When we have examined Tolstoy's search for the meaning of life and religion, the question naturally arises where does he stand? Has he been able to give a reasonable and convincing explanation of the meaning of life? Does he carry the conviction of reasonable men? Has he been able to unravel the truth in entirety? If not in entirety, then how much? To answer these questions we shall take up his understanding of the various aspects of the matter under investigation under the following heads:

(a) Tolstoy's understanding of life;
(b) of religion.
(c) Law of non-resistance.
(d) His attitude towards science.

(a) Tolstoy's understanding of life

The meaning of life has been one of those mystery of mysteries which has either eluded the grasp of mankind,
or concerning which there have been as many approaches as there are men, without arriving at any consensus of opinion. Were it not so there would not have been such uncompromising conflict of various faiths, orders, sects, and ideologies, which are prevalent in the world. Tolstoy's explanation of life is also one of the many approaches, and there is no reason to suppose that people would not disagree with him. But, what merit closer attention to Tolstoy's approach is that he was one of the most painstaking and curious explorer in this field.

Tolstoy's defining of the fundamental basis of life that it consisted in the relation of man's finite existence to the infinite life in space and time, is epic in conception. There could not be a better defining of life. It takes into its fold the deepest and the farthest reaches of human life. The link between the finite and the infinite life of men, by which Tolstoy tried to unravel the meaning of life, could be the only logical approach. In place of the limited span of life on earth, with all the suffering and ultimate end of bodily existence, he created the everlasting conception of life with no apprehension of death. From the
common viewpoint, with limited vision and selfish
approach to life, all this may be envisioned as visionary's imaginative exercise, full of self-delusion; but
in the opinion of any thinking man what could be better
comprehension of life than this? It appears to be the
best logically-deduced conclusion, which has for its
end ever continuous betterment of life with reasonable
explanation of life.

Another merit of Tolstoy's explanation is that
he brought to bear the central attention on improving
the state of life in the succeeding periods of time.
His argument that life could be viewed only from the
central viewpoint of making it better, appears to be
the only rational conclusion. His contention that life,
with innumerable aspects, could not be approached appropria
tely unless we viewed it from a main viewpoint,
is sound. And that main viewpoint could be the betterment
of life only.

Further, Tolstoy tried to resolve the conflict
between the demands of flesh and reason in man. The
two appeared to be mutually contradictory, pursuing
diverse ends. He harmonized the activities of the two
for creating better life by bringing into submission
of reason the animal personality of man.

Tolstoy's use of the Christian law of love for solving the contradiction in life, is healing and unifying in effect. To harmonise the activities of mankind ridden with sanguinary discords, to bring happiness to the unhappy world, to soothe the minds of the injured and the wronged, there could be no better cure than love.

Theoretically, Tolstoy's argument on life is compact, whole. But, what appears to be theoretically sound and consistent falls into impracticable difficulties when we try to translate the theory into practice.

To take up the chief argument of Tolstoy on life that the betterment of life consisted in bringing the animal personality of men under the submission of reasonable consciousness and cultivating of love in heart for all, we have to examine how far is it feasible. An observation of human beings would make us realise that each individual has a certain predominant tendency in him. We may note that one individual is greedy, another evil, third mean, fourth full of love, fifth vindictive, sixth opportunistic, and so on. This means
that whereas the first is dominated by the predominant tendency of greed, second by evil, third by meanness, fourth by love, fifth by vindictiveness, and the sixth by opportunism. This is referred to by Tolstoy in Resurrection as 'special definite qualities' in men. ¹ It does not mean that all these people are not possessed of other feelings apart from the predominant one; the constituent elements are the same in all human beings, but they differ in proportion. All human beings are endowed with the feelings of love, hatred, evil, meanness, vindictiveness, but these differ in proportion in different human beings. There is always one predominant tendency in each individual, which may be the feeling of love, hatred, vindictiveness, and so on. We may say, for example, that in President Kennedy the predominant tendency was love. It was the feeling of love that predominated over all his other feelings, and thus we say that he was a good man. Sometimes we note that two or three feelings are dominant; for example, a man may be destructive, mean, and vindictive. But in that case also one feeling would be predominant, may be that of destruct-

