CHAPTER II

SPIRITUAL-CRISIS (1879)

The last chapters of Anna Karenina make us realize Tolstoy moving towards a dead-end in his life. The pace of life gradually slackened and finally came to a virtual standstill. He lived and lived, fulfilled all the requirements of a routine life, but the urge and a zest to live was gone. His mind was all the time engrossed with that eternal enquiry 'What the devil did it all mean?' He was concerned too often with such primeval questioning as to why was he born? Why others were born? Why did man die? Did all perish with the dying of body? What about soul? Did it exist? If yes, what relation was there between body and the soul? All such questions which constituted the framework of the meaning of life filled his mind. Reference to his search for the explanation of these problems are to be found in many of his writings before 1879, but the publication of A Confession in that year marked the formal beginning of his herculean effort to grapple with them. In a letter Countess Tolstoy wrote to her
sister: "Levochka has now buried himself in his writing. His eyes are fixed in a strange gaze, he scarcely talks, he has quite left this world and is absolutely incapable of thinking about everyday matters." This letter written about this time portrays a bit the state of his mind in which he was trying to search out the meaning of his life.

_A Confession_ is one of the most outstanding record of the analysis of human life. There is the most objective and comprehensive diagnosis of life. It is not simply a confession of Leo Tolstoy but the confession of all men. In the words of Aylmer Maude "it soon merges into a consideration not of his own life alone, but the life of us all...."  

Tolstoy moved systematically, in the manner of a research scholar, to investigate the problem of life. The first task was to collect all the relevant facts concerning life with the aid of which a correct diagnosis of life could be made. That he did during the exploratory period before 1879. That period equipped him with a body of facts which he would now analyze to

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1 As quoted in Alexandra Tolstoy, _Tolstoy_, p. 229.

2 Introduction by Aylmer Maude to _A Confession and What I Believe_, p. viii.
deduce essential conclusions concerning the enquiry.

In *A Confession* he made an analysis of life from all the fundamental aspects, which in a way encompassed the experience of mankind in general. That way his effort epitomised mankind.

What prompted him to undertake the exploration of life and a diagnosis of it thereby was due to the following:

My life came to a standstill. I could breathe, eat, drink, and sleep, and I could not help doing these things; but there was no life, for there were no wishes the fulfilment of which I could consider reasonable. If I desired anything, I knew in advance that whether I satisfied my desire or not, nothing would come of it. Had a fairy come and offered to fulfil my desires I should not have known what to ask. If in moments of intoxication I felt something which, though not a wish, was a habit left by former wishes, in sober moments I knew this to be a delusion and that there was really nothing to wish for. I could not even wish to know the truth, for I guessed of what it consisted. The truth was that life is meaningless. I had as it were used, lived, and walked, walked, till I had come to a precipice and saw clearly that there was nothing ahead of me but destruction. It was impossible to stop, impossible to go back, and impossible to close my eyes or avoid seeing that there was nothing ahead but suffering and real death - complete annihilation.¹

He, a healthy and fortunate man, felt that he could no longer live. Some irresistible power impelled him to rid himself of life one way or the other. The thought of self-destruction came to him as naturally

as thought* of how to live and improve his life had come formerly. And it was so seductive that he had to be cunning with himself lest he might carry it out too hastily. He did not wish to hurry because he wanted to use all the efforts to disentangle the matter. He was in a state that he himself did not know what he wanted; he feared life, desired to escape from it, yet still hoped something of it.

And all that befell him at a time when he was having the best of time, a complete good fortune. He was not fifty yet; he had a good wife who loved him and whom he loved, a number of good children, and a large estate with good income which without much effort on his part improved and increased. He was respected by his relations and acquaintances more than at any previous time. He was praised by others and without much self-deception could consider that his name was famous. He enjoyed a vigorous health in body and mind; physically he could keep up with the peasants at mowing and mentally could work for eight and ten hours at a stretch without experiencing any ill results from such exertion.

He felt his life to be a stupid and spiteful joke someone had played upon him. He could give no
reasonable meaning to any of his act or the whole life. He even felt surprised that he could have avoided understanding this from the very beginning which was known to all for so long. Any day he might fall sick and die and nothing would remain but stench and worms. Then the question was why to make any effort? When a person understood it all then how could he go on dragging his meaningless existence? One could live while intoxicated with life, but a sober thinking made him realize that it was all a fraud. No matter how often he was told that if he could not understand life he ought not to think of that but go on living, he could not do so because the significance of death drawing near was only too clear to him.

