

Adventist *Heritage*

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Early Day Campmeeting

At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked again and saw they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life, on either side of the river of life; its branches bowed to the place where we stood; and the fruit was glorious, which looked like gold mixed with silver. We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when brothers Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them,



In the 1840's Joseph Bates was intrigued with the prophetic imagery of 2nd Esdras and quotes from it in several of his early pamphlets.

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And I saw another field full of all kinds of flowers, and as I plucked them, I cried out, well they will never fade. Next I saw a field of tall grass, most glorious to behold; it was living green, and had a reflection of silver and gold, as it waved proudly to the glory of King Jesus. Then we entered a field full of all kinds of beasts—the lion, the lamb, the leopard and the wolf, altogether in perfect union; (ii) we passed through the midst of them, and they followed on peaceably after. Then we entered a wood, not like the dark woods we have here, no, no; but light, and all over glorious; the branches of the trees waved to and fro, and we all cried out, "we will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in this woods." (jj) We passed through the woods, for we were on our way to Mount Zion. As we were travelling along, we met a company who were also gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were? He said they were martyrs that had been slain for him. With them was an innumerable company of little ones; they had a hem of red on their garments also. (kk) Mount Zion was just before us, and on the Mount sat a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies, (ll) and I saw the little ones climb, or if they chose, use their little wings and fly to the top of the mountains, and pluck the never fading flowers.

ii Isa. 11: 6-9. jj Eze. 34: 25. kk Jer. 31: 15-17. Mat. 2: 18.
ll 2 Esdras, 2: 19. mm Isa. 60: 13. Isa. 41: 19. nn Rev. 14: 3.
oo Luke, 12: 37.

Of interest to Seventh-day Adventists now are the references to the Apocrypha that James White included in 1847 when he printed Ellen White's early visions in *A Word to the Little Flock*.



Under the Triple Eagle

EARLY ADVENTIST USE OF THE APOCRYPHA

Ron Graybill

The 2d 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.

The "apocrypha" is a title applied to a collection of fourteen or fifteen books which once stood in English Bibles between the Old and New Testaments. These books included 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Bel and the Dragon, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and a number of others. Most of them had been included in the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, but were not a part of the Hebrew scrip-



O. R. L. Crosier, author of the first published article on the Sanctuary doctrine, believed in the inspiration of Esdras.



tures which were finally "canonized" in the councils of the early church.

The term "apocrypha" literally means "hidden (books)," but over the centuries it came to mean "spurious" or "heretical." Martin Luther included them at the end of the Old Testament in his German translation of the Bible, but he noted that they were "not held equal to the sacred scriptures." The Calvinist view, followed by most Protestant churches, including Seventh-day Adventists, is that these books should be rejected as of no authority in the church, and that they have no more value than any other human writings.

Back in the 1830s and 40s, however, many Bibles containing the Apocrypha were still in circulation. Up until 1827, Bibles distributed by the American Bible Society often contained the Apocrypha. In fact, the huge Bible in the Harmon family home, which the youthful Ellen held aloft in vision, contained the Apocrypha printed in smaller type between the Testaments. So the first reason early Ad-

Vorrede.

Denn ich einfeltiger / vnd wie ich hoffe /
Christlicher meinung / dafur achte / das Chri-
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zu rhumen / auff diesen trost / der vns vnd der
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nöten ist / vnd vns allein gewis vnd feste stehet /
Das / was aus Gott ist / das wird von men-
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ewige Gott / Vater vnseres Heilands IESU
CHRISTI / wolle E. F. G. allezeit gne-
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Though Martin Luther (shown here in an original woodcut from 1546) included the Apocryphal books at the end of his German Old Testament, he did not consider them equal to the other books in the Bible.

Courtesy Jim Nix

ventists used the Apocrypha was because it was readily available to them.

The second reason early Adventists used the Apocrypha was because they were intrigued by the book of 2 Esdras. Why? Because 2 Esdras is an apocalyptic book like Daniel and Revelation, full of symbols and prophecies, promises and warnings. Almost all of the references early Adventists make to the Apocrypha are references to 2 Esdras.