¹Though Tolstoy argues against any such definite qualities in men according to the argument in the novel, yet we get an understanding that in his mind he was aware of it. Many a time he argued against those facts of which he himself had a lurking belief in his mind. He wrote in Resurrection: "One of the most widespread superstitions is that everyman has his own special definite qualities: that he is kind, cruel, wise, stupid, energetic, apathetic,
tiveness, meanness, or vindictiveness, and the two others subordinate. Under this observation, how could we think it feasible that different men possessed of different predominant feelings would behave alike, that is, try to bring their animal personalities under the submission of reason and cultivate love in their hearts for all? If a person has the predominant tendency to animalism, then how would he be able to bring his animal personality under the influence of reason? That would be rather impossible. We read of many people committing fearful crimes under the heat of passion. Persons with one of the predominant criminal tendency get their reason suspended under the heat of passion and act as their passion dictates. How would the methodology of Tolstoy apply to them?

Firstly, the question is how many people would be able to understand Tolstoy’s explanation of life and methodology to work for its betterment? According to his conception the betterment of life would be reali-

and so on. Men are not like that. We may say of a man that he is more often kind than cruel, more often wise than stupid, more often energetic than apathetic, or the reverse; but it would not be true to say of one man that he is kind and wise, of another that he is bad and stupid. And yet we always classify mankind in this way. And this is false. Men are like rivers: the water is the same in one and all; but every river is narrow here, more rapid there, here slower; there broader, now clear, now dull, now cold, now warm. It is the same with men. Everyone bears in himself the germs of every human quality; but sometimes one quality manifests itself, sometimes another, and the men often becomes unlike himself, while still remaining the same man.” (Resurrection, p. 314.)
zed only when men in general understood the explanation and put it into practice by acting upon his methodology. If the understanding and methodology was limited to only a few enlightened people, then the very effectiveness of the argument was lost.

Secondly, the methodology of bringing the animal personality of man under the submission of reasonable consciousness and cultivating of love in heart for all, may at best be theoretically satisfying, but to translate it into actual practice appears highly impracticable.

In this connection we may consider an argument by Charles Darwin, the famous naturalist, that men should follow their good instincts for the betterment of human life. He wrote in his Autobiography:

A man who has no assured and ever present belief in the existence of a personal God or of a future existence with retribution and reward, can have for his rule of life, as far as I can see, only to follow those impulses and instincts which are the strongest or which seem to him the best ones. A dog acts in this manner, but he does so blindly. A man, on the other hand, looks forwards and backwards, and compares his various feelings, desires and recollections. He then finds, in accordance with the verdict of all the wisest men that the highest satisfaction is derived from following certain impulses, namely the social instincts. If he acts for the good of others, he will receive the approbation of his fellow men and gains the love of those with whom he lives; and this later gain undoubtedly is the highest pleasure
on this earth. By degrees it will become intolerable to him to obey his sensuous passion rather than his higher impulses, which when rendered habitual may be almost called instincts. His reason may occasionally tell him to set in opposition to the opinion of others, whose approbation he will then not receive, but he will still have the solid satisfaction of knowing that he has followed his innermost guide or conscience....

All this may be plausible in the case of few individuals with high sense of understanding and responsibility, but is it practicable when applied to men in general? The effectiveness of Tolstoy's theory lies in its general application to human beings, because the movement of life depends upon mankind in general. The cultivating of social instincts, as argued by Darwin, can have at best only a limited application.

Moreover, standards and morality of social behaviour differ from society to society. Kissing in public may be normal behaviour in the western countries, but it is considered objectionable in a country like India. If the standard and morality of social behaviour cannot be systematised, then its relevancy to Tolstoy's argument is inappropriate.