Tolstoy was inconsolable. His love of family, art, all appeared aimless pursuit. His reasoned that his family - wife and children - were also human, placed just as he; they must either live in a lie or see the terrible truth. He loved them and looked after their welfare, but finally they would come to the same despair as befell him. Loving them he could not hide the truth from them, each step in knowledge led them to truth, the truth that was death.
For art, he had long assured himself under the influence of success and praise of men that this was a thing one could do though death was drawing near — death which destroyed all, including his work and its remembrance. But soon he understood that it too was a fraud. It was plain to him that art was an adornment of life, an allurement to life. But since life had lost its attraction to him he could not attract others by art. So long as he believed that life had a meaning the reflection of life in art afforded him pleasure, it was pleasant to look at life in the mirror of art; but when he began to seek the meaning of life and felt the necessity of living his own life that mirror became for him unnecessary, superfluous, ridiculous, and painful. It was all very well to enjoy the sight when in the depth of his mind he had a belief that his life had a meaning; then the play of lights — comic, tragic, beautiful, terrible — amused him.

Nor was that all. Had he simply understood that life had no meaning he could have borne it quietly knowing that to be his lot; but he was not satisfied with that. He was like a man lost in a wood who, horrified at having lost his way, rushed about to find the
road. He knew that each step he took confused him more and more, but still he could not help rushing about.

He wrote:

It was indeed terrible. And to rid myself of the terror I wished to kill myself. I experienced terror at what awaited me - knew that that terror was even worse than the position I was in, but still I could not patiently await the end. However convincing the argument might be that in any case some vessel in my heart would give way, or something would burst and all would be over, I could not patiently await that end. The horror of darkness was too great, and I wished to free myself from it as quickly as possible by noose or bullet. That was the feeling which drew me most strongly towards suicide.

That was the state of utter despair and on the verge of self-destruction that he had reached; but, in the heart of his heart he felt that he might have erred somewhere. After all men had lived since times immemorial and the state to which he had come to be could not be natural to mankind. And he sought for an explanation of those problems in all the branches of knowledge acquired by men. He sought painfully and persistently day and night, not from idle curiosity or listlessly, but as a perishing man who made vigorous efforts to save himself. But he found nothing.

He sought in all the sciences, and due to a life

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spent in learning and also to his relations with the scholarly world, he had access to scientists and scholars in all branches of knowledge, and they readily acquainted him with their knowledge in books as well as in conversation. He had at his disposal all that science had to say on the question of life. But far from finding what he wanted he became all the more convinced of its ineffectiveness to explain the meaning of life.

He found that in relation to the question of life all human knowledge was divided into two series of sciences. The one series seemed not to recognize the question but replied clearly and exactly to its own independent questions: they were the experimental sciences, at the extreme end of which stood mathematics. The other series recognized the question but did not answer it: they were the abstract sciences, at the extreme end of which stood metaphysics.

The experimental sciences were exact and clear in inverse proportion to their applicability to the question of life: the less their applicability to the question of life the more exact and clear they were; while the more they tried to reply to the question of life the
more obscure and unattractive they became. If one turned
to the division of sciences which attempted to reply
to the question of life - to physiology, psychology,
biology, sociology - one encountered an appalling poverty
of thought, the greatest obscurity, a quite unjusti-
fiable pretension to solve irrelevant questions, and
a continual contradiction of each authority by others
and even by himself. If one turned to the branches of
science which were not concerned with the solutions
of the questions of life but which replied to their own
special scientific questions then one was enraptured
by the power of men's mind. They had clear, exact, and
unquestionable replies to the laws of light, of chemical
combinations, the laws of development of organisms,
the laws of bodies and their form, the relation of
numbers and quantities, the laws of mind, and so on.
In general, the experimental sciences replied to the
question of life thus: in infinite space and time infi-
nitely small particles changed their forms in infinite
complexity, and when one understood the laws of those
mutations of form then he would understand why he lived
on the earth. But there could be no law of endless
development. To say that in infinite space and time
everything developed, became more perfect and complex, was to say nothing at all. They were all words with no meaning, for in the infinite there was neither complex nor simple, neither forward nor backward, and neither better nor worse.

