

Space and Time, "Heaven" and "Eternity"
Ellen White Measuring the Truth
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Introduction

In an 1892 letter Ellen White used expansive terms of *space* and *time* to attempt to describe the magnitude of what truths God has given us. "The truth we have set before us for the past few years, is immense in its importance, reaching into heaven and compassing eternity." This letter's setting is clearly rooted in the light that came in the years around Minneapolis. She continued using the same descriptive terms over the next 20 years to address principles of God's word. While spread over a significant portion of her ministry, her use of these words describes truths with intensely practical application, and vitally connected character.

An appreciation of these word pictures, the documents from which they come, and the historical setting in which they were written, will bring to us essential lessons from the past that speak to our identity and mission. The final witness of Christ's ministry on earth awaits a revival and development of what is described, which the Spirit is waiting to accomplish and empower.

The stimulus to search these terms came, when, being familiar with PH002 25.2 (where the 1892 letter is located, a letter I like to call her most passionate one I've found), and impressed with her struggle to describe the immensity of what has been given, I found in MH similar words, "heaven," "compass," and "eternity." I wanted to see where else she used these terms and when.

I used the search criteria: [heaven eternity compass* (reach* oR high)]. I found 30 hits, with 15 published in her lifetime, covering from 1892-1913. The 1892 letter turned out to be the "mother" source of this way of describing the enormity of the truths, though no other statements copied this original sentence exactly, nor were any others rooted in the history of Adventism as explicitly. As often seemed to happen, she backed off the surface events to show the more fundamental nature of what was at stake. Three of the statements were in manuscripts or talks published in full after her life, but whose dates fall within the above time span. The 18 statements made during those years are analyzed in the following table, and then reproduced in full. The other 12 hits were strict repeats in compilations after EGW's life, as noted in the observations after source references of the full statements.

Table of Uses of Terms in 10 Lineages

This table shows the "family tree" of the 18 statements, arranged in 8 "daughter statements" after 1892, 3 (shaded cells) of which had 9 "grand-daughter statements." Note the 8T statement has two lines of descendents. The "grand-daughter" ones were edited or copied, as indicated by the italicized letters in the cells below the shaded one: *E* = edited from reference directly above; *C* = copied from reference directly above. Her major books are noted in **Arial Bold font**.

<i>Year</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1892	PH002 25.2									
1893		RH, August 15, 1893 par. 3								
1894			1888 1274.1							
1895				RH, September 17, 1895 par. 8						
1896					MB 25.2					
1898						2SAT 120.3				
						<i>e</i> ST, October 27, 1898 par. 3				
1900						<i>e</i> COL 100.2				
1902							ISAT 334.3			
1903								Ed 125.1	8T 314.1	
1904									<i>E</i> : ST, June 8, 1904 par. 7	
1905										<i>E</i> : MH 453.4
1906						<i>c</i> ST, October 10, 1906 par. 12		<i>C</i> : ST, April 11, 1906 par. 4		
1909						<i>c</i> ST, January 20, 1909 par. 3				
1910									<i>C</i> : RH, April 28, 1910 par. 7	
1913										<i>E</i> : CT 20.1

Statement in Chronological Order

Explanations:

1. Beside the year is the word connected with "heaven" and "eternity." Next to that is another word or phrase in parentheses defining the setting.
2. In all paragraphs the key phrase or sentence with the search terms has been bolded.
3. In "first generation" paragraphs the underlining highlights other key thoughts.
4. In the "daughter paragraphs" (indicated by a bracketed note right after the year) the underlining and bracketed content has been inserted in analyzing the variant editing. I ignored variations in punctuation and grammatical articles.
5. Observations on the source references are noted in brackets by the references.
6. Other key observations are noted in boxed paragraphs.

