

I AM THAT I AM—SELF-EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER

Hebrews 11:1–6.

“‘I AM the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’

“‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me.’ Ex. 20:2, 3.

“‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ Matt. 4:10.

“‘The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.’ Mark 12:29, 30.

“When Moses, at the command of the Lord, said to Pharaoh: ‘Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go,’ Pharaoh, in rebellion, said: ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.’ Ex. 5:1, 2.

“If, in reverence, Pharaoh had asked, in an honesty iniquity: ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?’ his question would have been respected by the Lord. For when the Lord first appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, and sent him into Egypt for the deliverance of the people, provision was made for the answer of just such a question. For Moses said to Him: ‘When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?’ Ex. 3:13.

“This supposed question, ‘What is His name?’ is only, in different form, Pharaoh’s question, ‘Who is the Lord?’ And, in expectation of the asking of that question, ‘God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.’ And ‘thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ Verse 14.

“It is true that Pharaoh did not know the Lord. But that, of itself, was not against him; for that is the condition of every man, at first. **Pharaoh’s mistake was in exalting himself upon his ignorance, and supposing that he knew enough without God, and in refusing to receive the knowledge of Him.** For, equally with any other man in the world, Pharaoh could have received the knowledge of God. For God had sent into Egypt, for all who were there, the revelation of himself: ‘I AM THAT I AM.’

“This expression, ‘I AM THAT I AM,’ is the revelation of God. **It reveals Him in His self-existence—‘I AM;’ and in His character—‘I AM THAT I AM’—I AM THAT WHICH I AM—I AM WHAT I AM.** ‘This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.’ Ex. 3:15.

“In believing in God **it is not enough to believe in the self-existent One.** He is more than that—He is more than existence: **He is character.** And in believing in Him it is not enough to believe that He is: we must believe **WHAT** He is. As it is written, ‘He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.’

“His name embraces both these thoughts. And His name is not known unless these two thoughts—**self-existence and character**—are known. As to existence, His name is ‘I AM;’ and as to character, ‘I am what I am.’

“What is He, then, in this which He is? What is His name as to character? This question is answered in full by the Lord himself. He has revealed not only that He is, but He has revealed what He is; and this in order that all men may know Him; may know His name in its fullness, and as it is in truth. For again in its fullness, and as it is in truth. For again He said to Moses: ‘I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee. . . . And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. Ex. 33:19; 34:5.

“And in proclaiming this His name, ‘the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, **The Lord, The Lord God**, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.’ Ex. 34:6, 7.

“This is what He is. When He said, ‘I AM THAT I AM. . . . This is my name forever,’ this is what He said. And when He passed by before Moses and proclaimed this, His name, He only said in more words what He said at the first, ‘I AM THAT I AM. . . . This is my name forever.’

“The words, ‘The Lord, The Lord God,’ express self-existence, as do the words ‘I AM.’ All the rest of the words of that glorious name express His character, as do the words, ‘I AM THAT [THAT WHICH, or WHAT] I AM.’” *Review and Herald*, February 12, 1901.

THE SCIENCE OF FAITH

“At nine o’clock I attended a meeting of the students in the school chapel. About eighty were present, and the room was full. An hour was occupied in reading, and in talking to them about **the necessity of their understanding how to exercise faith**. This is the science of the gospel. The Scripture declares, ‘Without faith it is impossible to please God.’ **The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired**. We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and **our ignorance of how to exercise faith**. We must break through the clouds of unbelief. We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot **obey** the gospel unto salvation, **until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised**. There can be **no perfection of Christian character without that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul**.” *Review and Herald*, October 18, 1898.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God. The reason for this is that ‘**whatsoever is not of faith is sin**’ (Romans 14:24); and of course sin cannot please God.

“This is why it is that, as stated by the Spirit of Prophecy on the first page of the *Review*, October 18, 1898, ‘The knowledge of what the Scripture means **when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired**.’

“And for this cause we shall hereafter, in this place in each number of the *Review* give a Scripture lesson on faith, what it is, how it comes, how to exercise it—that every reader of this paper may have this knowledge that ‘is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.’” A. T. Jones, *Review and Herald*, November 29, 1898.

“We need to cultivate faith. If in faith we would **seek the wisdom that cometh from above**, we would obtain a rich experience in the things of God. By **receiving and obeying** the

truth, we may bring into the life a **power** that will keep the love of God fresh in heart and mind and soul.” *Review and Herald*, July 8, 1909.