For the abstract sciences he reasoned thus: all humanity lived and developed on the basis of spiritual principles and ideals which guided it. Those ideals were expressed in religions, sciences, arts, forms of government. They became more and more elevated and humanity advanced to its highest welfare. A man being a part of humanity was to forward the recognition and realization of the ideals of humanity. But as soon as the question of life presented itself clearly to him those theories immediately crumbled away. Apart from the obscurity with which those sciences announced conclusions formed on the study of a small part of mankind as general conclusions, and of the mutual contradictions of different adherents of this view as to what were the ideals of humanity, the strangeness of the theory consisted in that to understand what man and his life was he must first understand the life of the whole, the entire humanity.
As in the sphere of man's experimental knowledge one could not be satisfied with the reply that to understand life he ought to study in endless space the mutations, infinite in time and complexity, of innumerable atoms; so also a man could not be satisfied with the reply that to understand life he ought to study the whole life of humanity, of which one could know neither the beginning nor the end, and of which one did not know even a small part. The problem of experimental science was the sequence of cause and effect in material phenomena, and the moment the question of a final cause was introduced it became irrelevant. The problem of abstract science was the recognition of the primordial essence of life, but the moment the investigation of consequential phenomena, such as social and historical, was introduced it also became irrelevant. If in itself neither of the two series of sciences explained life appropriately there could not be a compromise either between the two. Such a compromise had supplied the whole ballast of the semi-sciences called juridical, political, and historical. In those semi-sciences the conception of development and progress was again wrongly introduced, only with the difference that there
it was the development of everything while here it was the development of the life of mankind. The error was there as before: development and progress in infinity could have no aim or direction. And to the question of life again there was no real answer.

In the realm of philosophy even the highest minds seemed to confirm a lurking belief in his mind that life was meaningless, senseless, and stupid:

"The life of the body is an evil and a lie. Therefore the destruction of the life of the body is a blessing, and we should desire it", says Socrates.

"Life is that which should not be - an evil; and the passage into Nothingness is the only good in life", says Schopenhauer.

"All that is in the world - folly and wisdom and riches and poverty and mirth and grief - is vanity and emptiness. Man dies and nothing is left of him. And that is stupid", says Solomon.

"To live in the consciousness of the inevitability of suffering, of becoming enfeebled, of old age and of death, is impossible - we must free ourselves from life, from all possible life", says Buddha.1

The conclusion appeared to be: it was all vanity. Happy was he who had not been born. Death was better than life, and one must free himself from life.

When Tolstoy failed to find an explanation in science he turned his attention to life in general. He hoped to find it among the people around him. He

began to observe how the people lived, and what was their attitude to the question. Firstly he turned to the people of his class. He found that for the people of his circle there were four ways out of the enigma of life.

The first was that of ignorance. It consisted in not knowing that life was an evil and an absurdity. People of this sort - chiefly women, very young or dull people - did not understand that question of life which presented itself to Solomon, Socrates, Buddha, and Schopenhauer.

The second way out was Epicureanism. It consisted, while knowing the hopelessness of a life, in making use meanwhile of the advantages one had. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow everything was to end in nothingness with the dying of body. That was the way in which the majority of the people of his circle lived. Their circumstances furnished them with more of welfare than hardship, and their moral dullness made it possible for them to forget that the advantages of their position were accidental. The dullness of these people's imagination enabled them to forget what gave Buddha no peace - the inevitability of sickness, old age, and death,
which today or tomorrow would end all those pleasures.

The third escape was that of strength and energy. It consisted in destroying life when one understood that it was an evil and an absurdity. Some exceptionally strong people acted so. When they understood the stupidity of the joke that had been played upon them they decided best of all not to exist.

The fourth way out was that of weakness. It consisted in seeing the truth and yet clinging to life, knowing in advance that nothing would come of it. People of this kind knew that death was better than life, but not having the strength to act rationally and put an end to deception by killing themselves they seemed to wait for something. This was the escape of weakness because if one knew what was best then why did he not yield to that? Tolstoy found himself in that category.

Though his reasoning led him towards suicide, as did the thoughts of some of the most powerful thinkers, yet he did not kill himself. There was a reason for that. It was like this:

I, my reason, have acknowledged that life is senseless. If there is nothing higher than reason (and there is not: nothing can prove that there is), then reason is the creator of life for me. If reason did not exist there would be for me no life. How can reason
deny life when it is the creator of life? Or to put it the other way: were there no life, my reason would not exist; therefore reason is life's son. Life is all. Reason is its fruit yet reason rejects life itself! I felt that there was something wrong here.

