

Satan's Captives are Burning the Bible

Did Ellen White Endorse the Apocrypha in 1849?

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Abstract

Ellen White's comments about "the Hidden Book" or "Apocrypha" have created a growing interest among Adventist historians. With the public release of a new document in 2014 (Manuscript 5, 1849) that revealed White had not only recommended the "Hidden Book," but called it "thy Word" and "the Word of God," a need has been created for an explanation of her early remarks. This has been complicated additionally by the fact that the document itself is riddled with spelling errors. In this article, I will seek to provide a textual reconstruction of the two passages regarding the Apocrypha, offering emendations in addition to those that the White Estate has already given. In doing so, I will also offer a close analysis of the work, exploring the historical background behind her comments about the Apocrypha being "burned" and "cast out," particularly the British and Foreign Bible Society and its supporters who called for the destruction and according to some reports, even the burning of the Apocrypha. It will be argued that Ellen White's final statement in these two paragraphs is best understood to have warned that any attempt to remove the Apocrypha would eventually lead to the expulsion of the entire canon of Scripture, shedding light on her later warning in Manuscript 4, 1850.

Among the statements made by Ellen White that have most mystified Adventist historians are those she made in reference to the works of the Apocrypha, or the "Hidden Book," as some Adventists uniquely referred to it. Yet, rather ironically, these statements have received little attention and interest, with

only a handful of scholars ever broaching or exploring the subject.¹ On no more than three occasions she is known to have directly spoken on the topic and in only two instances are her words actually recorded. Both have proven discouragingly cryptic to understand and further complicating matters, each account was only brought to published light in the past forty years, well over a hundred years after they were originally written. Adding to the mystery, the young Ellen Harmon is acknowledged to have alluded to and/or quoted from two of these apocryphal works eight or more times within two early letters, one of which was a published account of her first visions.² Furthermore, additional study has shown that she continued to quote and allude to the Apocrypha throughout her lifetime, demonstrating a consistent practice that did not cease until around her death.³

While her comments from Manuscript 4, 1850 have received the focus of a number of past studies, no such scholarly attention has been given to the earlier Manuscript 5, 1849 and its enigmatic comments. As Roland Karlman noted, “there has been little published comment on [it]” (Karlman 2014, 183). In fact, prior to Karlman’s annotation, there had quite literally *never* been a public acknowledgement of the document’s existence. However, that it was known previously at the White Estate appears equally true. William White appears to express knowledge of the transcript and appears to comment on it in 1911 in a private letter (White William 1911).⁴ Ronald Graybill directly refers to it in 1984 within a private letter. Shortly before R. W. Olson released publicly Ellen White’s comments in Manuscript 4, 1850 and the accompanying

¹ These five scholars are: Ronald Graybill, Denis Fortin, Donald Casebolt, Laurence A. Turner, and Matthew J. Korpman. For a full list of all scholarly journal articles and dictionary entries dealing with this topic, see the following: Korpman 2025b; 2025a; 2024b; 2023; Turner 2023; Korpman 2022a; 2022b; 2021; 2020b; 2020a; 2018; Casebolt 2018; Fortin 2013; 2002; Graybill 1987. One might also add Roland Karlman (2014) to the list for his brief annotations on the material. Additionally, others have attempted to add their voices to the conversation, even when they lack scholarly training or methodology. See Paulson 2022. While there is much to disagree with Paulson with regard to both his claims and methodology, I will make reference to several of his comments throughout this paper, since he remains the only conversation partner to date.

² For a full study of this specific claim and its associated evidence, see Korpman 2020b; Fortin 2002; Graybill 1987.

³ See Korpman 2020b, 2020a.

⁴ For full discussion of this newly discovered letter by William White, see my discussion in Korpman 2024c.

statement by Arthur White in 1985, Ronald Graybill wrote a letter to Ron Joliffe in 1984 mentioning by name the document that wouldn't be released until 2014.

Graybill wrote to Joliffe that "You should also request from the White Estate Manuscript 5, 1849, taken from Record Book 2, pp. 45–46. This document records words spoken by Ellen White during a vision Sept. 23, 1849" (Graybill 1984). Graybill curiously never mentioned or even alluded to this document in his later 1987 article, and the White Estate only released Manuscript 4, 1850 upon Joliffe's request.⁵ However, when asked about why during a YouTube interview on the topic, Graybill admitted it wasn't because of any specific reason, at least as far as he could remember. He said he simply wasn't sure of what value to deem it, a possibility equally true perhaps for Arthur White who never mentioned it, despite it being one of the earliest documents attributed to Ellen White.⁶ Denis Fortin, in the same interview, also revealed that he was not even made aware of this manuscript's existence when he was assigned the topic to research in 1998, and he doubted those who assigned it him were aware either (Fortin 2021).

In short then, Manuscript 5, 1849 has received little of the attention that it deserves, whether by the White Estate or Adventist historians. To this date, the White Estate has never updated the prepared statement by Arthur White to include acknowledgement of the additional manuscript or even the newest research (including the initial studies by Graybill and Fortin) that has been published since Arthur White's initial statement. Moreover, due to the fact that this document is being circulated online for diverse ideological goals by various groups, it behooves Adventist historians to provide a historically sound analysis of this work. And moreover, to attempt to both situate it within its historical context, as well as to investigate how it connects with the comments she soon after made in Manuscript 4, 1850, dated only a few months later.

⁵ It is not known if they privately shared the other document to Joliffe but if they did, it can presumed that they did not permit its public release.

⁶ "Korpman: 'In a conversation that I had with you, you kind of alluded to the fact that it just wasn't valued. It was just assumed too questionable, too odd. It just wasn't given the same kind of value as the assumption was for the 1850 manuscript. Am I correct?' Graybill: 'Yeah.'" Graybill and Korpman 2021.

One of the major obstacles to undertaking this task is the fact that this document and transcript of Ellen White's vision is riddled with spelling errors, as implicitly acknowledged by the fact that the White Estate provided numerous suggested textual emendations to the text. Yet, these are only the minimal emendations that the Estate presumed necessary for publication and the possibility of a need for more corrections has not been removed. Particularly within the section of the manuscript dealing with the issue of the Apocrypha, there are a number of statements made that cause confusion in their current textual state.

In this article, I will propose additional textual emendations to this passage in Manuscript 5, 1849. I will propose these emendations on the basis of internal consistency, consistency with Manuscript 4, 1850, and finally with consideration of the historical context in which these statements were made. Instead of Ellen White claiming that a "part of the hidden book is burned," it will be suggested that she actually said that "a part of [it,] the hidden book[,] is burned." Furthermore, instead of her concluding with an exhortation to "let everything be cast out," the statement, it is reasoned, should be corrected to "le[s]t everything be cast out." The consequences of these emendations, it will be argued, is that White's vision gains consistency with her later statement and becomes historically grounded in the fears that were emerging after the British and Foreign Bible Society's decision in 1827 to remove the Apocrypha from newly printed Bibles.

Yet, it should be noted that while these emendations provide better clarity and explanatory power for how to situate White's vision, a goal of this article, they do not affect the *content* of the vision itself and what has made it so controversial. Even without any emendations, the transcript claims outright that the Hidden Book (the Apocrypha) is the "Word of God" and "thy Word." It also explicitly records Ellen White imploring those around her that they need to "bind" the Apocrypha to their hearts and not let its pages be closed. These elements of the vision that have continued to mystify scholars are not affected by emendation and are the basic facts surrounding the manuscript. What makes the manuscript enigmatic is *not* whether it claims these things, but how to explain why it does so. As such, these proposed emendations are undertaken for the purpose of better situating how these comments should be interpreted in the light of our current knowledge about what Ellen White believed on these issues.

1. An Unpublished Vision: Text and Commentary

Between 2014–2015, the Ellen G. White Estate undertook a bold move and made public all of the previously unpublished writing materials from Ellen White (*Adventist Today* News Team 2015). These were released online as well as in print, partly published in a landmark first of its kind commentary on Ellen White's early works (see Karlman 2014). Amongst these releases was a previously undisclosed manuscript/transcript of a vision by White during her early years in 1849, a vision in which she mentioned the "Apocrypha" or "Hidden Book." Yet, the public impression of the White Estate since 1985 was that there were not any other documents (aside from the vision of 1850) which existed which could shed light on the question of Ellen White's views of the Apocrypha.⁷ As such, the publication of this new document represented a major development in the study of Ellen White's relationship to the Apocrypha.

