I saw that the bible was the standard book, that will judge us at the last day.” She thus encouraged an understanding of the Apocrypha, while preserving the canonical Scriptures as the standard.<sup>22</sup>

Given this attitude, it is not surprising that Ellen White would have been familiar enough with 2 Esdras as to have used its language in her early visions, nor that James White would provide footnote references to the passages from the Apocrypha which paralleled her account.

For instance, Mrs. White describes heaven, where she saw Mount Zion, and noticed that “about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies.” At that point, James White’s footnote pointed the reader to 2 Esdras 2:19, which describes “seven mighty mountains, whereupon there grow roses and lilies.”

There is even one phrase from the Apocrypha that James White did not note. Ellen White describes Jesus as welcoming the saints into the New Jerusalem with the words: “You have washed your robes in my blood, stood stiffly for my truth, enter in.” 2 Esdras 2:47 says “Then I began greatly to commend them that stood so stiffly for the name of the Lord.” The parallel phrase evidently became a common one among early Adventists, for as late as 1856, one believer writes the *Review and Herald* to say “We mean to be of that company that Esdras saw who stood stiffly for the truth.”

In case Adventists did not have the Apocrypha in their Bibles, E.L.H. Chamberlin of Middletown, Connecticut, placed an ad in the *Review* in 1851 offering to sell copies of it for 15 cents. This practice of making the Apocrypha available to Seventh-day Adventists was revived again as late as 1869 when James White announced that the church’s publishing association would be issuing an edition of the Apocrypha.<sup>23</sup>

While there are additional aspects brought out here which are of much interest, we do not want to lose our focus on understanding the connection between the Apocrypha and “the wise.” Again, as Graybill pointed out, the early Adventists believed that the Apocrypha was not necessarily going to benefit everyone; rather, it was specifically for the benefit of the wise. This understanding is not something that they came up with themselves, but instead, it is something they got from 2 Esdras. As pointed out in footnote 44, 2 Esdras itself has some interesting things to say concerning this idea. To quote a key passage again:

44 So, during the forty days, ninety-four books were written. 45 And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, 'Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them: 46 but *keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people.* 47 *For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of Wisdom, and the river of knowledge* . – 2 Esdras 14:44-47

Notice how in this book, which many of the most influential early Adventists considered to be Scripture, we have described for us how, in the time of Ezra, there were many more sacred writings than are even in the Protestant Bible today. Even more significant is what we are told concerning these books; namely, that "in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge." Think of how important this is! If 2 Esdras is true, then we have the answer as to where to look in order to find out the thoughts and words of Wisdom! She has instructed us to listen to Her and to seek Her out, and when we do so, we are pointed, by means of a vision given to Ellen White, to an abundance of sacred texts not found in the Protestant Canon which are called "the fountain of Wisdom." Surely, the "wise" in these last days need to understand the Apocrypha.

If we know that these writings are called "the fountain of Wisdom" and yet we do not earnestly study them to comprehend their meaning, can we really say we are searching for Wisdom as for hidden treasure? And if we are not, can we come to understand the fear of Yahweh and come to discover the knowledge of Elohim? Assuredly, the answer is a solemn "no." So then, seek Wisdom with your whole heart, your whole mind, and your whole soul! Engage your whole being in the pursuit of Her! She is to be esteemed more than anything, for She is your very life!

## ***The Fountain of Wisdom***

Now, let us see if these writings really are the fountain of Wisdom, and if they really do contain Her words and Her thoughts. For the purposes of this article, we'll only give here a brief overview with the aim in mind of encouraging all to investigate the writings to which we here refer along with others. The first text which calls for our attention is *The Wisdom of Solomon*:

22 I will tell you what Wisdom is and how She came to be, and *I will hide no secrets from you*, but I will trace Her course from the beginning of creation, and *make knowledge of Her clear*, and *I will not pass by the truth* . – Wisdom of Solomon 6:22

None can deny that if any text makes a claim to be the fountain of Wisdom, then certainly this one does. Put the claim to the test. Investigate! Gain an experimental knowledge of this writing. "Sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God's word" (TM 476). Study, my friends, for these are they which testify of Wisdom!