Life is a senseless evil, that is certain, said I to myself. Yet I have lived and am still living, and all mankind lived and lives. How is that? Why does it live, when it is possible not to live? Is it that only I and Schopenhauer are wise enough to understand the senselessness and evil of life?

It struck him that there was something which he did not yet know. Ignorance often led to wrong conclusion. There was the whole humanity living as if it understood the meaning of its life, for without understanding it could not live. He then realized that the life of his class of people, the rich class, was not the life of whole mankind; rather it was the life of a limited number of people who constituted a minority in relation to the enormous mass of humanity. It was not the real life. It were those millions of humble folks who in fact constituted the real humanity. Therefore he turned his attention to them.

He considered the life of those simple, poor, and illiterate people, and he saw something quite different. He saw that though their life consisted more of privation and suffering than enjoyment they did not

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drag on a meaningless existence irrationally. They explained every act of their life as well as death itself. To kill themselves they considered the greatest evil. It appeared that all mankind had a knowledge of the meaning of life. It appeared that reasonable knowledge did not explain the meaning of life but denied life itself; while the meaning attributed to life by milliards of people rested on some despised pseudo-knowledge.

But soon the explanation of life provided by the humble folks disillusioned him. Whereas the rational knowledge of the learned and wise denied the meaning of life, the enormous mass of mankind who constituted real humanity received that meaning in irrational knowledge. And that irrational knowledge was faith, which he could not accept. It was God, One in Three; the creation in six days; the devils and angels, and all the rest which he could not accept as long as he retained his reason.

He was in a miserable state. He knew that he could find nothing along the path of reasonable knowledge except a denial of life; and in faith was the denial of reason, which was yet more impossible for him than a
denial of life. From rational knowledge it appeared that life was an evil and an absurdity, but by faith it appeared that to understand the meaning of life he must renounce his reason, the very thing for which a meaning was required.

But, to Tolstoy there appeared one merit in the faith of common men that they introduced in every answer a relation between the finite and the infinite, without which there could be no solution. Whatever the faith might be, and whatever answers it might give, it gave in every answer the finite existence of man an infinite meaning, a meaning not destroyed by suffering or death. This made it possible that in faith there could be an explanation of life.

What was this faith then?

...I understood that faith is not merely 'the evidence of things not seen'... and is not a revelation (that defines only one of the indications of faith), is not the relation of man to God (one has first to define faith and then God, and not define faith through God); it is not only agreement with what has been told one (as faith is most usually supposed to be), but faith is a knowledge of the meaning of human life in consequence of which man does not destroy himself but lives. Faith is the strength of life. If a man lives he believes in something. If he did not believe that one must live for something, he would not live. If he does not see and recognise the illusory nature of the finite, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith he cannot live.1

He then understood that, firstly, his position along with Solomon and Schopenhauer was stupid, notwithstanding their learning and wisdom. They saw that life was an evil and yet continued to live. If life was senseless and they believed firmly in what was rational, they ought to have put an end to it. Secondly, however well they reasoned they could not obtain a reply to the question, it was always negative. That was probably due to their path being erroneous. Thirdly, he realized that in the replies given by faith was stored up the deepest human wisdom. He ought not to deny that on the basis of not being adequately rational. Moreover, those were the only answers which replied to life's question.

All that led him to a possible belief in faith provided it did not demand of him a direct denial of reason, because that would be falsehood. He studied Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. First of all he turned to the Orthodox of his circle, men who were learned: Church theologians, monks, theologians of the newest shade, and even to Evangelicals who professed salvation by belief in the Redemption. He questioned them eagerly on their beliefs and their understanding of the meaning of life.
Though he made all possible concessions and avoided disputes he could not accept the faith of these people. He saw that what they gave out as their faith did not explain the meaning of life but obscured it, and that they affirmed their belief not to answer the question of life but for some other aim. The more fully they explained their doctrine to him the more clearly he perceived their error and realized that he could not find the explanation of life there. It was not that in their doctrines they mixed up many unnecessary and unreasonable things with the Christian truths, but what repelled him was that their lives did not correspond to the principles they expounded in their teaching. He clearly felt that they found a meaning of life to live while life lasted and to seize what happiness they could, as he and others of his class had done. He saw that because if they had a meaning which destroyed the fear of loss, suffering, and death, they would not have feared them. But they, living in sufficiency and superfluity, tried to preserve or increase them, feared privation, suffering, and death. They lived to satisfy their desires, and in the outcome were as worse as the unbelievers. Their faith was not a real faith but an
epicurean consolation in life.