2 Corinthians 10:15 (increasing); Romans 12:3 (measure); Hebrews 3:1–4:12 (gospel mixed); Romans 1:16–20 (gospel power); Galatians 1:6–9 (everlasting gospel)

OWNERSHIP AND BLESSING

“The grace of Christ and his righteousness are offered to men as a free gift. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says: ‘God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath **quicken**ed us **together with Christ** (by grace ye are saved), and **hath raised us up together**, and **made us sit together in heavenly places** in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved **through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is **the gift of God**.’

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. **The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken.** If he can control minds, so that doubt and unbelief and darkness shall compose the experience of those who claim to be the children of God, he can overcome them with temptation. **The simple faith that takes God at his word should be encouraged.** God’s people **must have that faith which will lay hold of divine power**; ‘for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.’ Those who believe that God for Christ’s sake has forgiven their sins should not, through temptation, fail to press on to fight the good fight of faith. **Their faith should grow stronger** until their Christian life, as well as their words, shall declare, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.’

“**Faith is trusting God,—believing that he loves us, and knows best what is for our good.** Thus instead of our own way, it leads us to choose his way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts his wisdom; in place of our weakness, his strength; in place of our sinfulness, his righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already his; **faith acknowledges his ownership and accepts its blessing.** **Truth, uprightness, purity,** have been pointed out as **secrets of life’s success.** It is **faith** that puts us in possession of these principles. Every good impulse or aspiration is the gift of God; **faith receives from God the life that alone can produce true growth and efficiency.**

“How to exercise faith should be made very plain. **To every promise of God there are conditions.** If we are **willing to do his will**, all his strength is ours. **Whatever gift he promises is in the promise itself.** ‘**The seed is the word of God.**’ As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in his promise. **If we receive the promise, we have the gift.**

“Faith that enables us to receive God’s gifts, **is itself a gift**, of which **some measure is imparted to every human being.** **It grows as it is exercised in appropriating the Word of God.** In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in contact with the Word.” *Review and Herald*, December 24, 1908.

FAITH

Romans 10:17; 12–31; Matthew 8:6–10 (the word only)

“Faith is the **expecting** the word of God to do what it says, and the **depending** upon that word to do what it says.” A. T. Jones, *Lessons on Faith*, 16.

Creation: Genesis 1; Psalm 119:130; 33:6–11.

“Thus it was in creation. And thus it was in redemption; he healed the sick, he cast out devils, he stilled the tempest, he cleansed the lepers, he raised the dead, he forgave sins, **all by his word**. In all this, also, ‘he spake, and it was.’

“And so he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Always he is the Creator. And always he does all things by his word only. And always he can do all things by his word; because it is the very characteristic of the word of God, that it is possessed of the divine power by which itself accomplishes the thing which is spoken.

“This is why it is that **faith is the knowing that in the word of God there is this power, the expecting the word itself to do the thing spoken, and the depending upon that word itself to do that which the word speaks.**

“The teaching of faith is the teaching that such is the nature of the word of God; the teaching of people to exercise faith is the teaching them to **expect** the word of God to do what it says, and to **depend** upon it to do the thing which is by it spoken; the cultivating of faith is by practice to cause to grow confidence in the power of the word of God itself to do what in that word is said, and dependence upon that word itself to accomplish what the word says.

“And ‘the knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.’

“Are you cultivating faith?” A. T. Jones, *Review and Herald*, December 27, 1898.

“We must have the faith which prophets foretold and apostles preached—the faith that **works** by love and **purifies** the soul. **If we reach the standard of perfection**, our peculiar traits of disposition must be molded into harmony with Christ’s will. **Then** we shall sit together in **heavenly** places in Christ; brethren will work together, without a thought of collision.” *Bible Training School*, November 1, 1902.

“The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a figure of the development of character. There can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the growth of character. At every stage of development our life may be **perfect**; yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be constant advancement.” *Child Guidance*, 162.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. **Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God**, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Hebrews 11:1–3.

DEVILS BELIEVE

James 2:17–24

FAITH IS AN ACT OF THE MIND

“Genuine religion is based upon a belief in the Scriptures. God’s Word is to be believed without question. No part of it is to be cut and carved to fit certain theories. Men are not to exalt human wisdom by sitting in judgment upon God’s Word. The Bible was written by holy men of old, as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, and this Book contains **all that we know for**

certain and all that we can ever hope to learn in regard to God and Christ, unless, like Paul, we are taken to the third heaven to hear ‘unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter’ (2 Corinthians 12:4). This revelation to the apostle did not spoil his humility.