Due to the fact that many are unfamiliar with this work, and the need for textual emendation, the passage pertaining to the Apocrypha is presented in its entirety below alongside accompanying commentary in the footnotes on specific suggestions for corrections. A number of spelling errors and corrections are proposed by both myself and the White Estate who originally released it, indicated by brackets []. When the correction does not appear self-explanatory, a footnote explains the reasoning behind the correction and whether its source resides in my particular reconstruction or the White Estate. Comments in parentheses () are original to the transcriber. Some parts of the text has been italicized and bolded by me for emphasis. Finally, I have reviewed the original handwritten document in the Vault at the White Estate and have corrected the spelling of certain words in the passage. At present, the form of the text presented below is more accurate than any other available transcription and has attempted to retain the smallest details (spelling and punctuation) from the original handwritten version.

(Taking the large Bible containing the apochraphy:) *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,

⁷ Arthur White wrote that "there is some documentation of the early years which may be of interest" and listed a number of sources for discussion on the topic. The impression is that there was nothing else beside these documents to discuss.

pure and unadulterated, How *lovely*, How lovely, How lovely. My blood, My blood, My blood. O the children of disobedience, reproved, reproved. *Thy word*, thy word, thy word, a part of it is burned unadulterated, a part of [it,]⁸ *the hidden book*, a part of it is burned (the apocraphy).⁹

⁸ *a part of [it,] the hidden book, a part of it is burned (the apocrypha)*. The original statement that is handwritten, “a part of the hidden book,” is quite odd. It is possible, given the large amount of spelling errors in the document and the fact that it’s a transcription, that the statement quoted here was possibly miss-transcribed, since it doesn’t agree (at least obviously) with the rest of the statements in that vision (she elsewhere states in the same vision that the Hidden Book is the Apocrypha which was removed and burned *from* the Bible, thus indicating that the *entire* Apocrypha was burned and not simply a part of it). It’s plausible, therefore, that White actually may have simply said: “a part of [it,] the hidden book, a part of it is burned.” This simple change would make far more sense and would then agree with her other statements, making the “it” refer to the Bible she was holding (as she speaks elsewhere in the same vision). It would also be easy to see how the transcriber may have missed the “it” and not providing the comma, given us the sentence as we have it.

⁹ *the apocraphy... (the apocraphy)*. The original handwritten transcript evidences two different spellings of the plural form of “apocrypha.” The term “apocrypha” in the singular is never mentioned, contrary to the official current transcription hosted online by the White Estate. While it is clear that the term “the apocraphy” is the same functionally as “the Apocrypha,” noticing the spelling difference helps to elucidate something important: the transcriber is not limiting Ellen White’s words only to a single book amongst the Apocrypha. The “hidden book” (a singular title) refers to “apocraphy” (a plurality), indicating that the *entire collection* of the King James Bible is being considered.

Those that shall despitefully trea[t]¹⁰ that remnant¹¹ wodel¹² would think that they are doing God service. Why? because they are led captive by Satan at his will, [the]¹³ *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 strait truth* bind it to the heart (3 times) Le[s]t¹⁴ everything be cast out (White 1849).

¹⁰ *Those that shall despitefully trea[t] that remnant*. This was a suggested spelling correction by the White Estate and the context could certainly be seen to support it. It should be noted however that it is possible to make sense of the original record of “tread,” since it connotes disrespect. While the correction to “tre[a]t” seems more grammatically correct, it is also the case that “tread” is used in similar ways within the King James Bible that influenced Ellen White. In either case, whether it is “tread” or “treat,” the meaning remains the same in both uses. However, when one examines the original handwritten document, it turns out that perhaps both options are right. The original handwritten word includes a cursive *d* that has a crossed *t* at the top. It appears, as such, that the original transcriber originally wrote the letter *d* and then tried to correct their mistake by adding a line at the top to transform it into a *t*.

¹¹ “Remnant,” as a word here, is used as a descriptor to the Apocrypha. This is the natural meaning of the word “remnant” in this context. I am not alone in seeing this, as the White Estate also published their belief that it seemed to them as well to be a reference to the Apocrypha.

¹² The original handwritten document has this incomplete word crossed out. It appears that the transcriber miswrote “would” and quickly crossed it out and continued writing. This is part of the evidence that suggests the handwritten document is the original transcription taken while Ellen White spoke, rather than a later memory statement. This was neither a copy of an earlier transcript (or else this would have been removed) nor was it a later memory statement written for posterity. This is an original transcript of White’s words as she gave them.

¹³ [The] *Hidden book, it is cast out*. Nowhere else does Ellen White ever refer to “Hidden Book,” but always by the full title “The Hidden Book.” This suggests that the transcriber has missed the opening word. However, it is still always possible that this was the one occasion in which White referred to it in shorthand. In either case, the original handwritten document shows that the transcriber placed a comma, not a period before the capitalized term “Hidden book,” which suggests that he saw the word as a title.

¹⁴ *bind it to the heart (3 times) Le[s]t everything be cast out*. As explored later in the broader analysis, I believe “let” is another spelling error, missing an *s* to make it “lest.” This is the only explanation that salvages the meaning and cohesion of the two paragraphs and the message they intended to provide. It would be nonsensical and absurd for the final sentence to be “let everything (including the Bible) be cast out,”¹⁴ as former pastor Kevin Paulson noted as well on his blog. Paulson, “Ellen White, Scripture, and the Apocrypha.” The full implications and argument for this change though

2. Is It Reliable?

This document records Ellen White's comments made during vision, transcribed by an anonymous member of the small house meeting which White was part of. Some may be prone to question the reliability of the transcription from 1849 due to it not being a native manuscript belonging to Ellen White,¹⁵ as Graybill himself intimated was his own reasoning for initially ignoring it.¹⁶ One might wonder whether it accurately reflects the truth of what White said that night in Maine. Despite the reservations of those prior to its eventual publication, the White Estate has offered no concern over its authenticity since 2013 and to the contrary, has increased our assumptions of its authenticity.

Karlman, in his annotations provided with the release of the document, simply noted that "this manuscript is another rare example of a report of actual words uttered by Ellen White in public vision" (Karlman 2014, 181). Alberto Timm also appears to agree that the transcriptions of Ellen White are implicitly trustworthy (Timm 2013, 10).¹⁷ And some recent dissertations and articles on Ellen White have treated these transcriptions as precise and accurate records of Ellen White's words.¹⁸

Karlman also clarifies in his annotations to the visions that we should understand such documents as *transcriptions* of the words spoken (Karlman 2014, 177).¹⁹ We should not then presume that this is a later memory statement or that it is primarily based on the memory statements of others, rather than an eyewitness account. There seems no reason to doubt that the handwritten

will be explored later in this article. (Alternatively, perhaps one could argue she means let everything be cast out of the heart so that there is room to bind the apocrypha there, but this meaning seems contrived and does not seem to be a better answer than the proposed emendation).

¹⁵ Tim Poirier's description of the similar Manuscript 6, 1849 is applicable here: "in one account of an early vision, Ellen White reportedly said..." Poirier 2008, 21.

¹⁶ See Dixon 2021.

¹⁷ While Timm was referring specifically to Manuscript 6, 1849, his logic for doing so would naturally apply to its sister-manuscript Manuscript 5, 1849. In fact, as shown later in this article, we have more reason to trust Manuscript 5 than we do Manuscript 6.

¹⁸ See the work of Peruvian scholars Cristian S. Gonzales and Cid Gouveia, who both treat Manuscript 6, 1849 (and Manuscript 5) as a precise transcription of Ellen White's comments, never referencing any cautions about the trustworthiness of these manuscripts. Gonzales 2021, 45–69; Gouveia 2019.