He came to realize that this faith could not serve the great majority of mankind who were there not to amuse themselves with the labour of others but to create life. Those millions of people who lived and attributed a meaning to life, must have a different and real knowledge of faith. It was not the fact that he and other intellectuals like him did not kill themselves that convinced him of the existence of faith, but the fact that those milliards had lived and continued to live.

And he began to draw near to the believers among the poor, simple, unlettered folk: pilgrims, monks, sectarians, and peasants. The faith of these common people was also the same Christian faith as was profess-ed by the pseudo-believers of his circle. There also he found a great deal of superstition mixed up with the Christian truths, but the difference was that whereas the superstitions of the believers of his circle were quite unnecessary to them and were not in conformity with their lives, the superstitions of the believers among the labouring masses were a necessary condition of their life and conformed to their lives. The whole life of the un believers of his circle was a contradic-
tion of their faith, but the whole life of the working-folk believers was a confirmation of the meaning of life which their faith gave them. The more he looked into the life and faith of these people the more he became convinced that they had a real faith which alone gave their life a meaning and made possible for them to live. He noted that, unlike among his people, there was hardly an unbeliever among them. The whole life of these people was passed in heavy labour, yet they were content with their lives. They did not complain of illness or suffering but rather accepted them without perplexity and opposition with a conviction that all was good. Death and suffering was faced by them with tranquility.

I looked more widely around me. I considered the life of the enormous mass of the people in the past and the present. And of such people, understanding the meaning of life and able to live and to die, I saw not two or three, or tens, but hundreds, thousands, and millions. And they all - endlessly different in their manners, minds, education, and position, as they were - all alike, in complete contrast to my ignorance, knew the meaning of life and death, laboured quietly, endured deprivations and sufferings, and lived and died seeing therein not vanity but good.1

He got to love these people. The life of the rich and the learned not only became distasteful to

him but lost all meaning in his eyes. All their actions, discussions, science, and art, appeared to him mere self-indulgence with no possibility of finding a meaning of life. The life of the labouring people, on the contrary, appeared to him true, and the meaning given to it in consonant with that.

The meaning which they provided to life was that: every man had come to the world by the will of God. And God had so made man that everyone could destroy or save his soul. The aim of man in life was to save his soul, and to save it he must live 'Godly', for which he must renounce all the pleasures of life, labour, humble himself, suffer, and be merciful. The people obtained that meaning from the whole teaching of faith transmitted to them by their pastors and by the traditions that lived among the people. So far the meaning was clear to him and dear to his heart. But together with that much was inseparably bound up that was inexplicable to him: sacraments, Church services, fasts, and the adoration of relics and icons. Despite all that being disliked by him he accepted everything, and attended the services, knelt morning and evening in prayer, fasted, and prepared to receive the Eucharist. For
the time his reason did not resist anything, he accepted all that what formerly appeared to him impossible. He reasoned that the knowledge of faith flowed, like all humanity with its reason, from a mysterious source. That source was God, wherefrom originated both the human body and reason. As his body had descended to him from God, so also his reason and the understanding of life, and consequently the various stages of the development of that understanding of life could not be false. All that people sincerely believed in must be true. It might be differently expressed but it could not be false, and if it appeared to him so it only meant that he had not understood it.

Yet, whatever the arguments, Tolstoy could not accept it. "With all my soul I wished to be in a position to mingle with the people, fulfilling the ritual side of their religion; but I could not do it. I felt that I should lie to myself and mock at what was sacred to me, were I to do so."¹

At that point, however, the new Russian theological writers came to his help. According to their explanation the fundamental dogma of their faith was the

infallibility of the Church. From the admission of that dogma followed inevitably the truth of all that was professed by the Church. Therefore, the Church as an assembly of true believers united by love and possessed of true knowledge became the basis of his belief. He thought that the divine truth could not be accessible to a separate individual, it was revealed only to the whole assembly of people united by love. To attain the truth one ought not to separate from the whole, and in order not to separate one must love and endure even that with which he might not agree.