“The life of a Christian is a life regulated by the Word of God just as it reads. All the truths of the Old and the New Testaments form a complete whole. These truths we are to cherish, believe, and obey. To the true disciple, faith in God’s Word is a living, active principle; for ‘with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’ (Romans 10:10). By faith man believes that he receives the righteousness of Christ.

“**Faith, in itself, is an act of the mind.** Jesus Himself is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He gave His life for us, and His blood speaks in our behalf better things than spoke the blood of Abel, which cried unto God against Cain the murderer. Christ’s blood was shed to remit our sins.

“Many commit the error of trying to define minutely **the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification.** Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to work out every minute point, **as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter?** All cannot see in the same line of vision. You are in danger of making a world of an atom, and an atom of a world.

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, **discerns Christ’s atonement** in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, **his sins are pardoned.** This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer, and **advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.**

“**Pardon and justification are one and the same thing.** Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: ‘This is My child. I relieve him from **the condemnation** of death, giving him My life-insurance policy—**eternal life**—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.’ Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ’s righteousness, **stands faultless before God.**

“The sinner may err, but he is not cast off without mercy. His only hope, however, is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. **It is the Father’s prerogative to forgive our transgressions and sins,** because Christ has taken upon Himself our guilt and relieved us, imputing to us His own righteousness. His sacrifice satisfies fully the demands of justice.

“Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God’s boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal.

“David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul, and believed that God’s promise to forgive would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and was reconverted. In the rapture of the assurance of forgiveness, he exclaimed, ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.’ The blessing comes because of pardon; pardon comes through faith that the sin, confessed and repented of, is borne by the great Sin-bearer. Thus from Christ cometh all our blessings. His death is an atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the great medium through whom we receive the mercy and favor of God. He, then, is indeed the Originator, the Author, as well as the Finisher, of our faith.” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 9, 300–302.

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

“Ministers should present **the sure word** of prophecy as **the foundation of the faith** of Seventh-day Adventists.” *Evangelism*, 196.

1 Corinthians 3:9–17; 1 Peter 2:3–10

“In the Galatian churches, **open, unmasked error** was supplanting the gospel message. Christ, the **true foundation of the faith**, was virtually renounced for the obsolete ceremonies of Judaism. The apostle saw that if the believers in Galatia were saved from the dangerous influences which threatened them, the most **decisive measures** must be taken, the **sharpest warnings** given.” *Acts of the Apostles*, 385.

“May God help you to receive the words that I have spoken. Let those who stand as God’s watchmen on the walls of Zion be men who can see the dangers before the people,—**men who can distinguish between truth and error, righteousness and unrighteousness.**

“The warning has come: Nothing is to be allowed to come in that will disturb **the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844.** I was in this **message**, and ever since I have been standing before the world, true to the **light** that God has given us. We do not propose to take our feet off the **platform** on which they were placed as day by day we sought the Lord with earnest prayer, seeking for **light**. Do you think that I could give up the **light** that God has given me? It is to be as **the Rock of Ages**. It has been guiding me ever since it was given.” *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 6, 1903.

“The scripture which above all others had been both **the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration:** ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ Daniel 8:14. These had been familiar words to all believers in the Lord’s soon coming. By the lips of thousands was **this prophecy repeated as the watchword of their faith.** All felt that upon **the events therein foretold** depended their brightest expectations and most cherished hopes. **These prophetic days** had been shown to terminate in the autumn of 1844.” *The Great Controversy*, 409.

“The Lord would have the subjects of His kingdom represent the character of their Sovereign. His commandments are not left for man to trim down to suit his ideas or his convenience. God’s great moral standard is **His ten precepts, the foundation of the faith of prophets and apostles.**” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 2, 120.

“When the Jews **rejected Christ** they **rejected the foundation of their faith.** And, **on the other hand**, the Christian world of today who claim faith in Christ, but reject **the law of God** are making a mistake **similar** to that of the deceived Jews. Those who profess to cling to Christ, centering their hopes on Him, while they pour contempt upon **the moral law, and the prophecies**, are in no safer position than were the unbelieving Jews. **They cannot understandingly call sinners to repentance, for they are unable to properly explain what they are to repent of.** The sinner, upon being exhorted to forsake his sins, has a right to ask, **What is sin?** Those who respect the law of God can answer, **Sin is the transgression of the law.** In confirmation of this the apostle Paul says, **I had not known sin but by the law.**” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 229.

“If isolated sentences, separated from their true setting, are taken from my writings and used to substantiate erroneous positions, I must meet this effort by publishing some things that I would prefer to withhold. I am weary of trying to withstand the attempts that are being made to do violence to the truth that should be proclaimed at this time. If my words are taken by some to sustain error, I shall not be led into controversy, **but I shall continue to set before the people the truth as God designs them to understand it.** I shall endeavor to make my words so plain that they cannot be misinterpreted. The truth of God will be vindicated, and effect the purpose that God designed it should. The mind can only be freed from error when every thread is cut that binds it to the fallacy of the enemy.