This fascination seems to have dated back at least as early as 1842, when a Millerite lecturer, T. F. Barry, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, came upon a striking vision in 2 Esdras 11. The vision depicted an eagle rising out of the sea, having three heads, twelve wings, eight other smaller wings, and various groups of feathers. At a Millerite conference in his home state, Barry expounded on the vision, especially 2 Esdras 12:20 where eight of the eagle's feathers are said to represent eight kings. Barry said this was "a view of our own country, with her eight kings [presidents], with 'time small and years swift.'"



The large Harmon family Bible that Ellen held aloft in vision contained the Apocrypha that was printed in smaller type than the rest of the Bible. It is shown here with her son, W. C. White.

Courtesy Ellen G. White Estate



The Eagle of 2nd Esdras 11 and 12 held a great deal of fascination for several early Adventist writers.

Courtesy The Huntington Library



O. R. Fassett co-authored an article with E. R. Pinney in *The Voice of Truth* that suggests an elaborate interpretation of the eagle and its feathers of 2nd Esdras 11 and 12.



Joshua V. Himes was among the Millerite leaders who denounced the idea that the book of 2nd Esdras was inspired.

The topic was given further attention in Seneca Falls, New York, a town later made famous by the first women's rights convention in 1848. There, in 1844, lived E. R. Pinney and O. R. Fassett. These two Millerite Adventists developed a more elaborate interpretation of the eagle and his feathers, and finally "obtained satisfactory evidence of the divine authenticity of the two books of Esdras." In the feathers of the triple-headed eagle, Pinney and Fassett also thought they saw a symbol of America.

Pinney and Fassett soon traveled to Rochester, New York, where they lectured on the vision of the eagle "to the satisfaction and joy of many." Joseph Marsh, editor of the local Millerite paper, *The Voice of Truth*, published these new views because he believed his readers ought to have the privilege of judging their merits for themselves.

Reactions soon poured in, and Marsh discovered that some Adventists were ready to accept the inspiration of 2 Esdras and the Pinney-Fassett interpretation of the vision of the eagle. A second group accepted the authenticity of 2 Esdras, but doubted the interpretation offered, and a third group stuck to the orthodox Protestant view that 2 Esdras was not even an authentic work, let alone an inspired one.

The most vigorous opposition came from Boston, where Joshua V. Himes was struggling to keep the disappointed Millerites from being strewn to the four winds by deviant doctrines. The *Advent Herald*, which represented the leaders of the Millerite movement, denounced Esdras, saying "it would seem hardly credible that any one who has carefully perused this fiction, should have for a moment seriously believed it to be either a record of facts, or the result of inspiration."

As to Pinney and Fassett's interpretation, the editors of the *Advent Herald* found "so many objections, and so much fancy in the application, and such a lack of internal evidence in Esdras," that they had no confidence whatever that the triple-headed eagle had anything to offer Adventists.

Pinney and Fassett had not only been fanciful in their interpretation, they had made the fatal error of predicting the immediate future. It seems that the eagle had two feathers representing rulers. One of these feathers was set up to rule, "but shortly it appeared no more." Then the second "was sooner away than the first." To Pinney and Fassett, the first feather was President William Henry Harrison, who was "set up" as ruler when he was inaugurated in 1841. He "shortly appeared no more" because he died scarcely a month later. The second feather was James K. Polk who won the election of 1844 and was awaiting inauguration when Pinney and Fassett published their views in December. Essentially, the pair were predicting that Polk would be removed from office even sooner than Harrison had been.

Polk took office on March 4, 1845, and by mid-April he was still firmly installed in the White House. The *Morning Watch* was thus able to taunt: "Is Esdras a prophet? An inspired writer?"



According to E. R. Pinney and O. R. Fassett, the untimely death of President W. H. Harrison after serving only a month in office represented the first feather of the eagle of 2nd Esdras that "shortly . . . appeared no more."



ANOTHER MISTAKE.