¹⁹ This is followed by Kevin Morgan as well. See Morgan 2023.

transcription was written down at the time Ellen White spoke in vision.²⁰ As Karlman explains the value of such documents:

Such reports provide valuable insights into the phenomena of the visions themselves and sometimes include information on movements, gestures, and facial expressions, etc. However, as far as conveying information on the factual content of the vision, these reports are limited in what they can provide. Not only is the accuracy of the recorder's transcription not guaranteed, but the intermittent character of the utterances means that there is often insufficient context available to make the meaning of individual statements clear or to understand the overall structure of the vision (Karlman 2014, 177).

²⁰ In another rare example of a similar transcribed vision from around the same period of time (Manuscript 6, 1849), an anonymous transcriber records toward the end of the vision a notation about what another witness during the vision claimed to have seen. The passage is reproduced below, with Ellen White's comment in vision "I see it" followed by the notation of the transcriber.

I see it. (Says Brother Chamberlain: Here was silence for some ten minutes, her eyes going quickly each way as if looking at angels. When she came out of vision she accounted it thus: "I saw a large company of angels moving. I was not permitted to tell what they said to me. Each one had a round rod in their hand ten inches long. Think they had something to do with the time of trouble, etc.). Manuscript 6, 1849.

In this different manuscript, it is clear that what we have is a *memory statement* being provided with the source of the memory identified. This suggests that the original transcription, before being edited into the final form of the manuscript, lacked any notation and only contained the words "I see it." This was clearly unsatisfactory and the editor decided there needed to be more clarity about that moment. This suggests that the initial transcription was indeed written as Ellen White spoke in vision. Confirmation for this can be seen in the handwritten original of Manuscript 6 (located at Pacific Union College) where the memory statement is located at the bottom of page 2. It appears, based on the similar handwriting, that the original transcriber returned to the document and added the memory statement in the final available two lines of white space after "I see it." The following page at the beginning of page 3 begins "I saw a large company of angels moving," suggesting that in the original draft one would have turned from "I see it" directly to "I saw a large company." In other words, Manuscript 6 does not appear to be an edited draft copied from an earlier original document, but the original with additional material added to explain things. See footnotes 26–33 for further discussion.

In fact, a close comparison of Manuscript 5, 1849 with other examples of transcriptions of Ellen White's visions appears to demonstrate its strong accuracy. When compared with its sister transcription (Manuscript 6, 1849), one can note that the other transcriber was far more speculative and uncertain about their notes.²¹ There are at least two perceivable stages of editing²² in Manuscript 6 and when compared, Manuscript 5, 1849 appears to have been completed closer to the time of the vision than the other manuscript was.

In contrast to Manuscript 5, the transcriber/editor of Manuscript 6, 1849 was not as precise. While the transcription itself may retain accuracy, his decision to admit uncertainty about his own corrections suggests that Ellen White was never consulted afterward about it. This means that any bracketed or parenthetical commentary on meaning is potentially the speculation of the transcriber and not later clarification from White. This is also suggested by the fact that the document includes a formalized and cited memory statement

²¹ Two unique differences between the two manuscripts is that Manuscript 6, 1849 contains the only explicit memory statement provided by another witness' testimony and on another occasion fills in a lacuna with the note "I suppose," showing the uncertainty the transcriber felt about emending the text. It is this latter statement that is perhaps most enlightening.

Swift messengers of Almighty God, withhold not [the means, I suppose]. Speed the messengers, speed the messengers; still repeated, speed the messengers. Last work.

The statement "I suppose" is unique both as expressing uncertainty but also that it is a bracketed comment, not parenthetical. In Karlman's analysis, it is likely that whoever filled in the brackets also wrote the original transcript of Manuscript 6. See Karlman 2014, 177. If so, perhaps it indicates that White paused long enough for the transcriber to imagine what was missing in her abrupt ending. The brackets in this case distinguish the comment from the other parentheticals. In the handwritten document, the transcriber only uses brackets in Manuscript 6 for speculative comments and details that are not visual such as identifying a person being spoken to or a memory statement. Other clarifying comments, which are presented as authoritative, are included with parenthesis.

²² What appears clear is that there were at least two stages to this document's creation (referring to Manuscript 6, 1849): the first stage involved a transcription of the words spoken during vision, and the second stage involved writing down or seeking later testimony about Ellen White's comments after the vision from Brother Chamberlain, adding his comment to the bottom of page 2 of the handwritten original.

from Brother Chamberlain, and does not simply note firsthand what White said later.

However, Manuscript 5, 1849 appears to differ from this document in some important and decisive ways. While it continues the tradition of bracketed and parenthetical comments that summarize or clarify information, it lacks statements of uncertainty (i.e. "I suppose") and also lacks any formalized memory statements, instead providing what appears to be firsthand commentary on Ellen White's statements following the vision. Compared with Manuscript 6, Manuscript 5 appears to be much more faithful to White's original wording.²³

In fact, one cannot overlook the possibility that the transcript contained in Manuscript 5, 1849 itself gives evidence that White oversaw and approved the written copy after coming out of vision. The transcriber notes that Ellen White

²³ In fact, whereas Manuscript 6 had summarized Ellen White's repetition as "repeated many times," Manuscript 5 quite precisely indicates the *exact* number of times that she repeats things ("4 times"). For the bulk of the manuscript, the transcriber simply records the repetition word for word. Only until the end does he begin to summarize, as if growing weary from writing down her words. This suggests not only a live transcription, but a transcriber who prized accuracy.

gave commentary²⁴ and elucidation²⁵ on the visionary comments after she came out of vision. Do these notations seem to suggest that White provided

²⁴ For example, the following represents two examples of this phenomenon.

After the light shone upon the Sabbath those that have received it and cast it away, there is no hope for them. The condemnation was great for breaking the nine commandments. **(Out of vision she said, But when the light comes on the fourth it would be greater if rejected.)** ...

Take it as the man of thy counsel, let not thy mouth be closed (Henry Nichols [Henry O. Nichols]). **(Not in vision said, He believes the promises are for every one else but for him.)** Glory, the rich reward, the rich reward, glory.

What exactly should one make of the phrase “not in vision”? Does this mean that she made further statements and these were thought to be worth including after the initial transcription was written or does it mean that she specifically commented on aspects of the vision, even perhaps the written transcript itself? It is possible that the second comment about Henry Nichols might have stemmed from an off-the cuff remark she made, but the first comment about the fourth commandment appears to be direct commentary and elucidation on what she said. How did such a comment come to be spoken or written? How would Ellen White have referenced this part of her long vision in order to add comment on it and how would the document’s editors know where to add such a comment? The problem is that the handwritten Manuscript 5, 1849 does not appear to show signs of being an edited document, but rather is quite messy and appears to show signs of being the original transcribed document. See footnotes 26-33 for further discussion. Another possibility is that Ellen White is imagined here to be going in and out of vision, rather than experiencing one single long vision that was unceasing. In this case, these comments do not provide us insight into her clarity on the manuscript, but are simply evidencing that those viewing her could note the difference between when she was in a trance-like state and when she was not in such a state. This scenario would suggest that the parenthesis mentioning the “apocraphy” were provided due to the clarity that White herself may have given coming out of vision (or a comment from someone else in the room), even if not explicitly stated by the transcriber.

²⁵ Manuscript 5, 1849 not only includes spelling corrections, notes about repetition, named identifications, and additional reports about White’s statements following the vision, but also full comments about various parts of the transcription. For example:

The mind is perplexed. The mind is troubled. Break away **(her parents and others)**.

clarification on what was happening in the various parts of the manuscript we have, as well as clarity on the meaning? It is hard to determine since some of them (the second and third examples given in footnote 34) can be explained based only on inferences from what Ellen White had said in the vision, while other examples (the first and fourth in footnote 34) may point to further elaborations by her since it is not at all obvious how these conclusions could be otherwise reached. It is possible then that if White didn't give direct oversight of the transcription, she nonetheless provided commentary on her vision following it (or during it), commentary which affected how the manuscript we now have was written. Some of these parenthetical comments may even be quotes from her, rather than summaries of the transcriber.

In fact, the handwritten manuscript bears evidence that suggests that it is the original transcription undertaken and not edited after the events con-

Do ye see those men?—1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (**pointing to angels who were waiting to write on their rolls the names of those established, and those separated from us**). Do you not see those bloody men with their weapons coming on as soon as the last name is enrolled?