The next few selections we'll be looking at are part of a collection of poetic texts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls known as *The Thanksgiving Hymns*. These hymns require our investigation.

I, the Master, know You, O my God, by the spirit which You have given to me, and by *Thy Holy Spirit* I have faithfully hearkened to Your marvelous counsel. *You have opened knowledge to me in the mystery of Your Wisdom* and in Your mercies [*You have unlocked for me*]<sup>24</sup> *the fountain of Your might*.<sup>25</sup>

But You, O my God, have put into my mouth as it were rain for all [those who thirst] *and a fountain of living waters* which shall not fail.<sup>26</sup>

For *You have opened a fountain in the mouth of Your servant*. *You engraved, by the measuring-line, [Your mysteries] upon his tongue*, that out of his understanding he might preach to a creature, and interpret these things to dust like myself.

You opened his fountain that he might rebuke the creature of clay for his way, and him who is born of woman for the guilt of his deeds; that he might open *the fountain of Your truth* to the creature whom You uphold by Your might; that he might be, according to Your truth, *a messenger of good news* [to recount] Your goodness;

that to the poor *he might bring glad tidings of Your great mercy, proclaiming salvation from out of the fountain of kn[owledge to the trou]bled of spirit, and everlasting joy to those who mourn.*<sup>27</sup>

Notice how here we have a messenger speaking, whose message is likened unto a fountain of living water – the fountain of knowledge and truth – the mystery of Wisdom. There is much contained in these *Thanksgiving Hymns* with which we all need to become acquainted. Their author's claim certainly parallels the claim which *2 Esdras* makes for the writings that were to be reserved for the wise. Once again, we invite you all to put these claims to the test.

Also in the Dead Sea Scrolls, is a collection of Beatitudes which bear relevance in this investigation of Wisdom sayings:

[... *to kno]w Wisdom and disc[ipline], to understand...*

...

[Blessed is the one who ...] with a pure heart and does not slander with his tongue [Ps. 15:3]. Blessed are those who hold fast to Her [Wisdom's] statutes and do not hold fast to the ways of unrighteousness. Blessed are those who rejoice in Her, and do not exult in paths of folly. Blessed are those who seek Her with pure hands, and do not search for Her with a deceitful heart. Blessed is the one who attains Wisdom, and walks in the law of the Most High. *He directs his heart toward Her always, restrains himself by Her corrections, does not forsake Her in the face of trials, he does not abandon Her in times of distress, does not forget Her in the day of terror, and does not despise Her when his soul is afflicted. For he meditates on Her continually and considers Her in his distress. [With all] his being [he gains understanding] in Her, [and he establishes Her] before his eyes so as not to walk in the ways [of wickedness].*<sup>28</sup>

The practical lessons of the above sayings are beyond estimation.

Next, is a psalm which was actually part of the scriptures of the ancient Syriac Christians (numbered by them as Psalm 154),<sup>29</sup> but which otherwise has been little known. It, too, was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and has many things to say concerning what Wisdom is sent to declare and how the righteous will receive it. Once again, the lessons of this text are very practical, and if carried out, will not fail to satisfy the searcher's desire.

