

EXTRACTS FROM DR. PENTECOST'S ADDRESS AT NORTHFIELD.

BY REV. H. B. BARTZLER.

Dr. George F. Pentecost is always a welcome presence at Northfield. Years ago he was drawn into the town, as were also the Gospel singers, Mr. Sankey and Mr. Towney, by the charms and associations of the place, to seek a home under its stately elms and maples; but Providence has not permitted him long to remain in his chosen home. The great cities of America, England, Scotland, and India have claimed him for special service in the interests of the kingdom of God. After an absence of nearly two years in India, Dr. Pentecost once more appeared before a Northfield audience on Sunday, August 23th. It was the closing day of the Northfield "season," which had begun with the World's Student Conference in July. The Congregational church was crowded to hear the words of their favorite speaker. In the morning and afternoon he preached with all his wonted energy and power, and in the evening he gave a remarkable account of his experiences and observations in India.

"Well, friends, I do not think if you should take a journey to another planet, that you would find yourself in the midst of more surprises than if you were to be suddenly transported from Northfield to India. I have the feeling, after having been in India only a little over seventeen months, that I have been in another planet. If I should speak to you of the geographical wonders of India; its billowy mountains, its magnificent forests and jungles, its wide, cultivated plains, it would require the whole evening to do so. Think of the vast snow ranges with mountains thirty thousand feet high, as if the Matterhorn were piled on the top of Mt. Blanc and then the two capped with the Rigi, and you still fail of the conception. Think of travelling through forests of oak an hundred miles, through which you could scarcely creep because of the dense undergrowth, and millions of orchids peeping and twinkling at you like myriads of fairy spirits, of forests of rhododendrons, towering from an hundred to an hundred and fifty feet in height and covered with one mass of brilliant flowers. Another evening might be spent on the architecture of India. Take the one outstanding, illustrious example from the ten thousand of beautiful buildings in India: the celebrated Taj Mahal, the most symmetrical, the most restful and beautiful building the world has every seen. I have looked at it in all lights; quivering in the first throbbing light of the day, and under the soft light of the setting sun; under the peaceful light of the full moon, and thrilling under the light of a million stars, when the whole structure had such a fairy look, that it seemed as though it might take wings and fly up into the heaven, from whence it seems it must have come. The architecture of India, as wonderful and more spiritual than that of ancient Egypt, goes to prove that when we speak of the people of India as heathen; we are not to think of them as barbarians or savages or as untutored black men. Perhaps India holds a people the most cultured of any in the world. They have a religious literature the most massive, and written in a language more musical than the Greek, more prolific than the Latin, and more exact than either of them—a people who have a religious cult that antedates every religion of the earth, with a philosophical system from which both the ancient

and modern western world have borrowed their most subtle thoughts.

"After two years of intimate intercourse with the educated men of India, my love for them has increased. The better I came to know this people, the more I talked with them, and the oftener I got on my knees with them, the more tenderly and sympathetically I came to love them: and when I turned away from the last meeting held with them, I turned away with my heart filled with emotions of tenderest love for those splendid men who for nights and weeks together came to hear the story of Christ.

"It has been said of the Hindu religion that it is eternal and unchangeable. They claim that their religion is based upon an eternal revelation and that it is unchangeable. The critics of Christianity, who have discussed the question whether it is possible for Christianity to pervade India, have said that in India we have to contend with an unchangeable religious system, bound and linked together by an indissoluble caste system which renders it an impregnable religious fortress. If I had time I might show you, through well certified facts, that, while it is the boast of the Hindu that his religion is unchanging and unchangeable, no religion in the world has given so many evidences of erosion and decay as theirs has under the influence and impact of Christianity for the last hundred years. Of course when we think of the 300,000,000 Hindus and Mohammedans, and our little force of Christians in India, it looks to the superficial observer like a hopeless undertaking to Christianize these millions. It seems as though the means were entirely inadequate to reach the desired end, and that the task could never be accomplished. So the passing stranger, the cold-hearted friend, and the hot-hearted enemy are constantly saying that the conquest of India by forces that are there is an impossibility. There are those who take delight in counting up the number of Christian converts and then counting up all the money that has been appropriated and spent for carrying on the work; comparing the number won over for Christ with the number of dollars spent for that purpose, and by this commercial test declaring that modern missions are a wasteful extravagance and that practically the work is a failure; but just here, in passing, I would like to say that in my judgement the result of Christian work in India is any way from fifty to five hundred times greater than the result of Christian labor in Christian America when you compare the number and cost of instrumentalities in that country with those in this. The most hopeful field of missionary labor to-day is India. If I had money to invest in religious work and were seeking the most profitable investment for it to-day, I would invest in India rather than in the Connecticut valley.

"To-day there are in India three million native Christians. I suppose the number of real Christians among the gross number of nominal adherents to Christ is much less than this; but suppose we should say that we have no more than one million, we have demonstrated the power of the religion of Christ over their religion. The great mass of native Christians are from the low castes, but there are enough high-caste men