In our paper of the 3d inst., we noticed the fact, that the name Ezra was Esdras in Greek orthography. Thus, "the book of Ezra and of Nehemiah" was, in the Vulgate, or Latin Translation, styled "the first and second book of Esdras." So it was always named in the time of the English Reformers. Now, we notice in the "Hope of Israel," of March 28th, the following paragraph:—

"BOOK OF ESDRAS.—In the year 1557, one of the martyrs (a preacher), whilst making his defence before Bishop Bonner, turns and thus addresses the people: 'O good people, now is fulfilled the saying of the priest and prophet Esdras,' and then quotes from the second book of Esdras. Truly, if he had lived in these last days, some of our modern expositors would have administered a rebuke to him for his confidence in that prophecy. He must be classed with the 'fanatical' ones!"

Now, the writer must have been utterly ignorant of the fact to which we have alluded. Hence, finding a reference to "the 2d book of Esdras," he fancies that one of the martyrs sanctions the Apocryphal Book of Esdras! By the bye, if the martyr had actually quoted the Apocryphal book, it would no more prove that he regarded it as an inspired writing, than it would were we simply to make a citation from the "Story of Bel and the Dragon." As the believers in the Second Book of Esdras have explained it as proving that President Polk must continue a shorter time than President HARRISON, who did not live a full month from the time of his inauguration, what do they now think, when Mr. Polk has lived more than a month since he was inaugurated, on the 4th of March! Is Esdras a prophet? An inspired writer? Are we to believe lecturers and writers, who have accused us for attacking this forgery in a bad spirit? Remember, the word of God teaches us, that those who "sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind."

The Morning Watch of April 17, 1845, took great pleasure in reporting the interpretation offered by E. R. Pinney and O. R. Fassett of the Eagle of 2nd Esdras.

E. R. Pinney and O. R. Fassett suggested that James K. Polk, elected President in 1844, would serve an even shorter term than W. H. Harrison, based on their interpretation of 2nd Esdras.

