

THE STRIKES.

NEVER was there a time when people generally and working men in particular had more need to recall the counsel of Dr. Johnson - "Clear your mind of cant." Cant is highflown, unreal speech, consisting of phrases and sentences which are originated by one man and copied by another, which are generally false or exaggerated as used by their original author, and which become more so as they are propagated, learned, imitated. Or these phrases and sentences may be such as had real meaning and force in their first use; but, having passed into other mouths, have become no longer the expressions of convictions, but merely the echo of other men's thoughts.

Among the cants of the present day there is hardly anything more dangerous than the frequent and unexplained use of the words "Christian Socialism;" and this because, in the first place, Christianity was not socialistic, in the modern sense of that word, and modern socialism is not Christian. There never was a time when community of goods was required by the law of the Christian Church. There never was a time when communism prevailed throughout the Church. We know that it existed for a short time in one particular church; but we are told distinctly that it was optional and not compulsory, and many persons believe that it led to the subsequent poverty of the "Saints at Jerusalem." This is a matter, however, which we need not discuss.

There is, however, one very conspicuous difference between the socialism of the New Testament and that of modern levellers; and it has been pointed out accurately and epigrammatically by a German writer whose name we cannot at present recall. The socialism of the New Testa-

ment, he remarks, says: "All mine is thine;" whilst the unbelieving socialism of the present time says: "All thine is mine." This is the exact point of difference. The spirit of the Gospel is loving, giving, communicating, self-sacrificing. The spirit of modern socialism is selfish, envious, covetous, rapacious.

Now, if by socialism the first, the Christian spirit is meant, then indeed we may well pray with all our hearts that it may spread; for this is our great need. That men should love as brothers, knowing that we all belong to the one great family of Him who is God and Father of us all, is the one supreme need of modern society; and it is the need of employers as much as of employed. If masters had been more just and more kind, servants would have been more loyal and submissive. But injustice will not be cured by injustice; nor will selfishness be remedied by hatred.

There can be little doubt that the strikes which are now going on—one may say—throughout the whole world, in the United States, England, Australia, not to speak of other nations, are greatly promoted by the diffusion of the spirit of socialism. And this is shown in the tyrannical spirit which has become developed in them. Simple minded people who know only the surface aspects of these questions would say that socialism is one of the latest outcomes of the spirit of liberty; and that strikes are a way of securing liberty (among other blessings) to the working man. Let such persons get to know the interior of these movements and they will soon be undeceived.

Socialism is the destruction of personal liberty: let that be set down as an undoubted fact which hardly needs to be argued. It is a return from the