“A great reformation is needed among the people of God. **Many** sapless and unfruitful branches **are to be removed from the parent vine.** Everything **will be shaken that can be shaken, that that which cannot be shaken may remain.**

“The enemy has worked upon the minds of some, and has led them to do violence to **our past experience by mingling with the truth erroneous and false theories.** He has led ministers and teachers to weave into their doctrines some pleasing figures of his own invention. **Every deviation from the truth as we have advocated it in the past is a departure from truth that has been witnessed by the Holy Spirit, and upon which God has placed His seal.**

“Truth must stand in its own order, **linked** only with truth. Unbelief disturbs the balance of the system of truth, and tends to destroy the whole. The mind that cherishes **sentiments that tend to destroy the foundation of the faith** that has made us what we are becomes confused, and **cannot discern between truth and error.**

“The truths that have been substantiated by the manifest working of God are to stand fast. Let no one presume to move a pin or **a foundation-stone** from the structure. Those who attempt to undermine the pillars of our faith are among those of whom the Bible says that ‘in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith,** giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 7, 188, 189.

“One step from the path in which God has ordained us to walk, places us where we are subject to the temptations of Satan. This is represented in the case of Adam and Eve. Outside of God’s way, we may be led **to believe a lie.** But angels of God will commune with those who obey His laws. Let mind and heart be united in following in the light that God has given. Keep soul and body pure and clean and holy. When we do those things that God has commanded in His word, angels of God will act as our teachers. **Our happiness is dependent upon our living a righteous life.**

“We are subject to certain laws, even as the plants are subject to law. Every tree will bear its appointed fruit. Disobedience to the laws that govern our being results in sickness and suffering and death.

“The soul is also subject to laws, and a disregard of these laws, by the wresting and misinterpretation of scripture, will result in the sickness and death of the soul. Those following in a path of error lose from the heart the genuine peace of Christ, and become like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt.

“Spiritual life is the result of the action of the soul in **obedience** to the word and in harmony with the laws of God. Let the soul be regulated by the law, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.’ ‘This do, and thou shalt live.’” *Bible Training School*, March 1, 1915.

“Unto the angel of the church of **Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them **which say they are apostles and are not**, and hast found them **liars**: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.’ Revelation 2:1–3.

“The church at **Ephesus** in her earlier history had been made **the dispensator of sacred truth**. Rare means and privileges had been bestowed upon her. ‘I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.’

“**Here we see a deep, heart-felt, prolonged struggle; just such a struggle as we might have expected in these last days** of conflict. ‘Thou canst not bear them which are evil.’ **Rigid and impartial discipline was exercised in the case of all unworthy disciples and false teachers who were bringing in damnable heresies**, which were undermining **the foundation of the faith.**”

“Here the ministers of righteousness are symbolized by the seven stars, which the First and the Last has under his special care and protection. The Lord Jesus Christ is acquainted with the number of the stars. He calls them by their names, binds the sweet influence of Pleiades, and looses the bands of Orion. The ministers of the gospel of Christ are greater blessings to the church than are the stars to our world. All are in God’s hand. He directs their motions. He disposes of them in their different orbs in their positions. He fills them with light and influence. He supports them, else they would soon be falling stars. They are instruments in his hands, and **all the good they do** is done by his hand and by his Spirit’s power.” *Review and Herald*, May 31, 1887.

“The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel’s message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make **an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today**. The truths that have been unfolding **in their order**, as we have advanced along **the line of prophecy** revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today. Those who passed over the ground step by step in the past history of our experience, seeing **the chain of truth in the prophecies**, were prepared to accept and obey every ray of light. They were praying, fasting, searching, digging for the truth as for hidden treasures, and the Holy Spirit, we know, was teaching and guiding us. Many theories were advanced, bearing a semblance of truth, but so mingled with misinterpreted and misapplied scriptures, that they led to dangerous errors. Very well do we know how every point of truth was established, and the seal set upon it by the Holy Spirit of God. And all the time voices were heard, ‘Here is the truth,’ ‘I have the truth; follow me.’ But the warnings came, ‘Go not ye after them. I have not sent them, but they ran.’ (See Jeremiah 23:21.)” *Selected Messages* book 2, 103–104.

I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But **if they had stood in my counsel**, and had caused my people to hear my words, then **they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings**. Jeremiah 23:21, 22.