Count Leo Tolstoy and the Study of Religion.

In the Christian Commonwealth for June 29 there is published the translation of a long letter which Tolstoy has sent to the editor of the Russian review entitled Life for All. He says that for some time he has been impressed with the necessity of encouraging men to make a thorough study of religion throughout the world, and he has himself determined to edit a series of books or pamphlets each dealing with some religion or aspect of religion.

'I consider,' he says, 'a knowledge of the elements of the religions of the world by which the whole of humanity has lived and lives to be one of the most important and necessary branches of knowledge for every man, and ignorance in this respect one of the principal reasons of the weakening of religious consciousness among the people of our times, among the majority of people, the so-called lower classes, as among the so-called intellectuals. The weakening of religious consciousness among people of the working classes is caused, in my opinion, pre-eminently because those people are educated in complete ignorance of the beliefs of other nations, and in the assurance of the exclusive truth of their own religion. Educated in that manner, people of the working classes at the present stage of their intellectual development naturally meet, in the religious assertions taught to them as certain truth, some which they are already unable to believe. And at the same time all the maxims of the faith taught to them are so indissolubly bound up with the acknowledgment of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures and the infallibility of the Church that, not having the strength to separate the more essential truth from the less essential, people cease to believe the whole teaching of the Church.'

Also.

Dr. A. C. Dixon of Chicago has sent to The Sword and the Trowel for July a study of some of the occurrences in the Bible of the word 'also.' He takes these passages.

Mt 10, 'Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.' He calls this the also of shame. That 'also' has added to the name of Judas the epithet with which it will ever be associated—'Judas the traitor.'

Ro 5, 'We glory in tribulations also'; or, as in R.V., 'Let us also rejoice in our tribulations'—the 'also' of tribulation. The Apostle says that we rejoice in hope of the glory of God—our faces are toward the sunrise. But we look around us also, not regarding the sorrows of life as out of harmony with its joys and hopes. These two aspects of life should not fight a duel, but play a duet.

2 Ti 1, 'The unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy
mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.' This is the 'also' of expectation. What Paul saw in Lois and Eunice he expected of Timothy; and so persuaded was he that the same faith would be found in him, that he calls it the unfeigned faith that is in thee.

Lk 16:9, 'She had a sister called Mary, which also sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word—one of the 'also' of devotion. This 'also' is Mary's vindication. She attended to her household duties; she also sat at Jesus' feet. Once a day at a certain hour a white handkerchief fluttered from the tent door of General Gordon. It was the hour of prayer within the tent. Gordon did his duty as a soldier; he also sat at Jesus' feet.

Mk 14:9, 'Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also.' This is the 'also' of the evangelist, the 'also' of the missionary. We are to tell those at home the good news; we are also to tell those abroad. Beginning from Jerusalem, that men who know us may take knowledge of us, let us go into other towns also, and on into all the world.

Jn 14:9, 'That where I am, there ye may be also.' It is the 'also' of final fellowship; it is the hook of steel which binds us to one who is more than a friend, to a Brother. Let us treat Him here, says Dr. Dixon, as we expect Him to treat us there.

Pink and Blue.

When she went to the party, Elizabeth Lou had her hair tied on top with a ribbon of blue.

But she hadn't a very good time, and I think 'twas because of a girl with a ribbon of pink. 'For all the girls chose her, the whole evening through, Just because she wore pink!' sobbed Elizabeth Lou.

At the very next party, Elizabeth Lou wore a ribbon herself of a roseate hue. But would you believe it? That same girl was there.

With a bowknot of blue tying up her brown hair, And the very same thing proved again to be true: 'They still like her best!' wept Elizabeth Lou.

Now between you and me, it had nothing to do With those crisp little loopings of pink and blue.

But one little girl wore a smile on her face, The other a frown in the very same place. A smile and a frown! Now which of the two Do you fancy was worn by Elizabeth Lou?

PAULINE FRANCES CAMP.

The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustration this month has been found by the Rev. James Mursell, City Tabernacle Baptist Church, Brisbane, to whom a copy of Walker's Gospel of Reconciliation will be sent.

Illustrations for the Great Text for September must be received by the 1st of August. The text is Ps 13.

The Great Text for October is Ps 4:

'Many there be that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

A copy of Clarke's Outline of Christian Theology, or Clarke's Sixty Years with the Bible, or Inge's Faith and Knowledge, will be given for the best illustration.

The Great Text for November is Ps 84:

'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?'

A copy of Leckie's Authority in Religion, or Barry's Ideals and Principles of Church Reform, along with Anderson's St. Matthew's Gospel, will be given for the best illustration.

The Great Text for December is Ps 9:

'The Lord also will be a high tower for the oppressed, A high tower in times of trouble; And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.'

A copy of Durell's Self-Revelation of our Lord, or two volumes of Plummer's English Church History, will be given for the best illustration.

The Great Text for January is Ps 11:

'If the foundations be destroyed, What can the righteous do?'

A copy of Forrest's Authority of Christ, or any volume of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series, will be given for the best illustration.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful.

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