

3. Christianity Misunderstood by Believers

What precisely does Tolstoy consider valid Christianity? What is the source?

He opposes the Sermon on the Mount and the Creed. What does he understand the Sermon to direct us to do? Which Creed? What does it tell us to do? How should we live?

Why does he think we are in such longstanding error as to think we know what to believe, how to live?

How does the church hide the significance of the gospel from us? Why?

What evidence does Tolstoy provide to persuade us he knows the Truth about Christ and Christianity?

“The longer mankind lived, the clearer and clearer became the meaning of Christianity, as must always be the case with every theory of life” (p. 34). What does that mean? Is it true? Evidence?

How does Tolstoy value supernatural occurrences connected to Christianity? Relics? Creeds? Rituals? Why? Do you agree with him that “Christ rejected all outward observances—ablutions, purifications, fasts, sabbaths” (p. 34)?

In TUMC, how do we value supernatural occurrences, miracles, relics, creeds, rituals? Why? What do they tell us about Christ? About living as Christ did?

Why does he spend time defining *church*? What does he want us to infer? Quoting Ignatius of Antioch from the late 1st century, Tolstoy comments that “*ubi Christus ibi ecclesia*”—why? Is that what we believe? Is that what we live?

What is heresy exactly? Why does Tolstoy consider the church (all of them actually) petrified? How have the heretics failed Christianity and become petrified themselves? (*Heresy* comes from the Greek *haireomai* which means “to choose.”). Why does he think there was no heresy in early Christianity?

Which churchmen does Tolstoy esteem in spite of their association with the church? Why?

On pp. 44-45, Tolstoy lists the various ways an individual interacts with the church—through a lifetime. How many of these rituals carry significant meaning for us? Would they have carried any meaning for Christ and the early church (before Paul)?

What does Tolstoy think of the Old Testament and its heroes and its god?

What does he think of the Orthodox church? The Catholic church? The Protestant sects? The Salvation Army? What are their major flaws? Failures?

Leaving this chapter, in a sentence or two, can we summarize what we have read here? And in another sentence or two, can we say what we agree and disagree with?

4. Christianity Misunderstood by Men of Science

According to LT, how exactly do men of science hinder our understanding of Christianity?

Why does he consider science the investigation of the past? And religion the theory of the practice of the future?

What are the three main views of life LT discusses? How do they differ? Why does he find the first two unsatisfactory—be specific.

What is the religion of the man with the individual view of life? Of the man with the social (or governmental) view of life? Of the man with the divine view of life?

Where in this chapter does LT discuss hard science, research, in opposition to Christ and Christianity? Do you think he understands clearly an opposition between science and religion? Explain. Cite examples from this chapter.

Where do you find any indications that LT objects to moderation and relativism in living a Christian life?

Where do you find parallels between John Wesley's beliefs about sanctification and Tolstoy's arguments about progress toward divine perfection? And what do any of them have to do with science?

On pp. 62-63, LT examines various statements from his reading of the Sermon on the Mount—the ideals we take from the Sermon. What do you think about his readings?

Leaving this chapter, in a sentence or two, state what we have learned about how men of science misunderstand Christianity.