[Lift your voice and glorify God; when the general congregation is assembled proclaim His glory. In the multitude of the upright glorify His name, and recount His greatness among the faithful. Bind] your souls to those who are good, even to the blameless, so to praise the Most High. Assemble together to proclaim His victory, and *be not idle in declaring His might*—His glory to all the untutored. For *Wisdom was given to declare Yahweh's glory*. She was made known to humankind *to recount His many deeds* to the foolish; *to give insight into His glory* to those without understanding—they who are far from Her gates, who have strayed from Her entrances. For the Most High, He is Lord over Jacob, and His majesty is over all his works. Surely he who glorifies the Most High finds favor as one who brings an offering; as though offering he-goats and calves, as though fattening the altar with a myriad of burnt offerings; as a sweet savor at the hand of the righteous. Wisdom's voice is heard from the gates of the righteous; Her song, from the congregation of the devout. *She is mentioned when they eat their fill and when they drink in communion together as one*. Their conversation is on the law of the Most High, and *their words are only declaring His might*. How far is the word of Her from the wicked, and knowledge of Her from the haughty! Behold, the eyes of Yahweh look with compassion on the good. His mercy increases upon those who glorify Him; from an evil time will He rescue their souls. Blessed is Yahweh, redeeming the poor from the power of enemies, delivering the blameless from wicked oppressors. He calls forth a horn out of Jacob; from Israel, a judge of the peoples. He will desire His habitation in Zion, choosing Jerusalem forever. – Psalm 154<sup>30</sup>

If you desire Wisdom, let your suppers of the Lord be thus.

Lastly, we would like for you to consider a passage from *The Wisdom of Joshua Ben Sirach*. Study this passage thoroughly and consider its instruction; apply its principles and see if it does not teach the only way to life.

<sup>18</sup> My child, from your youth choose discipline, and when you have gray hair you will still find Wisdom. <sup>19</sup> Come to Her like one who plows and sows, and wait for Her good harvest. For when you cultivate Her you will toil but little, and on the morrow you will eat of Her produce. <sup>20</sup> She seems very rough to the undisciplined; fools cannot remain with Her. <sup>21</sup> She will be like a heavy stone to test them, and they will not delay in casting Her aside. <sup>22</sup> For Wisdom is like Her name; She is not readily perceived by many.

<sup>23</sup> Listen, my child, and accept my judgment; do not reject my counsel. <sup>24</sup> Put your feet into Her fetters, and your neck into Her collar. <sup>25</sup> Bend your shoulders and bear Her, and do not fret under Her chains. <sup>26</sup> Come to Her with all your soul, and keep Her ways with all your might. <sup>27</sup> Search out and seek Her, and She will become known to you; and when you get hold of Her, do not let Her go. <sup>28</sup> For at last you will find the rest She gives, and She will be turned into your joy. <sup>29</sup> Then Her fetters will become for you a strong defense, and her collar a garment of glory. <sup>30</sup> Her yoke is a golden ornament, and Her chains a purple cord. <sup>31</sup> You will wear Her like a glorious robe, and put Her on like a splendid crown.

<sup>32</sup> If you are willing, my child, you can be disciplined, and if you give your all, you will become clever. <sup>33</sup> If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, and if you pay attention you will become wise. <sup>34</sup> Stand in the company of the elders. Who is wise? Attach yourself to such a one. <sup>35</sup> Be ready to listen to every godly discourse, and let no wise proverb escape you. <sup>36</sup> If you see an intelligent person, rise early to visit him; let your foot wear out his doorstep. <sup>37</sup> Let your mind be on the fear of the Most High, and meditate at all times on his commandments. It is He who will give insight to your mind, and your desire for Wisdom will be granted. – Sirach 6:18-37

So full of knowledge and instruction as it is, we cannot expound on every aspect of this beautiful passage here (it invites your further study). But, it would be a loss to not comment on a few points. Let us go over the passage again:

<sup>18</sup> My child, from your youth choose discipline, and when you have gray hair you will still find Wisdom. <sup>19</sup> Come to Her like one who plows and sows, and wait for Her good harvest. For when you cultivate Her you will toil but little, and on the morrow you will eat of Her produce. – Sirach 6:18-19

Wisdom is here likened unto the earth. And that which she brings forth for our life and sustenance (the truth), is likened unto the earth's produce. The instruction for us is to come to Her, not just in any way, but as one who plows and sows. To plow is to work the earth, turning up the soil to prepare it for the seed. This represents engaging with Wisdom, uncovering Her deeper layers. This is done by thorough and true study of the messages She has inspired. By "true study," we mean that it is done by personally engaging with Her. As you study the messages She sends, ask Her personally what they mean. Ask Her to search you out and to show you anything in you which keeps Her at a distance that you may cast it away and thus be as close to Her as possible. Thus you personally engage with the earth (Wisdom), and discover what She is like beneath the surface. You will find that She is more than mere dirt to walk upon, but fertile soil ready to produce life.