They cry, they agonize. (**Who? those who were right once, then they all join with the others, the wicked.**) It's too late, too late. Every idle word put a watch before thee.

It is the youth (**here and other places**). Critical place. Satan is tempting them, if they go back, if they give up there is, will be no more hope.

cluded. There are examples throughout the pages of misspellings and shorthand,²⁶ crossed out words that were misspelled,²⁷ underlined words,²⁸ words added above sentences to fill in things missed initially,²⁹ inconsistent usage of punctuation,³⁰ and non-standardized line spacing.³¹ We would not expect this if this was an edited or polished document copying from the more rough original. It is what one would expect from an original transcription. The same phenomena can be evidenced in the handwritten Manuscript 6, 1849 which

²⁶ On page 1, line 21, it reads "evry" and underneath it is an arrow pointing to a floating "e" that is inserted in the middle of the word to correct it. On page 2, we read both "apochraphy" and "apocraphy." Throughout the pages we read "th" rather than "the." Instead of spelling out the word "commandments" sometimes the writer just writes "commandts" with three dots *** underneath "ts" to indicate a spelling mistake or shorthand, or "the nine comm*" where what appears to be a drawing of a star * indicates shorthand for commandments (page 3, line 22). Page 4 has "commts" instead of "commandments" (line 13).

²⁷ On page 2, line 22, we read "~~upon~~" and written above it the correction "upon." On page 3, line 3, we read "~~wedel~~ would." On page 4, line 5, the writer writes "~~Halleluia~~ Hallelujah".

²⁸ On page 2 of the handwritten manuscript, we find on line 4 "Beware" underlined, so too on line 6 the statement "closing up closing up." Line 23 also has "faith, faith, faith, faith, faith" underlined.

²⁹ On page 1 of the handwritten manuscript, we find at the end of line 11 "should anyth" with "ing" written above it due to a lack of space on the page. Similarly, in line 16 "must be impla" with "nted" written above it due to a lack of space on the page. On page 2, line 15 has "those who were right once, they all join" and has "then" written above and in-between "once, they." Line 24 has "consum" and the "e" is written above it due to a lack of space. On page 3, the last line has "not in" and written above it is "vision," due again to a lack of page space.

³⁰ Throughout the document commas are sometimes used, or interchanged with periods. Sometimes when a period is used, the word is lower case and other times when a word is followed by a comma, it is capitalized.

³¹ On page 2, one can notice how the transcriber squishes the words together toward the end. The middle of page 4 begins to squish the lines tighter together in a messy fashion, bending the shape of some of the sentences.

also evidences these same oddities.³² This evidence, when taken with consideration of the other aspects discussed, would suggest that this is the original document and not a later edited version.³³

Overall, while it is true that our understanding of the September 1849 vision is partial due to lacking notes from Ellen White herself (Karlman 2014, 183), we find more reasons to rest assured that the transcription of Manuscript

³² Manuscript 6, 1849 evidences a number of problems that suggest firsthand transcription, such as erasing or crossing out errors that should have been obvious. At the top of the handwritten document, below the title, the writer by accident starts to write "Look ye, heave" and then scribbles it out writing the words one line down, as if recognizing that they had accidentally starting writing on the wrong line. Five lines from the bottom of page 1, the transcriber writes "to be swal" and then draws a line up to the next line in order to fill in above it: "lowed up in god." This suggests that the transcriber noted the blank space above the line and filled in the missing line there, a haphazard solution that only makes sense if the writer is rushing to record the lines. The line below that shows the transcriber writing "they shall not" with an arrow pointing between "they" and "shall" with the words in parenthesis "(the wicked)". In fact, the transcriber had erased an earlier attempt to write this on the line below, apparently worried that it would confuse readers. On the same line a bit later, there is an attempt to write a parenthetical comment but it was erased for some reason (only one word was begun to be written before being scribbled out). One page 2, line 14, we read "Hide it ~~away~~ from me, take it away," suggesting that the transcriber might have heard Ellen White say the latter part when they were writing the first clause, suggesting again that this transcription was undertaken as she spoke. 3 lines below on line 17 of page 2, a word is scribbled out. Manuscript 6 also has abbreviated words like "Br" with two dots under the r. And although the transcriber begins by noting Ellen White's repetition by noting first "still repeated" (page 1, line 7), then "(repeated)" (page 1, line 13), then "(R means repeat it)" (page 1, line 15), then "(R many times)" (page 1, line 22), and finally they begin to simply note the letter next to the statements "deny self R" (page 1, line 26). Progressively, the transcriber seems to grow weary of noting her repetitions. All of this suggests not a redacted and edited handwritten copy, but the original transcription in all its rough literary characteristics.

³³ That would further suggest that White was potentially going in and out of her vision, giving commentary on what she was seeing (given the comments about saying things "out of vision"). The reason for this conclusion is the fact that these statements about saying things "out of vision" are positioned in the manuscript in such a way that they had to be written down while the transcription was being made, not afterward added (such as Brother Chamberlain's memory statement in Manuscript 6 appears to have done). Given the evidence stated before that Manuscript 5 is the handwritten original transcription and does not evidence later editing and redaction, these comments about being out of vision must have occurred within the chronology of the transcription, indicating that Ellen White was variously coming in and out of her visionary state, providing commentary, and then drifting back into vision.

5 was of an even greater fidelity than the other example in Manuscript 6. Furthermore, the transcriber appears to give indications of having personally witnessed Ellen White's further commentary following the vision, rather than relying on memory statements from others. And perhaps most important, William White appears to acknowledge the transcription as a faithful record which was known to him and his mother, and which they retained access to (White William, 1911).³⁴

At least one pastor though has additionally cautioned that perhaps "mistakes could have occurred in the transcription" and expressed doubt about utilizing the work (Paulson 2022). Indeed, the transcription should not simply be trusted *de facto*, as shown by the need for textual emendations and corrections. Yet, it cannot be presumed to be untrustworthy either, nor can an ambivalence about it substantiate ignoring its challenging content. Instead, one must first seek a proper understanding of the document itself, then compare with what is known from Ellen White's own pen to perceive whether there is continuity and agreement. Later in this article, a cross-comparison with Manuscript 4, 1850 will be undertaken to do just this. However, before moving to the vision four months later, one must first gain a good understanding of the claims in the September 1849 vision.

3. Burned Unadulterated? Criticism or Endorsement?

The 1849 vision can confuse readers with regard to its references to the Hidden Book being burned, as well as the description of the text being "unadulterated." What exactly do these terms mean and how do they shed light on what Ellen White's intended message was during her vision? To this end, Karlman summarizes these concerns in what was the first published commentary on the passage:

The intent of the utterances regarding the Apocrypha in the preceding three paragraphs is not clear. What is the significance of it being "consumed," "burned," and "cast out"? Does it constitute a positive evaluation of the Apocrypha – that is has value but has been "despitefully"

³⁴ William evidences no doubts that Manuscript 4, 1850 and Manuscript 5, 1849 are faithful records of not only his mother's words but her views and teachings.

treated? Or do the words “burned,” etc., imply a negative evaluation? Or is, perhaps, no judgement intended at all? (Karlman 2014, 183).

While Karlman presumes that all three options are valid possibilities, the first appears more likely given the historical records we have, and as will be explored further, the other comments that she makes on the topic in the passage. In fact, Ellen White’s very use of “consumed” and “burned” may in fact be referencing the fact that factions of the “anti-apocryphal party” in her own time then had promoted the idea that people should tear out of their Bibles the apocryphal books and burn them in a fire (Howard 1829, iv). When White wrote these comments, it was not too long after the 1826 decision by the British and Foreign Bible Society to remove the Apocrypha from forthcoming Bibles printed for missionary efforts (Korpman 2021, 74–93). In 1849, the effect of this decision would have begun to be felt with newer Bibles entering Millerite and Adventist spaces that lacked the books.

