

PERFECTIONISM.

BY REV. D. B. BLAIR.

Extract of Sermon on 1 John, III: 8, 9.

"If any one says, while it is true that *all believers* cannot claim exemption from sin, so as to commit no sin, yet there are *certain saints* of superior holiness, who have attained to such a degree of absolute perfection, that they are altogether free from sin, in reply to this we observe that the language of the Apostle (1 John, iii: 9,) cannot bear that construction. His words are a general statement, '*Whosoever* is born of God doth not commit sin.' It is either all or none; either all are perfect, or none is. *Whosoever* is a universal term, and signifies or embraces all. The converse proposition is, '*Whosoever* committeth sin is not born of God,' which is equally true. It therefore necessarily follows from this statement (if the doctrine of perfectionism be correct,) that nine hundred and ninety-nine, at least, out of every thousand who profess Christianity, are sinners, not born of God, besides the great multitudes even in Christian countries, who make no profession whatever of the Christian religion. The only saints, the only regenerate persons born of God, are the few so-called saints who imagine, or feel, or suppose themselves to be perfect. The majority of professing Christians who know, and feel, that they have sin in themselves, and do commit sin very often, are shut out, from being the children of God, by this interpretation of the Apostle's language. For the apostolic maxim is, '*Whosoever* sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. *Whosoever* is born of God doth not commit sin.' According to this theory (of perfection,) any one who commits sin cannot be born of God, because all who are born of God are made perfect, and rendered incapable of sinning any more. Those who are not free from sin have not seen God, nor known him, therefore they can have no spiritual life. According to this view the disciples of our Lord, not only Judas, but the eleven others also, were unconverted, unregenerate, not born of God, while the Saviour was with them on earth, for in his last prayer, the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus prayed to his Heavenly Father: 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' The Son of God would not ask his Father to do what he had done al-

ready. If they were perfectly holy, Christ would not pray for their sanctification. If they were not sanctified there must be sin in them; if they have sin, they must commit sin sometimes, as Peter did in denying his Master; if they commit sin they are not born of God; he that committeth sin is of the devil. By this doctrine, therefore, the disciples were all of the devil, and were not born of God. We see from this in what absurdities we are landed at last if we adopt this method of interpreting the general words of the Apostle."

CONTENTMENT IN RAGS.

There is contentment with godliness, which is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come, and is like Joseph's coat of many colors. If Joseph wore such a garment as true contentment, as his after years showed, he was more than a prime minister—he was a king the moment he put it on. How rich, how royal are all they who are clad in its many colors. They are the possessors of three worlds; the greatest is that of inward peace, which can reform worlds and clothe men in the midst of the penuries of life. A Scotch nobleman, seeing an old gardener at his establishment with a very ragged coat, made some passing remark on its condition. "It's a verra guid coat," said the honest old man. "I cannot agree with you there," said his lordship. "Ay, it's a verra guid coat," persisted the old man; "it covers a contented spirit and a body that owes no man anything, and that's mair than mony a man can say of his coat."

THE SLIDING SCALE.

There is no "hard and fast line" or law on the subject laid down in the New Testament as there was in the Old; nor should it be needed by any one who wishes to be guided by a sense of obligation and duty to Christ of "how much he owes to his Lord." But one thing is plain. Our *giving* should not be stationary, stereotyped in its amount any more than our *getting* is. If we receive more we should give more,—"the first fruit of our increase,"—as well as give less if we receive less; in either case giving "according to what we have," "as God hath prospered us," or the reverse.—Rev. J. C. Burns, D. D., *Kirkcubrighton*.