On the evolution of life, C. E. M. Joad in his book on George Bernard Shaw, refers to two courses applicable to it: the one natural, and the other selective. Referring

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to the natural course of evolution he wrote:

Under the influence of certain specifiable but rare physical conditions - materialists were never tired of emphasising the paucity of the areas of the cosmos in which the conditions favourable to life obtained - matter had become conscious, conscious, as it was sometimes put, of itself. Matter's consciousness of itself was life, and life's subsequent development was governed by the same material conditions as had given it birth. One day when these conditions no longer obtained, life would finish its pointless journey with as little significance as in the person of the amoeba it began it. Meanwhile, its status in the universe was that of an outside passenger travelling across a fundamentally alien and hostile environment in which the mindless and the brutal conditioned and determined the living and the spiritual. Causation in other words operated universally from the less living as cause to the more living as effect, in the external world from the environment to the living organism, within the living organism from the body to the mind and within the mind from the less to the more conscious part of it.

This was the scheme in which Darwin's discovery of evolution, or, more precisely, his formulation of the laws of natural selection and the survival of the fittest by means of which evolution operated, played an integral part; integral, because in respect of the attitude which it adopted to the phenomena of life, of the explanation which it offered of the elaborate and varied process which beginning with the amoeba had culminated in ourselves, Darwin's account postulated the intervention of no spiritual force or agency, neither mind, life, nor creator, but was content to rely upon the operation of the same physical forces as those which had governed the development of our planet prior to life's appearance.¹

And referring to the selective form of evolution he wrote:

But suppose that the changes in living organisms

by means of which they adapted themselves to changes in their environment were purposeful, in the sense that somebody or something operating independently of the living organism, or perhaps using it as the vehicle of its own development, willed them supposing, in fact, that changes in the living things were not always the by-products of prior changes in dead things, but that at least sometimes they occurred independently as the expression of a drive in living things to adapt themselves better to dead things and possibly to use dead things for their own purposes. If this were so, causation might sometimes at least operate from the animate to the inanimate, and the activity of living force or spirit by which animate matter was distinguished from inanimate, instead of being merely a by-product of matter, might be in some sense independent of it, and in virtue of its independence able to act upon it, use it, even enter into and inform it. Such, in effect, was the contention of Samuel Butler, a contention which he proceeded to work upon into the sketch of a philosophy.\footnote{1}

We may say that Tolstoy also believed in the selective form of evolution, but the difference is that unlike the scientific approach he believed in spiritual evolution. If Bernard Shaw believed in the creation of superior species, which he termed as 'supermen' and who were to be instrumental for the betterment of life, Tolstoy believed in a religious, spiritual method for the furtherance of the same end. To quote a letter by Tolstoy to Shaw once more, he wrote:

I am particularly pleased by your attitude toward civilization and progress and the very true reflection that, however long the one and the other may continue, they cannot improve the state of mankind unless men themselves alter. The difference of our views is merely

\footnote{1C. E. M. Joad, \textit{Shaw}, pp. 176-7.}
this: You think that mankind's improvement will be accomplished when ordinary people become supermen or when fresh supermen are produced; while, in my opinion, it will occur when men discern the true religions, including Christianity, from all the sects which deform them, and when all, uniting in the understanding of life which lies at the base of all the religions, realise their reasonable relation to the world's eternal origin and accept the guidance for life which flows therefrom.1

Of the natural and selective methods of evolution it appears that first is more convincing. Nobody as yet knows out of which mysterious source have this world and life come, what has been the beginning of it all, and where possibly would it end. Since the earliest times an evolution in various spheres in various forms has been going on. How far this evolution has been due to man's conscious efforts, would be a matter of great dispute. One could say that man has been able to master successfully some of the aspects of nature, and is still in the process of doing so in case of others; but the question is whether the overall evolution of life is natural or selective? Of this it may be remarked that though man may have been able to master the working of some aspects of natural forces, yet the overall working of evolution remains natural. Man, life, and the universe, go on moving towards an end which is

1As quoted in Aylmer Maude, The Life of Tolstoy, II, 461.
neither defined nor apparent. It is all an enigma hidden in the bosom of enigma.