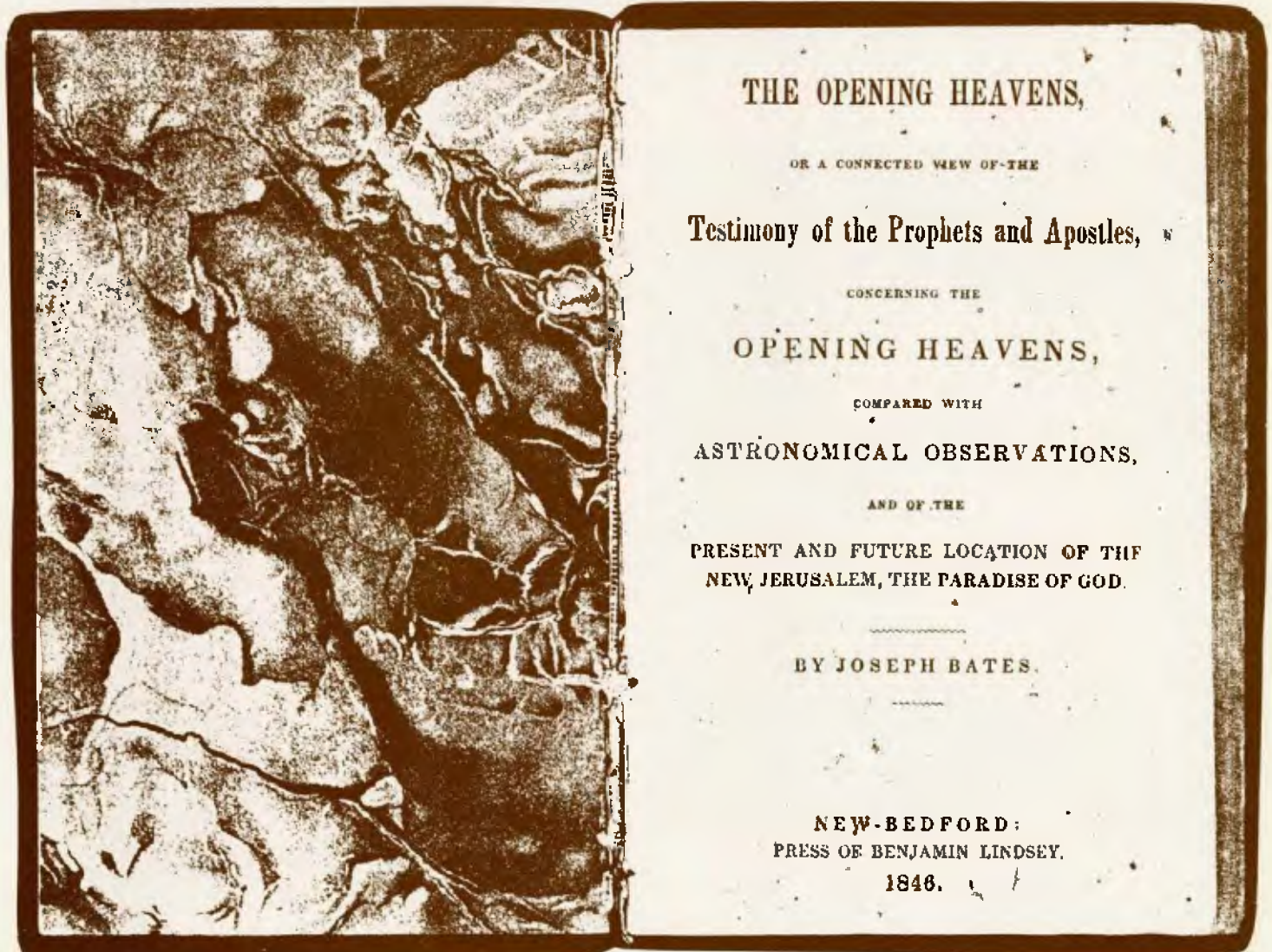




D. B. Gibbs interpreted the one term Presidency of John Adams as contrasted to the two terms served by his predecessor, George Washington, as being the second feather of the eagle of 2nd Esdras that was "sooner away."

Though Joseph Bates, in The Opening Heavens, quoted from the Apocrypha, he recognized that some of his readers did not accept it on the same level as Scripture.

Courtesy of Ellen G. White Estate



With this embarrassment, Pinney and Fassett seem to have quietly withdrawn from the fray. Fassett returned to more orthodox endeavors and became a recording secretary at the Albany Conference in April, 1845, where the Millerite leaders tried to agree on their beliefs.

More radical Adventists were not about to give up on Esdras, however. Into the gap leaped D. B. Gibbs of West Becton, Massachusetts. Not only did Gibbs defend the authenticity and inspiration of 2 Esdras, he had a new interpretation, one which ranged over world history from the Roman Emperors to the founding of the United States.

Gibbs played it safe on the two feathers, however. The first feather, he said, was George Washington who, unlike the kings of Europe who ruled for life, was in office only eight years. John Adams was even "sooner away" because he served only one term! Since Washington and Adams had both passed from the scene, Gibbs did not have to worry about Polk's tenure of office.

Joseph Bates, a reader and financial supporter of the *Voice of Truth*, in which Pinney and Fassett's article had appeared, made use of the Apocrypha in several of his pamphlets. In *The Opening Heavens*, he quotes 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, 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.

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 Es-

dras 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."

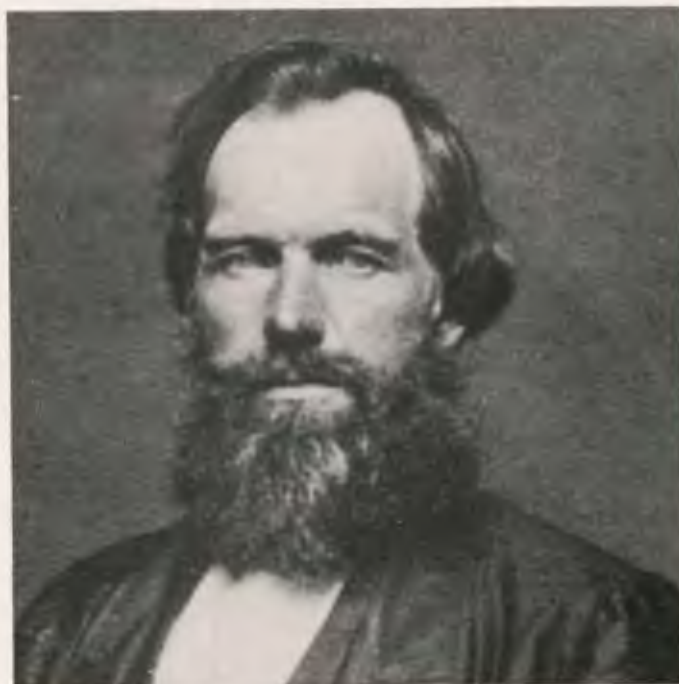
In case Adventists did not have the Apocrypha in their Bibles, E. L. H. Chamberlain of Middletown, Connecticut, placed an ad in the *Review* in 1851 offering to sell copies of it for 15 cents. This practice of making the Apocrypha