1892 "truth" ("past few years")

The forgiveness of sins and iniquities and transgressions, belongs in a special sense to this time. We are in the anti-typical day of atonement, and every soul should now be humbling himself before God, seeking pardon for his transgressions and sins, and accepting the justifying grace of Christ, the sanctifying of the soul by the operations of the Holy Spirit of Christ; thus the carnal nature is transformed, renewed in holiness after the image of Christ's righteousness and true holiness. The precious, golden links of truth are not separate, detached, disconnected doctrines; but link after link, form one string of golden truth, and constitute a complete whole, with Christ as its living center. Salvation comes through practical godliness and faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is made perfect through works, and is evidenced in the character. To those who are teaching the truth, whose hearts are impure, and who have not been converted, Christ says, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Oh, what truths we have--full of power, and it is not possible to controvert these Bible doctrines. There is no truth in heaven or in earth that would affect some characters, although it might be presented in all power and matchless purity and loveliness, because the heart does not love the practice of these holy sentiments. **The truth we have set before us for the past few years, is immense in its importance, reaching into heaven and compassing eternity.** Satan and his confederacy of evil have made every effort to cover up, to confuse minds, to make of none effect the precious, glorious truths of God's word. We are living in strangely solemn times, and at the very time when the people of God should be wide awake, and many are asleep or dead spiritually. There is great need of much work being done. Every individual member of the church should look to the Captain for orders. {PH002 25.2} [11/23/1892, Letter 22 entitled "The Need of a Converted Ministry" to O. A. Olsen]

1893 "truths" ("lessons which Jesus gave")

Christ was infinite in wisdom, and yet he thought best to accept of Judas, although he knew what were his imperfections of character. John was not perfect; Peter denied his Lord; and yet it was of men like these that the early Christian church was organized. Jesus accepted them that they might learn of him what constitutes a perfect Christian character. The business of every Christian is to study the character of Christ. The lessons which Jesus gave his disciples did not always harmonize with their reasonings. There was an

immense contrast between **the truths which he taught, which reached to heaven and compassed eternity**, and those things that related to the common, temporal, earthly life. The Redeemer of the world ever sought to carry the mind from the earthly to the heavenly. Christ constantly taught the disciples, and his sacred lessons had a molding influence upon their characters. Judas alone did not respond to divine enlightenment. To all appearance he was righteous, and yet he cultivated his tendency to accuse and condemn others. He had come to Christ in the same spirit as did the young man who had great possessions, who inquired, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." In this requirement Jesus touched the plague-spot of his heart,-- selfishness and covetousness. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." Judas had come to Christ in the same spirit of self-righteousness; and if he had asked, "What lack I yet?" Jesus would have answered, "Keep the commandments." Judas was selfish, covetous, and a thief, yet he was numbered with the disciples. He was defective in character, and he failed to practice the words of Christ. He braced his soul to resist the influence of the truth; and while he practiced criticising and condemning others, he neglected his own soul, and cherished and strengthened his natural evil traits of character until he became so hardened that he could sell his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. {RH, August 15, 1893 par. 3} [article "Contemplate Christ's Perfection, Not Man's Imperfection]

1894 "truth" ("practiced")

There is a great amount of truth professed, but **truth practiced in relieving our fellow men is of great influence, reaching unto heaven, and compassing eternity**. Every soul in our world is on trial; every man's experience, the common life history, tells in unmistakable language whether he is a doer of Christ's words and His works. There is constantly recurring a large array of little things that God alone sees; to act out in these things the principles of truth will bring a precious reward. The great and important things are recognized by nearly all, but the knitting of these things with the supposed smaller things of life and closely connecting them as one, is too rarely done by professed Christians. Religion is too much profession, and too little reality. {1888 1274.1} [complete untitled manuscript in *1888 Materials*, Manuscript 34, August 3, 1894]; later compilation: {TDG 224.4}

1895 "truth" ("living truths", "complete system of divine truth", "as it is in Jesus")

The oil so much needed by those who are represented as foolish virgins, is not something to be put on the outside. They need to bring the truth into the sanctuary of the soul, that it may cleanse, refine, and sanctify. It is not theory that they need; it is the sacred teachings of the Bible, which are not uncertain, disconnected doctrines, but are living truths, that involve eternal interests that center in Christ. In him is the complete system of divine truth. The salvation of the soul, through faith in Christ, is the ground and pillar of the truth. Those who exercise true faith in Christ make it manifest by holiness of character, by obedience to the law of God. They realize that **the truth as it is in Jesus reaches heaven, and compasses eternity**. They understand that the Christian's character should represent the character of Christ, and be full of grace and truth. To them is imparted the oil of grace, which sustains a never-failing light. The

Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, makes him complete in Christ. It is not a decided evidence that a man or a woman is a Christian because he manifests deep emotion when under exciting circumstances. He who is Christlike has a deep, determined, persevering element in his soul, and yet has a sense of his own weakness, and is not deceived and misled by the Devil, and made to trust in himself. He has a knowledge of the word of God, and knows that he is safe only as he places his hand in the hand of Jesus Christ, and keeps firm hold upon him. {RH, September 17, 1895 par. 8} [article "Have You Oil in Your Vessels With Your Lamps?"]; later compilation: {YRP 16.5}

1896 "truths" ("the Bible")

Only like can appreciate like. Unless you accept in your own life the principle of self-sacrificing love, which is the principle of His character, you cannot know God. The heart that is deceived by Satan, looks upon God as a tyrannical, relentless being; the selfish characteristics of humanity, even of Satan himself, are attributed to the loving Creator. "Thou thoughtest," He says, "that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Psalm 50:21. His providences are interpreted as the expression of an arbitrary, vindictive nature. So with the Bible, the treasure house of the riches of His grace. The glory of **its truths, that are as high as heaven and compass eternity**, is undiscerned. To the great mass of mankind, Christ Himself is "as a root out of a dry ground," and they see in Him "no beauty that" they "should desire Him." Isaiah 53:2. When Jesus was among men, the revelation of God in humanity, the scribes and Pharisees declared to Him, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." John 8:48. Even His disciples were so blinded by the selfishness of their hearts that they were slow to understand Him who had come to manifest to them the Father's love. This was why Jesus walked in solitude in the midst of men. He was understood fully in heaven alone. {MB 25.2} [chapter "The Beatitudes"]

1898 "truths" ("the Word of God")

When the believer is united with Christ, that faith is manifested in holiness of character, in consistent obedience to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The **truths which we receive from the Word of God are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity**, and yet the vital influence of those truths may be woven into the human life. The influence of the Word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our speech, our actions, our association with every member of the family, and with strangers. The leaven of truth must bring under control the temper and the voice. In the home and in the church there are matters which are termed "little things," but all these little things have great results. It is the "little things" that discipline the soul and prepare men to act with lowly-mindedness in large responsibilities. {2SAT 120.3} [Manuscript 82, 1898, "The Leaven of Truth", c6/26/1898]

[as 2SAT above but with bracketed ellipses and underlined variations]

The truths of the Word of God meet in one grand practical necessity, -- the conversion of the soul through faith. [previous sentence from previous paragraph to 2SAT 120.3] When the believer is united with Christ, that faith is manifested in holiness of character, in consistent obedience to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The grand principles of the Word of God are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. The **truths [...] of the Word of God are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity**; and yet their vital influence [...] is to be woven into the human life. The influence of the Word of God is to

have a sanctifying effect on our speech, our actions, our associations with every member of the human family. It must bring under its control the temper and the voice. [next sentence from 2SAT 122.3, whereas rest of 120.3 is in par. 4 of this article] The apostle exhorts us: "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." {ST, October 27, 1898 par. 3} [article "The Power of the Truth in the Daily Life"]

1900 "truths" ("the Word of God")

[as 1898 ST above but with bracketed ellipses and underlined variations]

The truths of the word of God meet man's great practical necessity--the conversion of the soul through faith. [...] These grand principles [...] are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. They are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, yet their vital influence is to be woven into human experience. They are to permeate all the great things and all the little things of life. {COL 100.2} [chapter "Like Unto Leaven"], also {ST, October 10, 1906 par. 12} [series "Our Great Treasure-House" article "Blessed are They that Do"], {ST, January 20, 1909 par. 3} [article "Truth's Power to Sanctify"]; later compilation: {FLB 123.2}

All the above statements (1892-1900) use "truth(s)" The Bible is specifically pointed out beginning in 1896. Then came the 1901 GC Session speech on "principles" (beginning in GCB, April 3, 1901 par. 1; word used 20 times), and this next talk in 1902 (extracted below) on "the line" and "a love." After these, the rest of the statements (1903-1913) are of "principles" and "science."

