In the following thesis an attempt has been made to trace the development of Tolstoy's understanding of life and religion. The meaning of life engaged his curiosity since his earliest days, and it remained with him till the very end. After a painful search he was able to find out a certain meaning of life. That meaning of life he understood with the aid of religion. There were two phases of his understanding of life and religion, the early and the later. His early understanding was with the aid of Christ's faith, but later on there was a transformation to a higher and deeper understanding of the whole process concerning life and religion. There were no two clear-cut distinct phases, in fact, the later understanding came to be evolved out of the early understanding; nevertheless, there was a different approach.

Though Tolstoy is a very exhaustively-dealt-with writer, but I think an approach to trace the development of his understanding of life and religion in similarity to one another would further put some light on one of the very essential aspects of this great writer. An attempt has been made to investigate his understanding from all the relevant
angles.

Working through translated works has its limitations. There may be variations in the translations leading to certain misinterpretations. Admitting that handicap, there is the consolation that some good translations of Tolstoy's works are available. Aylmer Maude's translations are one of them. They are very authentic and one can rely upon them with confidence. Maude lived for a fairly long time in Russia, at Moscow where he ran a business, to become adequately acquainted with the spoken and written Russian language. Furthermore, he was intimately known to Tolstoy with whom he had long talks and the facility of verifying many details. He is also one of his most reliable biographers. Therefore, we can fairly depend upon him, as the following investigation has done to a great extent.

It may of course be admitted that working through translated works would always be a second-rate method, but that need not falsify the conclusions of an argument. Apart from the reliability of good translations, in a long argument it is the \textit{consistency} of the whole argument that has to be looked into. In the thesis that consistency has been sought to be retained.
There are also a number of books on Tolstoy written in English by eminent scholars. Their painstaking efforts are added facility to arrive at the truth of the conclusions.

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Narendra Kumar