

any other Church. Though little beyond middle age, he is already known to the religious world as a very popular writer. His works are now pretty numerous, and they are all characterised by great vivacity of thought and vigor of style. It is but seldom that one so highly gifted as a preacher succeeds equally well as a writer of books, although, it must be confessed, the Doctor has as yet given to the world no theological work of commanding excellence. His great talent seems to consist in his wonderful power of illustration, one of the main elements of literary genius; but as a *diffuser*, both by means of the pulpit and the press, of the results of the heavy and laborious criticisms of others, which he quickens into life by the sprightliness of a rich and glowing fancy, he is, we believe, without a living equal. He at the same time speaks plain truths to plain men, in such a way that he that runs may read. There is no mistification about him, no dark sayings, no oracular utterances. All is bright and clear as an Italian landscape. In his hand, Christianity is not a dead and inoperative system of doctrines interesting only to the learned, but a system of living, vital, practical truths deeply affecting all men. He soon makes the reader or hearer feel, that religion is something more than a mere theory,—something more than a mere attendance at church upon Sabbaths,—something more than a controversy about words and names, fitted only for those with metaphysical heads or an argumentative turn of mind. He shows that its truths are vastly and vitally interesting to all without exception to whom it has come, laying them under the greatest responsibilities for the use they make of it,—and this he does with the clearest and most convincing logic, such as must make the sneering infidel hide his head in utter confusion and despair. His preaching is then characterised by anything but dulness. It is very different from that kind of sermonising which we sometimes hear of, where, along with a want of real unction, a solemn love of voice plays the most important part. Preaching, which from the generally dry and insipid nature of too many of the pulpit performances of the present day, has passed into a name for tedious dulness of any kind, is in the Doctor's hands a most powerful instrument, and a man of an intelligent and cultivated mind, no less than one who is illiterate and ignorant, would as readily go to hear an ordinary discourse from him, as a lecture upon some interesting and popular theme by any less gifted individual. Such is the witchcraft of genius. Of him it may truly be said, that he adorns everything he touches. The driest subject, under the magic power of his fancy, becomes instinct with life and freshness. As a pulpit orator, we doubt if he has ever been greatly surpassed in any age or country. He is endowed in a high degree with all the physical and mental

qualities which go to make an attractive and popular preacher. His voice, rich and mellow, is of great compass, ringing with silver sweetness through the largest edifice, and now rising into splendor, like the master tones of some choice instrument. In gesture, he is natural and expressive. In appearance, he is about the middle size, stout rather than lean, with dark hair, piercing eyes looking at you from behind spectacles, and a somewhat swarthy but highly intellectual countenance. Then, his taste, imagination, and fine powers of language are all under the control of an intellect far above the ordinary range. Like many other Scotchmen, he has risen by his talents and industry, to fill an honourable and distinguished position in the metropolis of the world; where it may not be uninteresting to our readers to learn, we have also, belonging to our Church, another earnest and highly esteemed preacher, the Rev. Alexander Pratt, a young man of the most promising talents, who at one time we believe intended coming to this colony. Fortunately for the Church and the world, Dr. Cumming's great natural abilities have been consecrated to the cause of truth and of God, whose glory it must ever be the highest privilege of genius to promote.

In what follows, we shall endeavour to present the reader with a brief, though, we trust, comprehensive summary of the Doctor's recent work entitled, "The End; or the Proximate signs of the close of this Dispensation." Our task will be both easier and more satisfactory, if we chiefly adopt the author's own language in summing up the conclusions arrived at, which he does in the beginning of the eighth Lecture. In the first place however, we may observe that by the "End," it is not, according to his view, to be understood that this Earth, the round ball on which we tread, is to be destroyed, but only to be renewed, at the hastening close of the present dispensation. Scripture tells us expressly that the last day, the day of the Lord will come, when the Heavens and the earth shall melt with fervent heat. But what is added? "Nevertheless we, according to his promise," (in Isaiah) "look for," not *another* heaven, but "a new heaven"; not *another* earth, but a "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." We have had several successive worlds with their successive ends since man fell. The Flood was the end of a world, that is, an age, the Exodus from Egypt was the end of another world or age; the *advent of Christ* was the end of a third and the commencement of the present. As every previous age has had its end, the present age, even the most sceptical will allow, is destined to have its end, and its final issue also. Prophecy was written for our instruction; and on every eve of every previous age preintimations have been given. Thus Noah was told the precise period of the flood,—Abraham was told the date of the captivity in Egypt, and Moses understood the expiring of that epoch. At the

close of the Levitical economy, Anna and Simeon and others who "waited for the consolation of Israel," understood that Daniel's years were expired, and that the time of the advent of the promised Messiah had come. Thus we find at the twilight that ushered in the close of every age the expectancy of its arrival at that very time. And if God gave forelights of the cross, has he given none of the crown? If he helped his people to see so clearly Him that was about to suffer, has he left us in total darkness about the distance, or the nearness, or the nature of the approach of Him who comes, crowned with many crowns, to sway a sceptre that shall never cease, and to exercise a dominion wide as the wide world?

In the first of these highly interesting and deservedly popular Lectures, the Doctor vindicates the study of prophecy from the misapprehensions of many; and shows the distinction, broad, deep and unmistakable, between the prophet who predicts things to come, and the expositor of prophecy who tries to unfold things that are already predicted. He wishes all specially to keep in mind this very important distinction. It is one thing to sit in the prophet's chair and predict; it is quite a different and a much more humble thing to kneel at the footstool of grace and seek light, and labour to explain what the prophet has predicted, and God has written for our learning. The first is blasphemy to pretend to; the second it is duty to attempt. If we fail, the failure in any one instance should not discourage; but rather, as the wreck in the channel with the buoy floating over it shows the course that other ships are to follow with greater safety, so the incidental error of the one generation may be the warning to the students in the next; and the result may be a clearer, deeper, fuller apprehension of the mind of the Spirit of God.

In his second Lecture he specifies, as laid down in the sacred page, the marks and characteristics of the eve or the twilight of this present dispensation. He notices the prediction of "earthquakes in divers places; pestilences, wars, signs in the sun and in the moon, distress of nations, perplexity." He calls attention to the daily papers as the most authentic evidences of prophecy translated into history; and he adduces from them various accounts of earthquakes in almost every quarter of the globe within the last year or two. He meets the difficulty that occurs to most minds; namely, that there have been earthquakes during the last eighteen hundred years. This is true: but our blessed Lord, who predicts earthquakes in divers places as one of the evidences of the nearness of the end knows that just as well as the objector; and yet he lays down the prediction that earthquakes in divers places will be one of the signs of the nearness of his approaching advent. He notices also the fact of famine in divers places; and also the occurrence of pestilence in divers