Next, is the seed. Being a part of the produce (the truth), the seed has its origin in the earth (Wisdom). It represents a part of the truth which has already been reaped from a past harvest (a past revelation and proclamation of truth), but which, rather than being digested, is returned to Wisdom in order to bring forth more produce. In other words, the seed represents the tiny kernel of truth which will grow to be a large plant many times its own size. Let us illustrate with an example: Earlier in this article we quoted a statement from Ellen White where she spoke of the Apocrypha as the hidden book and said the wise in the last days should understand it. The reading of her writings which led to that statement can be likened to feeding upon the produce of a past harvest of truth. The statement itself can be likened unto a seed, for it may seem small and rather insignificant at first glance, but it contains the essential elements which, if returned to Wisdom, will produce a whole new plant with new fruits with more seeds of their own. Thus, every seed of truth is a key with the potential of opening up whole new fields of study, full of new plants, bearing new fruit, with more seeds. All

that is required of us once in possession of such a seed is to return it to the earth. What this means is that when we come across a kernel of truth, rather than thinking little of it or cutting it open and trying to cause it to grow by our own means (trying to “figure out” the truth), we need to place it back in the hands of Wisdom. In order for the seed to grow we cannot simply toss it on the surface of the earth. We must be plowing the soil so that we might place the seed deep enough to take root. This means that you will be studying thoroughly and engaging Wisdom personally so that when you come across a kernel of truth you will know where to place it. You will take that kernel and apply it to your study and include it in your conversation with Wisdom. When this is done, you can then watch in eagerness as the seed becomes a plant and as the plant bears fruit. This is how Wisdom must be approached.

<sup>20</sup> She seems very rough to the undisciplined; fools cannot remain with Her. <sup>21</sup> She will be like a heavy stone to test them, and they will not delay in casting Her aside. <sup>22</sup> For Wisdom is like Her name; She is not readily perceived by many. – Sirach 6:20-22

Though Wisdom is fertile soil, she seems like rough, tough ground to the undisciplined; indeed, she even seems like a heavy stone. Thus, she is cast aside. This has more than one aspect to its meaning. First, those who are undisciplined find Her difficult to work with – as difficult as a farmer attempting to plow a heavy stone. The second aspect is the reason why they find her hard to work with. It is that She seems rough, or otherwise translated “harsh.” She disciplines by means of her rebukes and reproofs (Prov. 1:20-23). If one is unwilling to receive Her reproof, She seems harsh and unloving. In reality though, it is not Her who is hard as a rock, but the carnal (stoney) heart of the unrenewed man. It is the method of the enemy to cause people to view others as being guilty of the sins and attributes which they themselves commit and possess. It is one thing when this is done to humanity, but it is even worse when it is done to Divinity.

Let it always be remembered that “Wisdom (the Person) is like Her name (the quality of wisdom); She is not readily perceived by many.” Therefore, walk circumspectly.

<sup>23</sup> Listen, my child, and accept my judgment; do not reject my counsel. <sup>24</sup> Put your feet into Her fetters, and your neck into Her collar. <sup>25</sup> Bend your shoulders and bear Her, and do not fret under Her chains. – Sirach 6:23-25

Though She seems harsh to you – though Her discipline seems even like the bonds of slavery, do not fear. “Put your feet into Her fetters” – become slave to Her commands to either stay where She says to stay, or go where She says to go. Put “your neck into Her collar” – metal collars were common for slaves in the ancient world and were often inscribed with the name of the master and instructions for returning the slave. Thus, to have Her collar on your neck is to openly identify as Her slave, which itself binds you to Her and brings you back if you run from Her. “Bend your shoulders and bear Her” – bear whatever burden She places upon you, even if it be She herself. “Do not fret under Her chains” – take upon yourself Her restrictions, but do not fear.