1902 "line" "love" ("price", "sacrifice") [this is an exception to others, but is the heart of the gospel!]

You have been bought with a price--and what a price! Who can **measure the line let down from heaven** for the saving of the subjects of sin. Who can **compass a love that is as broad as eternity?** Think of the sacrifice that Christ made for you. He stepped down from His high command, and came to this world with the treasures of heaven, that every human being might have power to reach the standard set before him in God's law. Clothing His divinity with humanity, He came to stand at the head of the human race, in our behalf to live a perfect life, that He might know how to help us in our conflict with sin. Through His sacrifice, human beings may reach the high ideal set before them, and hear at last the words, You are complete in Him, not having your own righteousness, but the righteousness that He wrought out for you, Your imperfection is no longer seen; for you are clothed with the robe of Christ's perfection. {1SAT 334.3} [talk simply titled "Words to Students" "at the opening of the Fernando School, October 1"]

1903 "principles" ("the Bible", "the word of God")

In its wide range of style and subjects the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its pages are found history the most ancient; biography the truest to life; principles of government for the control of the state, for the regulation of the household--principles that human wisdom has never equaled. It contains philosophy the most profound, poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic. Immeasurably superior in value to the productions of any human author are the Bible writings, even when thus considered; but of infinitely wider scope, of infinitely greater value, are they when viewed in their

relation to the grand central thought. Viewed in the light of this thought, every topic has a new significance. In the most simply stated truths are involved **principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity**. {Ed 125.1} [chapter "Mental and Spiritual Culture"], also {ST, April 11, 1906 par. 4} [series "Our Great Treasure-House" article "God's Word a Perfect Whole"]; later compilations: {CG 505.1}, {CCh 86.3}, {LHU 122.5}

Against Kellogg's "scientific" heresy, the true "science of Christianity" is highlighted from here on.

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered,--a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. There are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. Often the training and education of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation. We must learn to look upward. The principles of the word of God--**principles that are as high as heaven, and that compass eternity**--we are to understand in their bearing upon our daily life. **Every act, every word, every thought**, is to be in accord with these principles. {8T 314.1} [section "The Essential Knowledge"]; later compilation: {YRP 68.3}

The rest are variations of 8T.

1904

[as 1903 8T but with bracketed ellipses]

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered,--a science as much deeper, broader, higher, than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. [...] Often the training and education of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation. We must learn to look upward. The principles of the Word of God,--**principles that are as high as heaven, and that compass eternity**,--we are to understand in their bearing on our daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. {ST, June 8, 1904 par. 7} [article "Co-operation"], also {RH, April 28, 1910 par. 7} [article entitled "Cooperation"]

1905

[as 1903 8T but with bracketed ellipses and underlined variations]

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered--a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. [...] Hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil [...] must be overcome. Often the education and training of a

lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation. We must learn to look upward. The principles of the word of God--**principles that are as high as heaven, and that compass eternity**--we are to understand in their bearing upon our daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. All must be brought into harmony with, and subject to, Christ. {MH 453.4} [chapter "The Importance of Seeking True Knowledge"]; later compilations: {HP 159.5}, {NL 61.1}, {RC 312.5}, {SD 87.4}

1913

[as 1905 MH but with bracketed ellipses and underlined variations]

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered--a science as much deeper, broader, higher, than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for men are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. [...] Often the training and education of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. The heart must be educated to become steadfast in God. Old and young are to form habits of thought that will enable them to resist temptation. They must learn to look upward. The principles of the word of God--**principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity**--[...] are to be understood in their bearing on the daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. [...] {CT 20.1} [chapter "The First of Sciences"]; later compilation: {1MCP 5.2}