As Graybill notes, “In case Adventists did not have the Apocrypha in their Bibles, E.L.H. Chamberlain of Middletown, Connecticut, placed an ad in the *Review* in 1851 offering to sell copies of it for 15 cents” (Graybill 1987, 31). That was only two years after the 1849 vision and curious enough, this was the same Chamberlain from Manuscript 6, 1849, discussed in the preceding section. Within two decades later, James White announced that the Adventist Church would be printing its own edition of the Apocrypha for those whose newer Bibles lacked it (White James 1869, 48). Moreover, in 1881, the *Signs of the Times* announced that Bibles still containing the Apocrypha would be offered at Camp Meeting with W. C. White’s study notes included (Israel 1881, 432). Clearly, Adventists felt a need up until 1881 to combat the decision of the British and Foreign Bible Society and likely encountered quite hostile attitudes from other Protestant groups. This historical background of anti-Apocrypha fanaticism may hide behind her word choice and help us to better situate the contemporary context of her comments. Consider the testimony of Luke Howard, writing a couple decades prior to White’s comments:

... a faction which has been rising in its bosom, and which threatens to be one of the most formidable that have yet afflicted the Church, publicly orders its dependents *to burn all the copies of the Apocrypha in their possession*; a proceeding, the ultimate end and tendency of which

cannot be mistaken. Hunted thus, from the Church to the library, from the library to the closet, the Apocryphal Books of Scripture will soon cease to be found among us (Howard 1829, iv–v).³⁵

Similarly, William MacGavin appears to allude to these discussions a few years earlier in 1827 when he mentions that he had proclaimed that he would not donate any money toward the purpose of burning all the copies of the Apocrypha (MacGavin 1827, 15). During the Apocrypha Controversy, some noted reports that the Jews in Jerusalem were so fastidious about their Bibles that they threatened to burn any copies that were not pure and exact to their specifications, a point that was raised in support of the need to remove the Apocrypha from English Bibles (The Edinburgh Christian Instructor 1826, 37–38). Even later, when the vitriol and attempts died away, the language of “burning” remained connected with the Apocrypha for some time, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury’s neutral comments in 1841 that “attributing inspiration in any degree to those writings, would add fresh fuel to the flame, which, under the most favourable circumstances, will continue for some time to burn fiercely” (Liddon 1893, 201). In the end though, there is no known record of anyone actually burning copies of the Apocrypha, so regardless of whether Howard is correct that such language was used as public rhetoric between 1827–1829, it may never have been actually enacted.

However, whether burned or not, Howard was not incorrect that the Apocrypha was ordered by the British and Foreign Bible Society to be utterly destroyed. As one writer notes, “On the adoption of the anti-apocryphal restriction, every known copy of the Apocrypha belonging to the Society was destroyed.” He notes that they were so “faithful” in this endeavor that they were careful to ensure that they didn’t sell copies of the paper leaves for fear that it might eventually be given to others to read, and so they “preferred sending the whole to a paper mill to be ground to pulp” (The Christian Observer, 1832, 229). Some went so far as to require the destruction “not merely of the copies, but of the stereotype plates” (Amicus 1826, 32).

It seems likely that White’s comments most naturally find their context within these historical circumstances. Furthermore, her comments that “thy word, a part of it is burned unadulterated,” an allusion to the Apocrypha

³⁵ Emphasis added by me.

(clarified as the subject of the statement in the following clause), points us to the same conclusion. There are other possibilities as well that may be supplementary, rather than merely alternative. For example, 2 Esdras reports that all the copies of the scriptures (both apocryphal and canonical) were burned by Babylon and had to be restored by God (14:21–26), so it is possible that she saw a connection with this “biblical” imagery. Likewise, the imagery of Jeremiah 36 (with the burning of parts and eventually all of Jeremiah’s letter) could also have played a role in why she described the behavior of the anti-apocryphal party as Satanic.

What then does this potentially reveal to us regarding her evaluation of the Apocrypha as “burned unadulterated”? In her opening remarks of the passage, she states that the Bible she is holding is “pure and undefiled.” She then states that “the Word of God” is “pure and unadulterated.” This confirms that she utilizes the term “unadulterated” to refer to the Word of God and declares that her Bible she is holding (containing the Apocrypha within it) is “undefiled.”

Evidence supporting this is the fact that Ellen White, in referring to the Bible *with* the Apocrypha as “pure and unadulterated,” seems to be refuting the claims of those who were involved in the 1826 controversy who often called for the Apocrypha to be removed *in order* for the Bible to be pure and unadulterated.³⁶ Thus, White appears to be affirming that the Bible without the Apocrypha is “burned.”

As such, when she states that the Apocrypha has been “burned unadulterated,” this cannot be a negative statement or an approval of its burning. The Apocrypha is not stated to be an adulterated thing, nor does the Bible *with* the Apocrypha represent a defiled or adulterated version of Scripture. Rather, the Bible *with* the Apocrypha represents an unadulterated work, undefiled by others, as she explicitly says. To say that the Apocrypha has been burned unadulterated then is most likely a positive endorsement, suggesting that despite attempts to burn it, both it and the Bible itself remains “unadulterated.”

³⁶ For use of “pure and unadulterated” by the 1826 controversy, see Thomson 1827, 18.

4. Thy Word? The Apocrypha's Relation to Scripture

Having established that the evidence is strongest that she described the Apocrypha's burning in a way that indicated her positive assessment of it, and likewise recognizing the contemporary historical context that explains her imagery of burning, one is left to analyze how she compares the Apocrypha with the Word of God in this passage. It has already been remarked that she utilizes "unadulterated" in a parallel fashion between the Word of God and the Apocrypha, but is there anything else that she said in this passage that sheds light on this parallel?

The first piece of evidence one can note is the fact that White, having picked up the Bible, states that "a part of it is consumed." This statement in itself appears to acknowledge that "it" (the Bible) contains the Apocrypha. She does not treat the Apocrypha as a foreign entity that does not belong to the Bible, but rather as a natural *part* of it. This appears confirmed again when she states that "thy word, a part of it is burned," again suggesting that the part burned (the Apocrypha) is not only *part* of the Bible, but the Word of God. In fact, between these two statements, White approaches Marion Stowell and having just stated that a part of the Bible "is consumed," declares "The Word of God, take it... bind it long upon thine heart, pure and unadulterated."

Given that this is then followed by her declaration that "a part of [thy word] is burned," and the fact that the Bible she is declaring to bind to the heart has the Apocrypha within it, is highly suggestive that White is indeed linking the Word of God, the Bible, and the Apocrypha together as one entity in this vision. The early Adventist transcriber of the vision also understood her reference to the Word of God to speak of the Apocrypha which is why he takes careful note to both reference in parenthesis that the Bible she is holding has the Apocrypha (something he didn't do earlier in the transcript when she picked up the same Bible). He also noted at the end of the paragraph again in parenthesis that she was speaking about "the apocrypha," to add emphasis.

One could also simply note that White nearly parallels her descriptions of the Word of God with the Apocrypha. For example, note the following parallel in the two paragraphs, presented in the chart beneath.

First Paragraph	Second Paragraph
<i>The Word of God</i> , take it (Marion Stowell), bind it long upon thine heart , pure and unadulterated.	<i>[The] Hidden book</i> , 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.

In the first paragraph, she urges for her listeners to “bind it” (the Bible) and then in the second paragraph repeats her emphasis to “bind it” but this time, referring to the Apocrypha specifically. This demonstrates that her use of words and images is coherent and purposefully paralleling the two works, rebutting the claim by some ministers on the internet that “no compelling case can be made for seeing this statement as an endorsement of the Apocrypha as part of the inspired Scriptures” (Paulson 2022). To the contrary: the case seems more than compelling. In fact, one might note that White is more insistent on binding the Apocrypha to the heart than when she first mentions the Bible at the beginning of the passage.

Given the preceding evidence and the obvious parallel fashion in which White speaks of both the Word of God and the Apocrypha, and the fact that she expressly states that the Apocrypha is “a part of [thy Word],” it seems that the weight of evidence leans toward the conclusion that in this 1849 vision, White is of the belief that the Apocrypha and the Word of God are linked, and not separate entities. Moreover, there is no hint of a negative evaluation by her of the material, nor even a cautious distance, but rather a full endorsement of it.