<sup>26</sup> Come to Her *with all your soul*, and keep Her ways *with all your might*. <sup>27</sup> Search out and seek Her, and She *will* become known to you; and when you get hold of Her, do not let Her go. <sup>28</sup> For at last *you will find the rest She gives*, and She will be turned into your joy. <sup>29</sup> Then Her fetters will become for you a strong defense, and her collar a garment of glory <sup>30</sup> Her yoke is a golden ornament, and Her chains a purple cord. <sup>31</sup> You will wear Her like a glorious robe, and put Her on like a splendid crown. – Sirach 6:26-31

Due to our own lack of discipline, She at first seems harsh and enslaving, but if we only give ourselves up as slaves to Her, we will find that Her yoke is easy and Her burden light (Matt. 11:30). We must recognize that in sin, we are already in slavery (John 8:34), and so we lose no freedom by making Her our Master. Rather, by becoming Her slave, we enter into glory. What at first appears to be the shackles of a slave, turns out to be the glorious robes of righteousness and truth. In fact, not only does Wisdom adorn us as kings and queens, but She adorns us as gods by giving Herself (the divine nature) as our garment (2 Peter 1:4). Again, “You will wear Her like a glorious robe, and put Her on like a splendid crown.”

<sup>32</sup> *If you are willing*, my child, *you can be disciplined*, and *if you give your all*, you will become clever. <sup>33</sup> *If you love to listen* you will gain knowledge, and *if you pay attention* you will become wise. <sup>34</sup> Stand in the company of the elders. Who is wise? *Attach yourself to such a one*. <sup>35</sup> Be ready to *listen to every godly discourse*, and *let no wise proverb escape you*. <sup>36</sup> If you see an intelligent person, rise early to visit him; *let your foot wear out his doorstep*. <sup>37</sup> *Let your mind be on the fear of the Most High, and meditate at all times on his commandments*. It is He who will give insight to your mind, and *your desire for Wisdom will be granted*. –

Sirach 6:32-37

Thus,

<sup>33</sup> *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...* – Matthew 6:33

<sup>20</sup> *So, the desire for Wisdom leads to a kingdom.* – Wisdom of Solomon 6:20

<sup>1</sup>Others referred to Christ as a prophet (Matt. 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 4:19) and He also referred to Himself as a prophet (Mark 6:4).

<sup>2</sup>In fact, the word “prophet” means “spokesperson.” See *The Silver Trumpet*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 23-27.

<sup>32</sup> Peter 1:21 tells us that prophets speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Also, we have the specific record that the Holy Spirit came upon Christ at His baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32) and that after that He was “full of the Holy Spirit” and “led by the Spirit” (Luke 4:1). What He did was directed by the Spirit (Luke 4:14) and we are even told that Spirit came upon Him so that He might proclaim the gospel (Luke 4:18).

<sup>4</sup>This verse is building on the symbol of Wisdom being a tree of life. As a tree of life, She produces life-giving fruit, which enables its eaters to walk in the paths of righteousness where She leads. For more study on this idea, see *She is a Tree of Life* by Doug Mitchell.

<sup>5</sup>*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 160

<sup>6</sup>*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 687

<sup>7</sup>*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 234

<sup>8</sup>See *The Silver Trumpet*, Vol. 1, No. 9.

<sup>9</sup>*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 683

<sup>10</sup>The feminine form is found in the Aramaic Peshitta.

<sup>11</sup>See *The Silver Trumpet*, Vol. 1, Nos. 5-7, pp. 58-61 and our youtube playlist, [The Wisdom of Solomon](#).

