

* The Freeman *

IN fulfilment of a promise made to write an occasional short article on the modern religious press, we commence this month with *The Freeman*. When you order it of your bookseller, he considers within himself if you are an Irishman without the brogue, or only a red-hot Radical, and he asks if he shall have to send direct to Dublin for it. But you explain that the further title is, "Organ of the Baptist Denomination," and he suddenly remembers, smiling, that he is quite familiar with *The Freeman*, "and a very good paper too!"

"The Organ of the Baptist Denomination," you may have to tell your bookseller; but *The Freeman* needs not to tell its readers so. Every paragraph says so.

And here, at once, is the thing that is most admirable in this paper: it is steeped in denominationalism, and yet with marvellous success it steers clear of sectarianism. It is conducted by Baptists; it is intended for Baptists; it is nearly all about Baptists. The very reports of meetings it contains are furnished, not by professional reporters, but by Baptist ministers. And yet it never anywhere infers that except a man be immersed he cannot see the kingdom of God. Said the late Professor Elmslie once: "Since I came to London I have got to understand the Baptists a good deal better, and by way of atonement for my early misdeeds and misconceptions, I want to give my testimony about the Baptists." We too have had our misconceptions, and by way of atonement would give our feebler testimony. Not, however, to the London Baptists do we owe it, but to the pages of *The Freeman*.

We owe more than the removal of misconceptions. Among other things, we owe some of our love of living, healthy evangelical religion, and some of our faith in its great future. This is the grand

"Baptist principle," and we witness for *The Freeman* that it strives always to be true to it. Sometimes we have been surprised at the range of its sympathies, but we have never doubted the place of its affections.

And yet the soul of these affections belongs to that supposed soulless thing—a company. *The Freeman* is the property of a company, and its conduct is shaped by a body of directors appointed annually at a meeting of the shareholders.

The acting editor is the Rev. J. Hunt Cooke. To his editorial gifts he adds another, an expository gift of no mean order and of wide range. Whether engaged upon a series of studies in the Psalms, upon the weekly scientific illustrations, or upon some out-of-the-way corner of Bible work, like the "Humour of Scripture," he is always profitable. And from this gift, together with a wise instinct as to the needs and likings of the preacher, it comes to pass that *The Freeman* contains week by week an exceptionally large amount of Biblical exposition, from Dr. Maclaren's sermon downwards.

But Dr. Maclaren's sermon is the great feature in *The Freeman*. We hold that every religious weekly should contain a sermon. Though a weak sermon is about the worst copy an editor can send up, a powerful sermon is nearly the best. Dr. Maclaren's are powerful always. We once already deplored the loss to the world of the sermons that will stand the wear and tear of time next to Robertson of Brighton's and John Ker's. How many are laid away year after year with the numbers of *The Freeman* that, if rescued to permanency and publicity, would enrich our stores with the best and rarest expository materials, and give an immense impetus to the spread of the noblest evangelical doctrines,—let our readers witness by the short portion we here present.

The Grace that is Coming.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

"The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 PET. i. 13.

THERE is a very remarkable phrase in the original, which is only partially represented by either of the translations in the Authorized or Revised Versions. The apostle tells us that we are to "hope for the grace which is being brought to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ." There are three things we have to note here, and I touch them very briefly. The

loftiest hope of the furthest eternity is the hope of *grace*. We usually keep that word in contradistinction to *glory* as expressive of the gifts of God which we receive here upon earth in our pilgrimage. But the apostle here goes even deeper than that, and says, "Ah! it is all of a piece from the beginning to the end. The first gifts that a believing soul receives whilst it is struggling here with darkness and light, are of the same sort as the eternal gifts that it receives