5. Satan's Plan: Understanding Ellen White's Final Warning

Giving closer attention to the second paragraph, we can note that White references those who would “despitefully trea[t] that remnant,” uniquely designating the Apocrypha by a term dear to Adventists. Her logic in doing so though is sound, since the Apocrypha, a collection of some seven books, did form a small remnant in comparison to the larger canon of scripture. Moreover, given the early Adventist understanding of “the remnant” in Revelation as representing those who were persecuted, the Apocrypha as a collection also matched the description given the context of attempts to burn and remove it.

She states that those who treat the Apocrypha despitely (likely a reference to the British and Foreign Bible Society's decision in 1826, as well as those who supported it) believe that "they are doing Gods service." She then proclaims that in reality, they serve Satan. By utilizing this language in service of the Apocrypha, Ellen White elevates any attack on them as originating from Satan himself. Again, if Satan wishes for the Apocrypha to be removed from the Bible and inspires others to do so, Ellen White is clearly indicating that she and others must be aware of this supernatural plot. This again, like the evidence before, shows the overwhelmingly positive attitude that she demonstrates toward the Apocrypha in this vision. And in truth, this attitude or attack was not unique to White nor unusual for her time period. A report from Breslau, Austria a few years later in 1854 (published by the British and Foreign Bible Society) mentions that missionaries were encountering people who claimed that "you are doing Satan's work" by removing the Apocrypha, and some Lutherans accused the Society of being "the Antichrist" because they "had mutilated the Bible" (The British and Foreign Bible Society 1854, lvi).

Ellen White finishes her exhortations by warning that the pages of the Apocrypha are not to "be closed" and that Adventists are to "read it carefully." She calls the books "the strait truth" (a possible reference to 2 Esdras 2:47). Contrary to one prominent Adventist televangelist who argued that "there's no call [by Ellen White] to study that material," (Murray 2023) she not only calls for the study of the Apocrypha in Manuscript 5, 1849, but explicitly calls for the pages of the Apocrypha to never be closed. She urges her listeners to "bind" the apocryphal books to their heart and then warns: "le[s]t everything be cast out." This last statement, I argue, is the key to understanding everything that came before and provides a unique window into the young mindset of Adventism's visionary founder.

As explored earlier, the original record of this text makes little sense given the overall context of the passage and the reconstructed historical context mentioned in this article. Former pastor Kevin Paulson noted wisely on his blog that "If the casting out of the 'hidden book' is condemned by God, why does she go on to say, 'let everything be cast out'?" (Paulson 2022). This clearly does not make sense. Not only does it make little sense for Ellen White to condemn the Apocrypha, but even removing the Apocrypha as a particular consideration, the statement specifies "everything," *not* specifically "the Hidden Book." Clearly, it makes little sense for Ellen White to also be claiming

that the entire Bible should be cast out! And yet, in some sense, that's what we would conclude from reading that "everything" should be cast out.

However, this confusion is not necessary and seems easily fixed. By correcting "let" to "le[s]t," an emendation first proposed by me in 2020 (Korpman 2020b, 122),³⁷ and followed by Donald Casebolt in 2022 (Casebolt 2022, 201)³⁸ it becomes possible to gain clarity on her intended meaning. With this one change, the final statement matches the tenor and overall message of the rest of the visionary passage.

The reference to "cast out" is used twice, first to state that the "Hidden Book" is cast out (i.e. the Apocrypha has been removed) and second to state that unless the Apocrypha is bound to the heart, "everything [will] be cast out." I wish to suggest that White's reference of "everything" is a designation for the Bible. This appears to make the most sense of the passage. What she is claiming then is that to cast out one part of the Bible (the Apocrypha formed a middle section of family bibles) would lead to the dismissal of other portions of the Bible. She is imploring those around her not to fall for Satan's deception and to hold onto the entire Bible as they have it, lest not only the Apocrypha disappear but potentially other books as well.

This idea seems related to another notable belief of hers from later in her life: that nobody can decide what is inspired and what does not belong within the Bible (an idea she largely explores within relation to the debates over science). She writes that: "I would have both my arms taken off at my shoulders before I would ever make the statement or set my judgment upon the Word of God as to what is inspired and what is not inspired." Again, she emphasizes that: "I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an *entire Bible*" (White 1888d).³⁹ That Bible, of course, at the time, included the Apocrypha. Elsewhere she writes that "No part of the Bible has died from old age. *All the past history of the people of God is to be studied* by us today, that we may benefit by the experiences recorded" (White 1897).⁴⁰ Some other of her comments, reproduced in full, are illustrative of this thinking.

³⁷ I did not offer a defense for the emendation in my 2020 article.

³⁸ Casebolt does not offer a defense for following my emendation in his 2022 book.

³⁹ Emphasis my own.

⁴⁰ Emphasis my own.

[God] has not... qualified any finite man... [or] inspired one man or any class of men to pronounce judgment as to that which is inspired or is not. When men, in their finite judgement, find it necessary to go into an examination of Scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us (White 1888d).

We must cling to our Bibles. If Satan can make you believe that there are things in the word of God that are not inspired, he will then be prepared to ensnare your soul. We shall have no assurance, no certainty, at the very time we need to know what is truth... Therefore let no one entertain the question whether this or that portion of the word of God is inspired (White 1888a, 787).

We call on you to take your Bible, but do not put a sacrilegious hand upon it and say, "That is not inspired," simply because somebody else has said so. Not a jot or tittle is ever to be taken from that Word. Hands off, brethren! Do not touch the ark. Do not lay your hand upon it, but let God move (1888b).

Building off these later quotations (assuming that they represented her earlier theological viewpoint as well), it appears this would mean that she saw the denigration of the Apocrypha as being "un-inspired" as a denigration of scripture and inspiration itself. Thus, according to her theological thinking as depicted in Manuscript 5, 1849, if the Apocrypha was part of the Word of God (the Bible) and was deemed uninspired, what would stop the book of Daniel from being next? In this regard, the contemporary testimony of Luke Howard sheds light. After discussing the zealous desire to burn copies of the Apocrypha and destroy them from the Bible, he considers the consequences of these actions:

What would ensue, I again ask, with regard to Holy Scripture at large, should this faction obtain the ascendancy? There is enough of matter to begin upon for further persecution, in that which they profess to receive in its whole extent as *the word of God*; enough, which may be rejected on the very principles which (as they say) have decided their

conduct towards the Apocrypha... thus judged down, as unfit for the perusal of the many and not needed for the study of a few; until a considerable part of the Bible shall have been consigned to oblivion, if not utter destruction. (Howard 1829, iv–v).⁴¹

It is possible that White was aware of Howard's viewpoint, published in 1829, and that this informed her thinking. Alternatively, it is simply possible that Howard's view was widely shared by many at this time and White heard of it growing up from others. Or, alternatively, her view by chance mirrored Howards. Whichever is the historical case, they both shed light on each other's understanding of the threat that the "anti-apocryphal party" appeared to present for Scripture as a whole. Howard's references to burning the Apocrypha are particularly helpful in shedding light on White's own references to the same phenomenon. Utilizing these insights indicates that for White, it appears that she assumed in 1849 that the canon of scripture was whatever had been retained within her King James Bible up until that point. The Apocrypha, simply put, could not be deemed uninspired because any removal of it was ultimately a threat to Scripture as a whole.

6. Ellen White in 1850: Finding Continuity

The importance of the preceding study is not limited to merely a better understanding of Ellen White's comments toward the end of 1849, but also helpful in revealing greater light regarding what she meant in her more well-known comments from her vision in 1850. To that end, they are reproduced below within the context of her entire passage.

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. (White 1850).

⁴¹ Emphasis added by me.

As Karlman notes, “The significance of this obscure but fascinating statement on the Apocrypha has occasioned considerable discussion, primarily regarding what status it might accord the Apocrypha” (Karlman 2014, 195). The two visions are intimately related, especially in proximity of date. Whereas Manuscript 5, 1849 was written in September, Manuscript 4, 1850 is written four months later in January. It is important to note that the vision of 1850 appears to draw on some of the very same language of the vision transcribed a number of months earlier. Understanding this provides us with the ability to interpret her remarks in 1850 through what she said months earlier in 1849.