Moreover, if any selective approach is feasible, it would better be based on scientific laws rather than on the quite impracticable methodology of Tolstoy. However, Tolstoy may define the true conception of religion; the fact is that his religion is based on certain abstract theorizing, which in other words means impracticality.

(b) His understanding of religion

In relation to religion Tolstoy's attitude was both negative and positive. On one hand he endeavored to abolish the very institution of Church with its false practices, and on the other to propagate the true essentials of religion without which mankind could not live a happy life. He believed that before true religion could be made explicit, the old structure of falsehood which inhibited the propagation of true religion must be demolished.

Tolstoy's condemnation of the false practices of
the contemporary Russian Church was a wholesome negative attack. The Church had in fact become a dead Church. It had not only lost all initiative and courage to raise its voice against the tyrannical activities of the Czarist government, it was left with no 'Godly' light even to lead men to the right path. It was all an effete Church. Its ministers lived in comfort and even luxury in contrast to the wretched poverty and suffering of the masses. (That way Tolstoy's arguments against the Church were in general applicable to the Church in other countries as well.) When Church lost its true initiative and independence, and came to be just a department of the oppressive government, it had no purpose or meaning left to exist. It was all lifeless, and when no means was in sight to revive it, its discard- ing was only left to be desired.

Tolstoy's attack on the contemporary Church was an act of great courage, effort, and sacrifice. At a time when it was taken for granted as sacro-sanct by the masses - th even the starving and wretched peasants - and when it yielded a powerful political influence also, it was a very bold act on his part not only to expose its falsehood and weaknesses but to demand its very
abolition. His conflict with Church brought him into painful differences with his family also. His wife and other relations were followers of the orthodox Church. It was no small effort for him to live in the same house and go on denouncing the beliefs in which his kith and kin believed. Later on when he was excommu-
nicated by the Church that came as an added grief to his family.

And, if he attacked Church it was with no malice or personal ambition. His sole effort was directed to search for the truth and propagate it. He searched for true religion in Church - laboriously and painfully - but in vain. Gradually he came to the conclusion that Church in reality only obstructed it and made its real-
ization more difficult.

Apart from the wholesome negative attack on the false practices in religion, Tolstoy's explanation of true religion merits consideration. His defining of religion was co-extensively epic in conception as his defining of life. If true life consisted in establishing men's permanent relation to the infinite life, true

religion was a relation of men to the eternal life in accordance with reason and contemporary knowledge. To

the best reaches of human mind there could not be a
greater defining of religion. It is the totality of being that forms a part of it.

Further, be emphasised that the relation of man to eternal life must be established in accordance with reason and contemporary knowledge. This is a very remarkable aspect of his definition of religion. All the religions in course of time appear to have some obsolete explanations which are not acceptable today. Who will believe today the Biblical explanation of the creation of world in six days or the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden? Similarly we find innumerable unacceptable explanations in all the religions. Those explanations were appropriate according to the state of knowledge possessed in those days, but now they have become untrue. Tolstoy's defining of religion that it the relation of men to the infinite universe must be in accordance with reason and contemporary knowledge, would ever keep the religious understanding up-to-date. It would not add excrescences to its body - as various religions had done in the course of centuries in the form of meaningless rites and rituals - and thus deviate from the true course. On the contrary, it would ever remain reasonable and adaptable to the latest development.
In man's knowledge, and impart true meaning to life.

Tolstoy's religion has the tremendous merit of being universal in conception. It transcends the limitations of sects and orders, and sets its foundation on the basic essentials of religion, which in a way are common to all the religions in their true form. It unites mankind in the bond of love and brotherliness, and has for its end the welfare of all.

