



The Kingdom of God is Within You: Christianity not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life

Leo Tolstoy

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Christianity not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life

By Leo Tolstoy

Translated from the Russian of Count Leo Tolstoy by Constance Garnett


The Kingdom of God Is Within You is a non-fiction book written by Leo Tolstoy. A philosophical treatise, the book was first published in Germany in 1894 after being banned in his home country of Russia. It is the culmination of thirty years of Tolstoy's thinking, and lays out a new organization for society based on a literal Christian interpretation.

The Kingdom of God is Within You is a key text for Tolstoyan, nonviolent resistance, and Christian anarchist movements.

The title of the book is taken from Luke 17:21. In the book Tolstoy speaks of the principle of nonviolent resistance when confronted by violence, as taught by Jesus Christ. When Christ says to turn the other cheek, Tolstoy asserts that Christ means to abolish violence, even the defensive kind, and to give up revenge. Tolstoy rejects the interpretation of Roman and medieval scholars who attempted to limit its scope.

“How can you kill people, when it is written in God’s commandment: ‘Thou shalt not murder’?”

Tolstoy took the viewpoint that all governments who waged war are an affront to Christian principles. As the Russian Orthodox Church was—at the time—an organization merged with the Russian state and fully supporting state's policy, Tolstoy sought to separate its teachings from what he believed to be the true gospel of Christ, specifically the Sermon on the Mount.

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