

FITTED INTO THE CREED.

"Abraham's faith now began to be saying and went on to sanctification. His justification took place before Isaac was born; his sanctification fifty years after, when God said: 'Walk before Me and be thou perfect.' His faith went still higher and took in testing. After sanctification the real test of his Christian life came."—*Rev. Dr. Watson.*

That is, according to this theory, Abraham, when he heard the voice of God in the land of Ur of the Chaldees and implicitly obeyed, going forth not knowing whither he went, was, at best, a seeker of justification, but that now, after years of obedience to God have passed away, he acting out that obedience in an open, unmistakable manner, when he, in addition to all his other acts of faith, believed the promise which God gave to him concerning Isaac, then was the exact time when he received justifying grace.

Again, when nearly a score of years after this, he received, amongst other directions and promises, the command to walk before God and be perfect, then he received the blessing of a clean heart, i.e., inbred sin was at that time cleansed away and thereafter he lived a sanctified life, etc.

Is it not a cause for the greatest astonishment that men of intellectual might and power, who, in the walks of secular knowledge, demand common-sense at least as the basis of dogmatic statement, can become responsible for such deliverances! When one becomes the slave of some pet theory, especially in religious belief, what trifling arguments, what foundationless guesses are used to support them!!

God appeared to Laban and told him not to injure Jacob, and Laban *believed* God; of course, then this must, according to this rule, have been the time of his, Laban's, justification. God appeared to Balaam and told him to go to Balak, and Balaam believed God and went, and so he also received the blessing of justification at this time, the *dumb ass* to the contrary, notwithstanding. Pursue this thought throughout Bible history and any one can see the absurdity of the teaching.

Again, Abraham's sanctification is made to follow God's command to him to be perfect, as a necessary consequence. Granted this, then it follows that all the Israelites were sanctified at Mount Sinai, for then God appeared to them and commanded them to be *holy*. But he who looks for any radical difference in their lives will be confounded, even as they will be, when looking for like evidence in the life of Abraham. Murmurers before, the Israelites were murmurers after; so in the life of Abraham, if the incident connected with his stay in the kingdom of Abimelech be compared with that which transpired when driven to Egypt by famine, he will be a nice discernor who will note any difference.

But why compromise the life of Abraham as an example by putting such a long interval between his justification and sanctification? According to the Bible record, this epoch in his history, made to do service as the time of his justification, took place some time before the birth of Ishmael, and yet Ishmael was at least thirteen years old at this the time of Abraham's presumed sanctification. So for nearly a score of years Abraham was a seeker of sanctification without obtaining it. What about the faith which courted such unnecessary delay? For the creed of this historian of the spiritual life of Abraham demands the belief that Abraham could have received this second blessing at any moment during these twenty years, and that nothing but *unbelief* kept him from it. Is it not a rather questionable act to hold such an one up to admiring ages as a man of faith, as, indeed, the *father* of the faithful?

Now we are, in all this, not merely examining the deliverance of one person, but are narrowly scanning that which is the dogmatic teaching of the great bulk of *holiness* writers and speakers. Hence our purpose will be evident to all candid readers, viz., to let the limping arguments used to bolster up the theory which requires two soul crises in the lives of Old Testament worthies awaken legitimate doubts as to the correctness of the creed.