Again, without that earlier vision, it might be possible to misunderstand the above comments.⁴² For example, take one early lay Adventist website’s interpretation that this was “A WARNING AGAINST, not a recommendation for, the apocrypha” (Ulrike 2002).⁴³ Or take Kevin Paulson’s claim on a different conservative website that:

This statement is unique in all of the writings of Ellen White... Certainly the above statement doesn’t claim inspiration for the Apocrypha, only that “the wise of these last days should understand it.” Moreover, the above statement distinguishes the Apocrypha, which is called the “hidden book,” from the Bible, the latter being called the “standard book that will judge us at the last day.” The Apocrypha, by contrast, is not declared to be the book that will serve as the basis of final judgment (Paulson 2022).

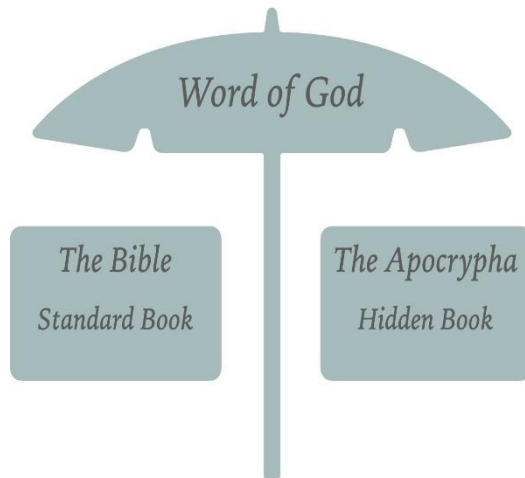
Contrary to such imaginative claims, historical context provides better insights. For example, although “pure and unadulterated” was the rallying cry for the anti-Apocrypha movements and typically referred to a Bible *without*

⁴² Karlman wrote that, with regard to the 1849 vision: “since... Ellen White never wrote out an account of this vision, our understanding of it remains partial.” Karlman, Ellen G. White, Letters and Manuscripts, 181. Karlman’s point though is not quite accurate, since the comment in January 1850 appears, using the same language, to be reflecting perhaps on that very same earlier vision (or another which repeated similar content).

⁴³ Unruh’s website has since been removed in 2024 but was for around two decades always listed in the top results of Google searches for the topic and although published prior to Fortin’s, Casebolt’s, or my own studies, and apparently unaware of Graybill’s, continued to influence lay Adventists on this issue during the time it was active.

the Apocrypha, White's 1849 vision clarifies for us that she purposefully used that same phrase to refer to the Bible *with the Apocrypha*. That indicates again that when she describes the Word of God in this 1850 vision as "pure, and unadulterated" (the exact same phrase), she is referencing the *entire* King James Bible (Apocrypha and all), just as she did in the prior 1849 vision. She appears to be directly in conversation with her contemporaries at the time, endorsing the opposite view that those who were against the Apocrypha were doing with the same slogans.

Understanding this is enlightening, for it becomes possible to perceive that for White in her 1850 statement, the "Word of God" is presented as an umbrella under which *both* the Hidden Book (Apocrypha) and the Standard Book (Bible) are presented as residing beneath. While indeed making a distinction between the Bible and the Apocrypha, Ellen White is uniting them (as she already explicitly did earlier in 1849) under the umbrella of inspiration.⁴⁴



⁴⁴ This nuances Graybill's optimistic assertion that Ellen White's 1850 comment "encouraged an understanding of the Apocrypha, while preserving the canonical scriptures as the standard." Graybill 1987, 31.

It must be reminded again that this is not an outlandish theory (despite how unusual it seems), but rather the most natural and historically grounded explanation. Manuscript 5, 1849, as already demonstrated, explicitly claims (with no textual emendations needed) that the Hidden Book is part of the Word of God and paralleled it with Scripture. So unless one is willing to dismiss this document's testimony (without any apparent basis), then the second visionary comment in 1850 made only four months later, would most naturally lead to the assumption that the two books mentioned (Standard and Hidden) are part of the Word of God mentioned right before.

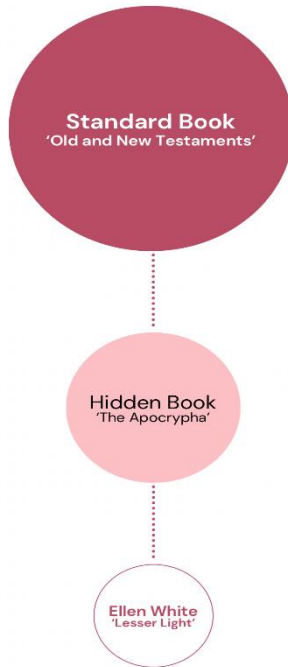
If someone doesn't wish to dismiss the validity of Manuscript 5, 1849 (something neither the White Estate nor any other Adventist scholar has done), and yet they do not wish to embrace this interpretation, then they will have to explain how Ellen White changed her opinions (delivered in vision) in four months, and yet evidenced no rebuttal of them in her second comment. Such an explanation would likely be very unconvincing in comparison to the simple and straight forward assumption that Manuscript 4, 1850 mirrors the wording of Manuscript 5, 1849 because it is clarifying and continuing to build in the same direction while working with the same earlier assumptions.

Continuing with the interpretation offered here, and reflecting on both visionary endorsements of the Apocrypha, it becomes evident that Ellen White was unusual in her views. For while it was common for Protestants to speak of the Bible as containing the sure Word of God and the Apocrypha (doubted and uncertain), (Korpman 2021, 74–93). White speaks of the Word of God containing the Bible (canonical books) and Apocrypha (hidden books). Rather than viewing the Apocrypha as doubtful, she appears to take the name literally for what it means (hidden) and assumes that it carries some sort of special significance. In other words, Ellen White accepts the Apocrypha with the assumption that its name signifies a special *role* it is to serve for the church, a role which “the wise of these last days should understand.”

Yet, this also *distinguishes* the Hidden Book from the Standard Book for her. While the Standard Book (the Bible) serves the role to “judge us at the last day,” providing it salvific importance, the Hidden Book is not affirmed by her as anything but a helpful addition for those who are “wise.” This means that a knowledge of the Apocrypha, while beneficial and seemingly considered inspired, does not serve the same role nor maintain the same importance as the proper body of Scripture. It is, quite plainly, *not* salvific. It is, in short, an

optional addition: a *deuterocanon* so to speak (in the sense of the Eastern Orthodox who create a hierarchy within their canon).

This would not directly mirror her own understanding of her role as the lesser light, for she treats some apocryphal books as having more authority than herself, but it does seem related in spirit.⁴⁵ Judging from how she appears to treat William Foy's vision during this time period and the deference that she gives the apocryphal book of 2 Esdras, it seems likely that if one imagined a descending series of three circles, each representing the level of authority something carried, White would appear to locate herself (and Foy) in the third and bottom circle, with the Hidden Book and Standard Book occupying the two circles of higher authority.⁴⁶



⁴⁵ For a full study of how Ellen White treats the authority of the book of 2 Esdras as compared with the authority of a Millerite prophet like William Foy (and also herself), see the analysis presented in Korpman 2023.

⁴⁶ Ibid. White appears to treat 2 Esdras as having the authority of the rest of Scripture, whereas she views Foy in a lesser capacity, though still inspired.

Some may be surprised to imagine that Ellen White deemed the Apocrypha to be of a higher authority than herself, but given the comments contained in Manuscript 5, 1849, this should not truly be surprising. Ellen White has always verbally affirmed that her work cannot replace the Bible. She exhorted Adventists: “Do not repeat what I have said... Find out what the Lord God of Israel says,” (White 1901) and warned that “the Spirit was not given – nor can it ever be bestowed – to supersede the Bible” (White 1888c). She was clear that “the Bible alone, is our rule of faith” (White 1900, 32). Since she identified the Hidden Book as part of the Word of God, she also placed it higher than her own authority which is underneath anything that is part of the Word of God.