Tolstoy's explanation of the three relationships of man to the universe, i.e., pagan or personal, family or socio-state, Christian or divine, is true so far as it traces the development of mankind from the personal or sectional level to the level of mankind in general. The common concern of men appears to be the logical development in the evolution of mankind. The League of Nations was an elementary effort towards this end, and when it failed its place was taken up by United Nations' Organisation; and this way the effort goes on for the common welfare of all. In the political ideologies also we note monarchy and capitalism gradually making way for the popular conception of socialism.

Further, Tolstoy so defined religion that in one of the three primary relationships of man to the world...
it must form a part of man's life. Man could not live
without religion. This co-defining of life and religion
inevitably is remarkable in the sense that true reli-
gion, from which man is to take guidance for his practi-
cal conduct in life, imparts purpose and direction to
human activity, corresponding to the welfare of all
in unison. It also imparts morality and nobility to
life in the highest sense.

But, despite all the merits enumerated above, the
question is how far Tolstoy's religion is translatable
in the practical conduct of life? It has to be enquired
whether his religion is a mere theoretical deduction
of the high mental exercise, or it stands the possibility
of human undertaking?

Engaged as people are in fierce struggle for
their existence and better survival, how many of them
would understand and put into practice the conception
of religion that it is a certain relation established
by man between his separate personality and the infinite
universe or its source, in accordance with reason and
contemporary knowledge, and which binds his life to that
infinity and guides his conduct? The foremost objection
to Tolstoy's religion is that it is far-too-much for
the common man to understand it and put into practice.
People would differ in their understanding and interpretation of his religion, and to the vast majority it would simply be incomprehensible.

Moreover, we note that it is the self-interest of men that guides his conduct in life, and not any conscious understanding of man's relation to the infinite universe or its source. However profound Tolstoy's defining of religion may be, we have to be realistic. His conception of religion is so lofty that it could be practised only by the most enlightened of men, and that also in a vague and uncertain manner, but certainly not by the common men. If it cannot be followed by the common men then the very efficacy of his religion is lost, because to be effective it must be followed by men in general.

The chief demerit of Tolstoy's understanding of religion is, what we noted in his understanding of life as well, that it is impracticable. In the letter written by him to Bernard Shaw, quoted earlier, his remarking that "one can easily imagine very large numbers even of little educated or quite uneducated people accepting true religion and following it, whereas to evolve supermen out of people who now exist, or to breed new ones,"
would need exceptional conditions which are as far from being attainable as those required for the correction of mankind by progress and civilization". is as inacceptable as his inacceptance of Shaw's superman theory.

While Shaw's theory may have some plausibility of scientific explanation - though however impracticable it may be, but Tolstoy's true religion is vague, indefinite, and seemingly unrealizable.

(c) Law of Non-resistance

The most criticised aspect of Tolstoy's teaching was his application to life the law of non-resistance to evil by violence. It made people feel his teaching to be devoid of the realities of life. His enthusiastic undertaking of the law led to an understanding that he was only one of those idealistic philosophers and preachers whose intentions might be all-worthy but who lived in their intellectual ivory towers and failed to descend to the stark realities of life.

Tolstoy's application of the law of non-resistance to life has been dealt with by a number of critics, and
any repetition of it here would be an exercise in repetition. Here I would like to confine myself to the application of this law by Mahatma Gandhi to the political affairs in India, which is the most notable example of its application to the practical conduct in life in recent years.

As is well-known, Gandhi had been greatly influenced by the teaching of Tolstoy, especially his work dealing with the law of non-resistance, *The Kingdom of God Upon Earth*, an influence which he admitted in his autobiography. Though one is inclined to believe that he might have framed his political theory and strategy based on non-resistance had there been no Tolstoy, but Tolstoy’s powerful marshalling of the logic in favour of the law went a long way in rooting the truth of the law in his mind.

Gandhi was the most singular adherent of this law who experimented with it in the political affairs in India on so wide a scale. First of all he used the strategy based on non-violence in South Africa against the racially discriminating White regime, later on it was made use of against the English colonial rule in India.