THE APOCRYPHA, a convenient size to carry in the pocket, can be had by addressing E. L. H. Chamberlain, Middletown, Conn. Price 20 cents single copy. Packages sent by Express, 15 cents.

E. L. H. Chamberlain offered copies of the Apocrypha for sale in the *Review and Herald* of June 2, 1851.

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.

The topic cropped up in one article during the American Civil War, when J. H. Waggoner took it upon himself to refute the idea then circulating, that the eagle of 2 Esdras represents the United States because after one of its three heads was destroyed, the remaining two symbolized the North and the South. No, said Waggoner, the eagle refers



In J. H. Waggoner's article on 2nd Esdras 11 that appeared in *The Review and Herald* of November 5, 1861, it appears that he accepts the book as inspired.



THE EAGLE OF 2 ESDRAS XI.

SOME have imbibed the idea that the eagle of 2 Esdras xi (Apocrypha), is a symbol of the United States, and especially since the Southern rebellion, thinking that the two heads that remained [verse 34] indicate the dissolution of the Union. Having been several times asked for my opinion on the subject, I would reply in this manner.

There is no evidence in favor of such a view, but positive evidence against it. The lion [verse 37] that talked to the eagle said thus:

"Art not thou it that remainest of the four beasts, whom I made to reign in my world, that the end of their times might come through them? And the fourth came, and overcame all the beasts that were past, and had power over the world with great powerfulness, and over the whole compass of the earth with much wicked oppression; and so long time dwelt he upon the earth with deceit. For the earth hast thou not judged with truth. For thou hast afflicted the meek, thou hast hurt the peaceable, thou hast loved liars, and destroyed the dwellings of them that brought forth fruit, and hast cast down the walls of such as did thee no harm. Therefore is thy wrong dealing come up unto the Highest, and thy pride unto the Mighty." Verses 39-43.

This shows that it refers to Rome, especially to Papal Rome. If any doubt remains, it is removed in the explanation given in chap. xii, 11:

"The eagle whom thou sawest come up from the sea, is the kingdom which was seen in the vision of thy brother Daniel."

A correct understanding of this matter is most important at this time, as the view above referred to serves to sustain another error, namely, that the dissolution of the Union will be the development of the horns of the two-horned beast.

J. H. WAGGONER.

Burlington, Iowa.

to Rome, because 2 Esdras 12:11 says "The eagle whom thou sawest come up from the sea, is the kingdom which was seen in the vision of thy brother Daniel."

By 1869, D. M. Canright noted in the *Review* that "although the books of the Apocrypha are not commonly regarded as being inspired, yet their testimony is important as showing the belief of the Jews at the time they were written."

Yet in 1873, when a questioner asked whether a remark in the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus applied to him, J. H. Waggoner simply interpreted the text rather than saying, as an Adventist minister would today, that the passage was not considered inspired.

As the years went by, however, references to the Apocrypha became less frequent and finally, in 1888, the *Review* editors stated flatly that the Apocryphal books were "not inspired." R. S. Webber wrote at length on the topic in 1894, saying "It is often asked if these books are inspired. I answer, No: they are not part of the Word of God."

And so the Apocrypha, that had been looked upon by early Adventists as containing, at least in 2 Esdras, some worthwhile, if not inspired, information, passed out of Adventist consciousness almost entirely. In this, as in other ways, the church came more and more in harmony with standard Protestant belief as the years went by.



During the American Civil War, and even after, Elder J. H. Waggoner appears to have still accepted the idea that the Apocrypha was inspired.

By 1869 Elder D. M. Canright acknowledged that though the Apocryphal books were not inspired, they were still important for an understanding of Jewish beliefs at the time they were written.