

THE EVER-MEMORABLE CONGRESS OF 1898.

BY PROFESSOR J. R. BUCHANAN.

[We have closed the discussion on Dr. Wallace's Address, but, out of respect for a venerable worker, and because there is a great thought in it, we willingly publish this paper, retaining the writer's own title.]

The ultra-conservative and somewhat stolid character of the British Press has not allowed me to anticipate any bold progress for the late International Congress, and hence it was a most agreeable result to find the stolidity confined to the Press, and the Congress animated by a spirit of harmonious progress which has never been equalled in the last half-century.

Having been engaged for more than half a century in the work of scientific and social progress which always encounters the opposition of society, it was a most unexpected pleasure to find my most earnest pleading with my countrymen so ably sustained by Dr. Wallace and Mr. Stead, and so well received by the Congress.

The most radical ideas which I have unsuccessfully urged on my American countrymen were ably and wisely presented by Dr. Wallace. Thus has England stepped in advance of America. The restless competitive struggle of American life in which the unqualified seek to become leaders is unfriendly to co-operation and to the leadership of the wise. For this reason the Rochdale system of co-operation which has been so successful in Great Britain has been generally unsuccessful in America, which I realised in personal experience, and the crudities and frauds of our spiritual movement are a matter of shame.

Mr. Stead well suggested that it was a just cause of indignation to think that with the noblest and holiest of all truths in our charge, we have done so little for it, and so utterly failed in the inspiration which those truths gave the Apostles in the Pentecostal time.

The indignation of which he speaks has been animating my labours for half a century and will continue while I live—not to be expended on our slow-moving brethren, but upon the ancient systems of negation, bigotry, and tyranny which hold the world in darkness. It may be that I have been unwise in this, for Messrs. Wallace and Stead, instead of denouncing or disproving ancient falsehoods, simply present the sacred truths and duties (so tenderly and beautifully presented in the Apostolic age) with the added wisdom of modern sociology.

Earnestly do I hope that this lucid presentation of our ethical duties, without any contest with ancient wrongs and falsehoods, may turn the thoughts of all Spiritualists towards the co-operation and social justice which belonged to the ancient Spiritualism called Christianity in the first century, for this is the end to which all profound psychic science leads, when it rises above mere spiritism.

America has not organised its Spiritualism yet to reach this end, but communities are leading in this direction, not only in the young co-operative commonwealth of Washington, but at Ruskin, Tennessee, and at the commonwealth of Georgia, where a young society which publishes its monthly 'Social Gospel' is endeavouring, with Pentecostal zeal, to establish as perfect as possible an imitation of the brotherhood and brotherly love of the first Christians.

To show the possibility of introducing such principles in the conduct of Government and producing a sudden amelioration of all social evils—ending the war of capitalists and labourers, is the leading object of the second volume of 'Primitive Christianity,' just published by myself; and to show that the best results can be attained only under the control of a profound religious sentiment, as it came in ancient days, and as it must reappear when we rise from spiritism to a profound Spiritualism enlightened by science, is the task to which the end of my life is devoted, and to which the hosts of heaven are giving their aid. They who live in the higher spheres give all the co-operation in this which we permit, and I am sure that England's great statesman, Gladstone, as well as her radical philosopher, Carlyle, will yet be heard as leaders in the progress which humanity needs. When Spiritualists learn that there is no difficulty in communing with the higher spheres when we are in harmony with them, our cause will advance in a rapid and triumphant manner.