We may examine Gandhi’s application of the law of
non-resistance to the political affairs in India with reference to the following points:

1. Gandhi's political strategy based on non-violence to get rid of the English rule was the outcome of the exigency of the particular situation prevalent in India at that time. The English were too formidable a power militarily. They were also able to employ successfully their 'divide and rule' policy to the natives, so that quite a powerful section of them with vested interests was on the side of the English. When there was no possibility of the opponent being countered by direct violent means, the methods adopted had to be non-violent. The law of non-resistance to evil by violence came to help in that context. The question is, had the English been so ruthless as the Nazis, would this law have been applied? There is very little reason to believe that Gandhi would have used that method against a regime as that of Hitler or even that of General Franco.

2. We have to examine how far the application of this law was instrumental in gaining freedom for India? Did the English grant independence to India due to the course of events directly connected with the
application of this law? The most reasonable answer appears to be that the departure of the English was due to the fact that a time had come for them to leave the country. The English departed not only from India but also from a number of other colonies, like Burma, Ghana, Ceylon, Malaysia, and others, where no law of non-resistance had been used. Even the most inveterate opponent of the English rule in the country knew that had the English desired they could have stayed on in India for a time to come.

The departure of the English may be termed in whatever way one liked; the assumption of power by the sympathetic Labour government in England; the absence of Winston Churchill from power; the devastating blow that Hitler delivered to England in war which made it too shaky to hold India; the popular upsurge of feelings in England and elsewhere that whereas the English fought to preserve their liberty they were suppressing that of others and therefore unjust; the popular demand of the people of India for freedom; and so on.

The achievement of non-violence in India might have been to bring to platform the opinion of Indians in common for freedom, and help them to chalk out a
unified programme of action; but how far the law brought about the successful culmination of political events resulting in independence, is disputable.

3. Moreover, if non-violence was the principle adopted in good faith, what has been its application to post-independence India? Gandhi had remarked time and again that non-violence was the basic principle of life for him, which was not a matter of expediency due to the exigencies of time, and would ever remain with him under all conditions and circumstances. He wrote in an editorial in \textit{The Harijan}, dated October 22, 1936, under the caption 'What are Basic Assumptions':

\footnotesize{...if we achieve freedom with non-violence, we shall defend it also with the same weapon. If we have not achieved that faith, our non-violence is a mere expedient, it is alloy, not pure gold. In the first place we shall never achieve freedom with doubtful non-violence, and in the second, even if we do, we shall find ourselves wholly unprepared to defend the country against an aggressor. If we have doubt about the final efficacy of non-violence, it would be far better for the Congress\textsuperscript{1} to revise its policy and invite the nation to a training in arms.\textsuperscript{2}}

But, in his lifetime when the conflict between India and Pakistan broke out on Kashmir immediately after independence, did he try to resolve it according to the principle of non-violence? The savage war was

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}The Congress party which played a crucial role in the struggle for independence.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2}As quoted in \textit{Kalusas Nag, Tolstoy and Gandhi} (Patna, 1950), pp. xvii-xviii.}
fought resulting in thousands of military and civil casualties on both sides, apart from the other havoc caused by it. The decision to go to war was taken by the most devoted of his lieutenants in the political field. Why did Gandhi not react to it in his non-violent manner?

Though he died early to have any experience of the post-independence India, yet the question is how far the principle of non-violence has been acted upon by India since his death? The answer is, not at all. K.N. Katju, one of the associates of Gandhi and himself a devotee of non-violence, wrote in the Introduction to *Tolstoy and Gandhi*:

...in India where one might have thought and expected that having won our freedom under Gandhiji’s leadership through non-violence and non-cooperation, we would be prepared to defend that freedom through the same potent weapons, we have felt compelled to depart from the teaching of the master and place reliance on the strength of arms....