<sup>12</sup>This can be verified by searching the term “wisdom of solomon” on the Adventist Pioneers CD-ROM and/or on the [www.adventistarchives.org](http://www.adventistarchives.org) website.

<sup>13</sup>D.G. Needham in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Aug. 5, 1858.

14The inside cover of *Adventist Heritage*, Winter 1987, describes him thus: “Assistant Professor of History at Loma Linda University, is also Editor of *ADVENTIST HERITAGE*. A popular lecturer and writer on topics of Adventist History, Dr. Graybill has also served as Associate Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate.”

15The full article can be read at: <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/ScholarlyJournals/AH/AH19870101-V12-01.pdf>.

16*Adventist Heritage*, Winter 1987, p. 25

17 Ms4-1850 (January 28, 1850) par. 13

18 *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 15, p. 66

19 Ms5-1849 (September 23, 1849) par. 7-8

20As pointed out earlier in Graybill’s article, the *Voice of Truth* was an Adventist periodical in which Pinney and Fassett (two other early SDAs) had published an article defending the inspiration and authenticity of 2 Esdras.

21 The passage quoted is actually from 2 Esdras 12:37-38.

22The last half of this sentence is perhaps the only aspect of Graybill’s article which I believe to be misinterpreting the facts. There are a few assumptions he makes which greatly impact his reading of Ellen White’s statement, which, if incorrect, leave one with quite a different meaning. The first assumption is that when Ellen White used the word “bible” in the phrase “I saw that the bible was the standard book,” she was speaking of a Bible *without* the apocrypha. In other words, he believes she is contrasting the Apocrypha with “the bible.” This, however, is not the case. In the record of her words spoken in vision, we have “(Taking the large Bible containing the apocrypha:) Pure and undefiled, a part of it [the Bible] is consumed.” Here we find that Ellen White was speaking of the Apocrypha as *a part* of the Bible rather than something separate from it. In her day, it was still very common for Protestant Bibles to contain the Apocrypha, so she would not have the automatic separation in mind that most Protestants have today. In fact the very point that she seems to be making is that the Apocrypha is a part of the Bible and that the Bible as a whole (including the Apocrypha) is the “standard book.”

What establishes this as being true is actually what Graybill himself noted; namely, that Ellen White’s statement was an expression of a shared early Adventist understanding of 2 Esdras and its admonition to teach the hidden things to the “wise” (as Ellen White said, “the *wise* of these last days should understand it [the apocrypha].” Another passage a little further along in 2 Esdras, which certainly influenced the early SDA understanding of this idea, reads as follows:

“So during the forty days, ninety-four books were written. And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, ‘Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them: but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.’” – 2 Esdras 14:44-47

This passage certainly does not teach that the “hidden books” are subordinate to the others; rather, in some ways, it portrays them as richer in wisdom and knowledge. Since Graybill has shown that it is 2 Esdras itself which lay behind the statements by Ellen White and the other pioneers, then we must understand their statements through the lens of Esdras, not through the lens of modern Protestant/Adventist canonical theology, which evidently these early Adventists did not share.

[23](#) *Adventist Heritage*, Winter 1987, p. 31

[24](#) Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls are fragmentary and so there are gaps in the text as well as restorations. Restorations are put in “[ ]” while gaps are indicated by “...”

[25](#) 1QHa Col. xx:11-13 (some give 14-16) – *Hymn 23*

[26](#) 1QHa Col. xvi:16 – *Hymn 18*

[27](#) 1QHa Col. xxiii top: 10-15 – *Hymn 24* (Notice the parallels to Isaiah 61.)

[28](#) 4Q525 Frag. 1:2; Frags 2-3:1-7

[29](#) Many ancient Christians had 151 Psalms, but Syrians had an additional four (Psalm 152-155).

[30](#) 11Q5 Col. xviii:1-17