

DR. CUMMING.

In one of our exchanges a correspondent writes from London regarding Dr. Cumming as follows:

I found my way to Dr. Cumming's church to realize my anticipations of fifteen years ago, when I first read his "Tent and Altar."

The Doctor is a man of fine personal appearance, preaching in gown and bands. He has a pleasant, melodious voice, with a very slight lisp, and upon some words a very Scotch accent. His flow of words is excellent, with an easy, familiar manner, quite winning. The singing was done by the congregation, a quartette in front of the pulpit leading off without an instrument. A very fine treble voice led the whole congregation of 1000 people. After the opening psalm and prayer, the choir chanted a psalm, quite alone. The Doctor then read 2 Thes. 11., and commented upon it fully fifteen minutes, showing how the "great falling away and the revealing of the Man of Sin, sitting in the temple of God and showing that he is God," must allude to the Pope of Rome. He said that at the installation of the Pope, after his election, he was always set upon the high altar, in the very place which all the Roman Catholic world believes to be occupied by the very body of Christ; thus fulfilling to the letter this prediction that he would "exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." The comment on the chapter held the audience in the profoundest attention. The Lord's Prayer, and another hymn prepared the way for the sermon baised upon 1 Thess. v. 21; "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good." His subject was the exercise of the right of private judgment in seeking what is truth and what is not. In examining the text critically, he made constant use of the Greek Testament, which he held in his hand. He had done the same thing during his commentary on the chapter read. In seeking what is truth we are led into the question: Was Christ a real personage and did he live 1800 years ago, according to the New Testament record? This simple fact, he said, had been so much assailed of late, and from high quarters, that it would be well to look into it. He first brought the testimony of five different writers living in Christ's time, proving that Christ was expected very generally, and that he came and wrought miracles. These were all profane writers, entirely outside the Bible record. He then considered the story itself—how marvellously told, such simplicity, such a want of any effort on the part of the evangelists: themselves to substantiate their statements. If the story be untrue, he said, it bespoke for evangelists the character of four of the greatest geniuses the world ever saw; to be capable of constructing so unpre-

tending a narrative. He then examined the miracles, drawing out in a few forcible sentences, their unanswerable argument. Is the Book, as we have it, the same that the apostles wrote by inspiration? was the next point. He remarked that none of us had ever seen any of the original handwriting of the evangelists. They often wrote by another person, as their epistles say. Why their handwriting had not been handed down by Providence, it was difficult to judge. The various manuscript copies next went under review: Tischendorf's copy of the fourth century, in Russia; the Vatican copy of the fourth century, the Alexandrian in the British Museum and others. These are all written in capital letters. The Syriac translation, made from the original Greek, as early probably as the days of John the Evangelist, or at the latest, in the second century; and then the translation from Greek into Latin were mentioned. From the existing writings of the Fathers, if all our other copies were destroyed, we can cull out, in quotations, the whole of the New Testament, the Psalms, and large parts of the prophecies. This forms a wonderful feature in the chain of evidence. The voluminous and long continued controversies on theological questions in those early days, was the cause of these copious quotations. The different readings of the copies was then touched upon, and the Doctor said he had himself examined these differences with considerable labor and could testify, along with other investigators, that they were trivial in the extreme, about single letters here and there; the text never varying in the essential and leading doctrines and truths taught. In the most polite and kindly manner he handled the recent objections made by the Dean of Canterbury to the veracity of the accounts of the crucifixion, inasmuch as each of the evangelists record a different inscription over the head of the Saviour. "Certainly the Dean will recall his doubts when he learns that John followed the Hebrew, Mark the Latin, Luke the Greek, and Matthew all three combined: 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews.'"

Now consider how the Bible has been a proscribed book, how it has been burned publicly over and over again; and people commanded to destroy it under pain of punishment; and how it has withstood all this rough handling, while three-fourths of the classic writings of olden times, notwithstanding the efforts of men to perpetuate them, have perished. The profane writings of the ancients, too, accord with the feelings, the desires and wishes of worldly men; while the Bible is throughout against them *in toto*; and yet it lives while they die. To-day \$50,000 would be given for some of the lost books of Livy; but they have perished and no price can revive them. Now, instead of the few hundreds of readers of Homer in the world, we have hundreds of thousands of