

14 CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

Another reason why Christianity is so imperfectly understood by many is the fact that there are other religious bodies that make no such claims to authority over the faith of men as the organizations referred to make, but they have some particular ceremony, or ordinance, or traditional view, or doctrinal belief, which they hold up as if they were the special custodians of it, which they emphasize, and obtrude, and keep to the front, in such a degree that the moral and spiritual elements of Christianity are overshadowed, and practically kept in the rear, and Jesus Christ's order is reversed; the things which in His teaching are supreme, become subordinate with them, and the things which He left in a subordinate place become supreme; and the religion of a majority of such people becomes a narrow and slavish legalism akin to the religion of the Pharisees, and they themselves become just as unspiritual and undiscerning, just as exclusive and unsympathetic, toward the real Christianity of Christ, and toward the higher manifestations of it, as the Pharisees of old ever were. They measure everything by their own little formulas and rules,