There have been innumerable firings by the police on civil agitators at various periods of time all over the country. Apart from that, immediately after independence India used force to solve the Hyderabad issue, and later on Goa also. Then, there have been two more conflicts with Pakistan since the first conflict in Kashmir.

There was fight against China also in 1962, apart from

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1As quoted in Kalidas Nag, *Tolstoy and Gandhi*, p. xv.
military operations against Nagas and Mizo in the north­
eastern region. The point to be emphasised here is,
where is the non-resistance to evil by violence left?
Does it mean that the principle of non-violence died
with Gandhi? And Gandhi also faltered when there was
conflict on Kashmir. If the law of non-violence is depen­
dent upon individual personalities, and disappears with
their passing away, then where is the efficacy of the
law?

All this makes us realise that the law of non­
resistance was utilised by Gandhi and his followers
more due to the exigencies of the time, though one
cannot distrust the sincerity and truthfulness of the
Mahatma, because he was always eager to put into practice
what he advocated. The harsh realities of life and time
compel even the most sincere and truthful to compromise
with their ideals at times.

The conclusion is that the application of the law
of non-resistance to life in general has little rele­
vancy. It remains a law engendered in lofty minds, and
the moment it reaches the humdrum of life it becomes a
dead letter.
(d) His Attitude Towards Science

It is commonly supposed that Tolstoy's attitude towards science was inimical. According to Gorky, Tolstoy thought that "science is a gold ingot concocted by a charlatan-alchemist. You want to simplify it, to make it comprehensible to everyone - in other words, to coin any amount of false money. When the people realize the true value of this money they will not thank you for it." 1

But Tolstoy protested against this misrepresentation of him. He is quoted as saying by I.I. Mechnikov, a scientist and friend of Tolstoy, that "I have been wrongly accused of being against science and religion.... Both accusations are unjust. On the contrary, I am a man of deep faith, but I am against the Church and the way it distorts true religion. The same thing is of true science. I have the highest opinion of true science, which is deeply concerned with man's happiness and destiny; but I am an enemy of false science that it imagines it has made a vastly important and useful contribution to knowledge by discovering the weight of the satellites of Saturn and things of a similar

Tolstoy emphasized that science could not investigate each and every matter which came in its way. It was because there were infinite aspects of the matter to be investigated. As it was impossible to approach an object from all sides at once, so it was to study life from all sides at once. He remarked that science should investigate matter in a certain order of priority. A sequence to be established was necessary in which first things came first. And that sequence could be established only through a proper understanding of life.

Moreover, he wrote that it was our conception how we defined life that ought to provide a clue to science to investigate matter, and not for science to dictate the conception of life to us. In a letter to his son, Sergei, he wrote: "The Darwinist theories, the theories of evolution and of the struggle for survival which you are steeped in will never help you find life's meaning and will be no use as a guide to your way of living...."

In a story, *Forty Years*, Tolstoy exemplified this...
point of view very well. There is a man, Trophim, who becomes rich by murdering a merchant. But being a simple, God-fearing man, his conscience tortures him for his foul deed. One night, as used to be practised by the village superstitious people, he visits the grave of the murdered man to find out what could he do to expiate for his sin. There he gets a visionary understanding that he would be punished for his crime after forty years. Trophim lives for forty years waiting apprehensively of the time of reckoning. After the fortieth year he gets the punishment in the form that he decidedly comes to believe in the law of struggle for existence and denial of the law of God. And that is the beginning of the whole evil in his life.