But, soon he lost faith in the Church. He wrote:

It was then so necessary for me to believe in order to live that I unconsciously concealed from myself the contradictions and obscurities of theology. But this reading of meanings into the rites had its limits. If the chief words in the prayer for the Emperor became more and more clear to me, if I found some explanation for the words 'and remembering our Sovereign Most-Holy Mother of God and all the Saints, ourselves and one another, we give our whole life to Christ our God', if I explained to myself the frequent repetition of prayers for the Tsar and his relations by the fact that they are more exposed to temptations than other people and therefore are more in need of being prayed for - the prayers about subduing our enemies and evil under our feet (even if one tried to say that sin was the enemy prayed against), these and other prayers, such as the 'cherubic song' and the whole sacrament of the oblation, or 'the chosen warriors', &c. - quite two-thirds of all the services - either remained completely incomprehensible or, when I forced an explanation into
them, made me feel that I was lying, thereby quite destroying my relation to God and depriving me of all possibility of belief.1

He was now convinced that all was not true in the religion he had joined, though it was not all false either. The whole of the people possessed a knowledge of the truth, otherwise they could not have lived. But he did not doubt that there was falsehood also in it. Though he found that among the peasants there was a similar admixture of the lies than among the representatives of the Church, he still saw that in their belief also falsehood was mingled with the truth.

Further, he understood that both the falsehood and the truth were contained in the so-called holy tradition, and the scriptures. Both had been handed down by the Church.

He once again turned to the examination of that same theology which he had rejected with contempt as being unnecessary. On that teaching rested the religious doctrine, and the only knowledge of the meaning of life that he had been able to find was inseparably connected with that. There appeared to be the only hope of salvation for him. The next task for him was to find

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what was true and what false and to disentangle the one from the other.

We note that in *A Confession* Tolstoy analyzed life not only in its fundamentals but made valuable deductions as well concerning the meaning of life, and thereby religion also. His first deduction was that the meaning of life could only be found by way of faith. As he wrote: "Whatever the faith may be, and whatever answers it may give, and to whomsoever it gives them, every such answer gives to the finite existence of man an infinite meaning, a meaning not destroyed by sufferings, deprivations, or death. This means that only in faith can we find for life a meaning and a possibility."¹

On the contrary, the materialistic approach to life revealed nothing to him. "All our actions, discussions, science and art, presented itself to me in a new light. I understood that it is all merely self-indulgence, and that to find a meaning in it is impossible...."²

Since early days he was inclined to feel that the possibility of the explanation of life lay in religion. That inclination went on being gradually confirmed

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²Ibid., p. 58.
and later on he made the exposition of the true meaning of life dependent entirely on the enunciation of true religion. He defined the fundamentals of religion so that it inevitably formed a part of man's life and thereby unfolded the meaning of life.

Secondly, he understood that truth could only be found in religion as enunciated by Church. "Both the falsehood and the truth were contained in the so-called holy tradition and in the scriptures. Both the falsehood and the truth had been handed down by what is called the Church."

Later on he would come to the conclusion that Church had lost all its relevancy to fulfil its task in the present time, and the whole truth lay in the scriptures - to be more exact, in the Gospels. He would admit the crucial role Church had played in nursing and propagating the faith of Christ, but would say that at its present stage of development that aid was not required. He was of the opinion that Church had become not only unnecessary but harmful as well to the teaching of Christ because it had deviated from the true aim and aspirations of Christianity. In place of Church

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he clamoured for the very source of truth to be tapped—that were the Gospels. He would formulate his early understanding of life and religion that way.

The third deduction that he derived from the analysis was that any solution to the meaning of life could be found only by creating a relationship between the finite and infinite life. The faith of the poor indicated to him that they created such a relationship and that way they gave a meaning to their lives. As he wrote: "however irrational and distorted might be the replies given by faith, they have this advantage, that they introduce into every answer a relation between the finite and the infinite, without which there can be no solution."

We shall examine later on that the creation of a relation between the finite and the infinite life would form the basic framework along which he would build his whole argument on life, firstly in its immature shape in the early phase, then in the final shape in the later phase. It was on the basis of this relationship that he argued for the basic attribute of life to consist in making it better in the succeeding periods.

of time. Again, it was the linking of the finite with
the infinite that made him disregard the meaninglessness
created by death. A life in infinite also created his
belief in the immortality of soul, and even in God.

From the diagnosis of life the next step for
him was to find the solution to the meaning of life
in the faith of Christ as upheld by Church. "That there
is truth in the teaching is to me indubitable, but it
is also certain that there is falsehood in it, and I
must find what is true and what is false, and must
disentangle the one from the other. I am setting to
work upon that."1

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1Tolstoy, "A Confession," A Confession and What I
Believe, p. 81.