Evidence for this appears to be confirmed by the fact that while there is evidence of Ellen White contradicting and correcting pseudepigraphic books outside her King James Bible (books like *Jasher*), (Korpman 2022a, 107–130), as well as New Testament Apocrypha (books like the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*), (Korpman 2024a), she is not known to have ever directly contradicted one of the books of the Apocrypha as they existed in her family Bible. In fact, as shown in other studies, Ellen White continued to quote and allude to these works until her death, even reproducing some of their stories (Korpman 2020b, 109–146; 2020a, 30–33). Throughout this process, one evidences a careful regard by her for their content and it is difficult to identify divergences between herself and them that would indicate she felt free to directly challenge their content. Taken together, the evidence suggests that she treated the Old Testament Apocrypha in a distinct and different manner than she did other apocryphal/pseudepigraphic works that lay outside her own Bible.

7. Conclusion

In July 2024, a letter by William White (the son of Ellen White) caught the attention of Adventist researchers who stumbled on it within the scanned archives of the White Estate. Dated to May 1911, the letter addressed to Guy Dail appears to confirm, in-part, the results of this study, noting that: “In some of Mother’s old writings she speaks of the Apocrypha and says that portions of it were inspired” (W. White 1911). This admission, written during Ellen White’s final years of ministry, by the one person who knew her best, confirms that her early views on the Apocrypha did consider them to be inspired. When she states that the Apocrypha is part of the “Word of God” in Manuscript 5, 1849, she meant just that.

However much insight that this overall study provides us about White's views, it must be remembered that it does so only in specifically in relation to her *early* ministry. Based on the explicit testimony of a transcript of Ellen White's early vision in September of 1849, we can say that at the beginning of her journey with the early Adventists, White embraced and promoted the Apocrypha to early Adventist believers as being connected to and part of the Word of God, yet she appears to have distinguished four months later in January of 1850 that the Hidden Book was distinct in purpose from the Bible proper and that only the latter mattered for salvation. This article has only explained the historical background for the claims already contained in these two visionary documents, hopefully providing clarity on how they fit with what else we know about Ellen White's views.

Yet, again, it must be cautioned that this only sheds light on what Ellen White believed between September 1849 and January 1850, but does not settle anything about her views beyond then. Though we know that Ellen White continued to quote and allude to the Apocrypha post-1850, we do not know for certain whether this same early theological construct remained active for her in her later years (although William White's letter from 1911 does not appear to evidence knowledge of a substantive change in Ellen White's thinking toward the issue). Yet, of course, the evidence about White's usage of these works post-1850 do suggest a continuing importance for them in her theology. As Denis Fortin has summarized the current state of Adventist scholarship on the issue, there is "obvious evidence that the Apocrypha were known to her and that she used them. And she used them somewhat authoritatively just like she did with Scripture, almost as a part of Scripture" (Fortin 2021).

When taking these insights into account, this also allows us to better understand that the inclusion of "scripture" references to the Apocrypha provided in the reprinted *A Word to the Little Flock* (printed between these dates), would likely have been met the approval of Ellen White at the time and that moreover, their designation by James White as "scripture" was a designation approved of and shared by her as well conceptually. As Donald Casebolt notes, both the vision in 1849 and 1850 indicate that "Ellen White strongly endorsed the Apocrypha," and moreover, "she thought 2 Esdras was 'The Word of God,' part of the 'hidden book' reserved for the 'wise' of the last days" (Casebolt 2022, 201).

Of course, it should be remembered that this article is simply a historical study of Ellen White's viewpoint about the Apocrypha between 1849–1850 and does not reveal whether one today should endorse or embrace those views (nor does it settle when or if she ever changed her mind about this issue in later life). While recognizing that White endorsed the Apocrypha while in vision twice will surely have implications for Seventh-day Adventist theology, those considerations and what to do about them are beyond the scope of this article. It should be remembered that much of early Protestantism accepted various books of the Apocrypha as inspired scripture, with John Calvin accepting Baruch and Martin Luther notably embracing 1 Maccabees as canonical and expressing his belief that Tobit and Judith may have a place within the Protestant canon (Korpman 2021, 74–93). So Ellen White's views are not far removed from the early Protestant Reformers.

Although I believe it is readily apparent, this study has worked with certain presuppositions and assumptions to guide its research agenda. First, I have presumed that Ellen White is coherent and that her views either built upon or did not arbitrarily disregard previous beliefs. My only reason for assuming the opposite would have been if there was direct evidence to suggest otherwise. Second, I have avoided presuming that Ellen White merely mirrored what others around her in early Adventism believed and focused solely on a close reading of her words and their historical context. This has allowed her own voice and thoughts to rise to our attention as unique among the Sabbatarian Adventists. Third, I have avoided reflecting on the theological application of her work or the question of her continuity of beliefs post-1850, simply focusing on the historical reconstruction of her beliefs during a certain window of time in her early ministry.

In conclusion, we must remember that the young Ellen White still upheld the typical Protestant canon of Scripture as the most authoritative, at best giving the Apocrypha an inspired but secondary level of authority. It would be reasonable to conclude that for her, the Apocrypha functioned in a parallel manner to how the *deuterocanon* functions for Eastern Orthodox Christians: inspired scriptures, but secondary in authority to the primary canon. The Bible remained the "Standard Book" that would judge salvation. The Hidden Book remained subservient to it. The Bible was necessary for understanding God, but the Apocrypha was a valuable (but optional) supplement for those who were wise. Regardless of how her views may or may not have changed

in the ensuing decades, this distinction is helpful for any Adventist interested in studying these intertestamental works.

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Zusammenfassung

Ellen Whites Äußerungen über das „verborgene Buch“ und die Apokryphen haben unter adventistischen Historikern ein wachsendes Interesse geweckt. Mit der Veröffentlichung eines neuen Dokuments im Jahr 2014 (Manuskript 5, 1849), aus dem hervorgeht, dass White das „verborgene Buch“ nicht nur empfohlen, sondern es auch als „dein Wort“ und „das Wort Gottes“ bezeichnet hat, ist die Notwendigkeit entstanden, ihre frühen Äußerungen zu klären. Dies ist zusätzlich durch die Tatsache erschwert, dass das Dokument selbst mit Rechtschreibfehlern gespickt ist. In diesem Artikel versuche ich, eine Textrekonstruktion der beiden Passagen über die Apokryphen vorzunehmen, wobei ich zusätzlich zu den vom White Estate bereits vorgenommenen Änderungen weitere Ergänzungen vorschlage. Dabei nehme ich auch eine genaue Analyse des Werkes vor und untersuche den historischen Hintergrund ihrer Äußerungen über die „Verbrennung“ und „Vertreibung“ der Apokryphen, insbesondere in Bezug auf die British and Foreign Bible Society und ihre Anhänger, die die Zerstörung und einigen Berichten zufolge sogar die Verbrennung der Apokryphen forderten. Es wird argumentiert, dass Ellen Whites letzte Aussage in diesen beiden Absätzen am besten so zu verstehen ist, dass sie warnte, dass jeder Versuch, die Apokryphen zu entfernen, schließlich zur Zerstörung des gesamten Kanons der Heiligen Schrift führen würde, was ein Licht auf ihre spätere Warnung im Manuskript 4 von 1850 wirft.

Résumé

Les commentaires d'Ellen White sur « the Hidden Book » (le Livre caché) ou les Apocryphes ont suscité un intérêt croissant parmi les historiens adventistes. Avec la publication d'un nouveau document en 2014 (manuscrit 5, 1849) qui a révélé qu'Ellen White avait non seulement recommandé « the Hidden Book », mais l'avait appelé « ta parole » et « la parole de Dieu », un besoin a été créé d'une explication de ces remarques précédentes. Cela a été compliqué davantage par le fait que le document est plein de fautes d'orthographe. Dans cet article je chercherai à fournir une reconstruction textuelle des deux passages concernant les Apocryphes, en proposant des corrections en supplément à celles que le White Estate a déjà données. Par conséquent je proposerai également une analyse approfondie du manuscrit 5, en explorant le contexte historique derrière ses commentaires selon lesquels les Apocryphes ont été brûlés et répudiés, surtout la « British and Foreign Bible Society » et ses soutiens qui ont exigé qu'ils soient détruits et selon certains rapports, même brûlés. On va argumenter que la déclaration finale de ces deux paragraphes d'Ellen White est mieux comprise comme ayant averti que chaque tentative de retirer les Apocryphes aboutirait finalement au rejet du canon biblique entier, en faisant la lumière sur son avertissement ultérieur dans le manuscrit 4, 1850.

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