However, to take up critically Tolstoy's attitude towards science, the foremost objection is how to decide what is first in importance? If he says that what is defined by life's conception to be of foremost importance should be the object of science first, we may point out that science investigates facts and what investigation may prove useful at what stage and may fit in at what place, is impossible to be judged. For example, these days an investigation of moon is going on. As yet nobody
knows what would be its chief or ultimate value, but
who knows in what direction its benefit may arise?
To give specific direction to science and confine its
field of investigation within certain limits, would be
to stifle its working. It may find itself unable to work
that way. Science investigates the facts of whatever
comes in its way. That way it goes on explaining the
general phenomena of life. A great many discoveries in
the field of science have taken place accidentally.
Newton's law of gravitation was suggested by the falling
of an apple; so was the use of steam discovered to
Stephenson by a boiling kettle. In theory it may be
all right to decide on a priority according to the
importance of the matter to be investigated, but to
decide first of all the priority according to importance
appears highly problematic. It would be very disputable
to arrive at a consensus of opinion regarding the first
in importance according to the true conception of life.
Divided as the world is on ideals and ideologies, it
looks improbable that men would agree on any such con-
ception. Mankind does not move in a lock-step, there are
varying paths leading to various ends.

We may conclude by saying that G. Tolstoy's inten-
tion may be all-worthy to find a true science, as he endeavoured to find a true religion, but it does not appear feasible.

**Summing Up**

Roman Rolland remarked about Tolstoy that "Never before had such a voice sounded in Europe ... It is little to say that we were thrown into raptures by the creative genius of Tolstoi. It became part of our life, became our very own."¹ In the words of Gorky "no one was more complicated, contradictory, and great in everything - yes, in everything. Great in some curious sense, broad, indefinable by words, there is something in him which made me desire to cry aloud to everyone: 'Look what a wonderful man is living on the earth!'"²

Tolstoy was a very various man. In turn he was a novelist, short-story writer, dramatist, essayist, critic, philosopher, political thinker, educationist, social reformer, farmer, and much more.

A man so various that he seemed to be not one, but all mankind's epitome.

To claim all these achievements for one man is

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¹As quoted on the cover of *Reminiscences of Lev Tolstoi by his Contemporaries.*

to claim a very wide appreciation. The seem range of his thinking was as infinite as his conception of life. He set out to seek the truth which "has never yet revealed itself to any human unadulterated."1 He intended to give the millions the possibility of understanding one end the same truths, that by truths they may build up the life of the soul, for which alone is life worth-living."2

How far was he successful in his endeavour?

We would say that as far as the analysis of life is concerned there would be few who would deny that he analysed it so masterfully as few had done before. The world presented in War and Peace, Anna Karenina, and various of his other imaginative work, is more alive than the actual world. His men and women are as real, or even more real, than they are in real life. His A Confession is a confession of all men. Life and its enigma has never been so thoroughly presented as in there-in. V.I. Lenin, who was primarily a man of action, read and re-read Tolstoy's Confession and is said to have remarked that he had never read a more true account of life.

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1Leonid Leonov, "Thoughts about Tolstoi," Reminiscences of Lev Tolstoi by his Contemporaries, p. 9.
2Ibid., p. 18.
As to the meaning of life which he offered, we may repeat once again that he set out in search of a truth which has not revealed itself so far to any human being unadulterated. It is a matter for every individual who is interested in life and its meaning to scrutinise what Tolstoy offered as his understanding of life, and decide for himself how far the great explorer has been able to discover the truth. The reading of Tolstoy could never be in vain; on the contrary it would always be a very worth-while effort. In the words of Aylmer Maude, he "was not always right, but he was always thoughtful, and stated important matters plainly and impressively.

No writer of comparable power has handled so wide a range of great questions so profoundly, sincerely, and persuasively. To follow his thought, broadens and deepens our comprehension of life, and if at times we are forced to join issue with him and to find reason for this disagreement, the effort is valuable and invigorating."

The effect of Tolstoy's reading is tonic. He does not leave anyone indecisive or depressed. In the most complex of situations, as for example, while dealing with the understanding of life, he searches the way out painstakingly and finally points towards it. He is that arch-lamp on the road to life which lightens the path

*1 Aylmer Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy*, p. xii.
in darkness in the right direction. It beckons the path to those lost on the way, and fills their mind with renewed vigour and hopefulness to reach the destined end. To him the living on earth was not to end ultimately in sorrow and suffering, but to make it worth living for those living now, and for those yet to come.