

The Goforth Fund.

For some months the further maintenance of the Goforth Fund has been under consideration by the Alumni of Knox College. The annual revenue from the contributions of Alumni has been gradually decreasing, partly because those who have graduated recently have not become contributors, partly because some of the first contributors have felt it necessary to reduce their contributions on account of the claims of the congregations to whom they minister, and partly because of lack of interest. A circular letter was sent out in February, asking for an expression of opinion as to the advisability of keeping up the fund. The answers received were about equally divided between those who thought it better to drop the Fund, and those who wished it continued. To test the matter a resolution was submitted to the effect that the Fund be continued, suggesting at the same time certain changes in administration. This resolution was all but unanimously adopted, only one voting against it. The changes proposed are that in future contributions shall be sent in, with other mission contributions, through the mission Treasurer of the congregation, this contribution being specially designated; also, that Rev. Dr. Warden, the Agent and Treasurer of the Church, shall be Treasurer for the Fund. These meet many of the objections urged. The amount contributed to the Goforth Fund will now be duly credited to the congregation, as a special contribution, and will be sent in with the other funds, and acknowledged with the other contributions to the schemes of the Church. There should now be no difficulty in reaching the desired amount.

"Christian Science" and Controversy.

"Christian Scientists" decline to enter into controversy, and in that they are wise. Religious debates often tend to degenerate into petty, quibbling or small personalities; and again it is easier to issue manifestoes than it is to conduct controversy in a right spirit. The founder of "Christian Science" concludes his latest in these words: "I shall decline entering into newspaper controversy." But there is after all another view of the case, and that is that "Christian Science" is carrying on a newspaper controversy all the time; it may be called missionary work, but it is controversial all the same. When a system becomes organized and has its regular journals, and scatters "free supplements where we feel that good will result," what is that but controversy? When those who have settled principles, and see in the thing only a fad are spoken of as "those of narrow intelligence, full of prejudice and a little pent up religious bigotry, who are slower to conceive and whose capacity to comprehend

the truth when they see it, is like looking through a glass darkly," the controversy can scarcely be called gentle. One would think that the "Scientists" would be eager for argument, because they themselves say that "another beauty of Christian Science is its simplicity. While exceedingly idealistic and sublimely transcendental, it is as logical and practical, as capable of demonstration, as a mathematical problem." But as a matter of fact it is assertion, not demonstration, which is offered to those who seek truth in this quarter; and the central assertion is always the same, but by way of variety it is sometimes put in rhyme, thus:

"Lo! the ages quicken onward. Christ comes again to reign.
Lo! the birthday of our mother brings the Truth to earth again.
Lo! the Star of Bethlehem riseth, Science, Health has come to stay,
Mary Baker Eddy bringeth forth the Christ-Love of to-day.
Oh! Shout the world in glory! ye rocks, ye hills rejoice,
Ye mountains and ye valleys join in the glad-some voice.
The Star of Bethlehem reigneth, Christ heals now as of old;
Our Mother Shepherd bringeth the sheep back to the fold.

When "the dear mother" has been enshrined in rhyme of this high quality this will doubtless ensure to her a kind of immortality! However we have constantly the same claim put in plain prose; in an Easter editorial we find this lady placed on an equality with Jesus. He, it seems, discerned "Christian Science," and she "re-discovered it." Then unaided (as Jesus was in the garden), she, as He did, turned to the Father for wisdom, for understanding, and with a voice that shall never die said, "Oh the depths of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, etc." We do not wonder that this kind of rant provokes men of science to use strong language, but it is better to keep calm in the face of superstitious folly.

We can imagine some of our innocent readers saying this is merely the foolish enthusiasm of weak admirers. Surely the good woman herself would not encourage them to make such a claim? Well, let us see. In her manifesto referred to above we find these swelling words: "I submit that Christian Science has been widely made known to the world, and that it contains the entire truth of the Scriptures, as also whatever portions of truth may be found in creeds. In addition to this, Christian Science presents the Divine Principle and rules of the Bible hitherto undiscovered in its translations and lacking in the creeds." Surely that is plain enough, and the claim it contains is big enough to satisfy the most exacting demand for a new religious sensation. The pretentious nature of this claim will lead some to turn aside in disgust, but some will ask, is there any evidence presented? Yes; here it is from the same letter: "In evidence thereof I query, do Christians who believe in sin, and especially those who claim to par-

don sin, believe that God is good and that God is all." We answer, we have nothing to do with those who claim to pardon sin, we leave that bit to the "kind priest" who provoked the manifesto; as for ourselves, we believe that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sin, and that His method is not that of Mrs. Eddy. We believe, further, that God is supreme, and we believe this in spite of "the problem of evil," of which the "Scientists" make such short and easy work. Again, "Does he who believes in sickness know or declare that there is no sickness or disease, and thus heal it?" No; because he would thus contradict himself, as "Christian Scientists" are able to do without compunction. We do not profess to believe two opposite things at the same time, although we may have to believe things that we cannot exhaustively explain or completely harmonise. It has been well said that such a system asks men to deny their senses. We go further and say that it asks them to stultify their reason; in the name of "Science" to give up real Science; and in the name of "Christian" to be false to the fundamental principles of Christian truth. This is not controversy; or, if it is, it is the kind in which the followers of this false light indulge, only somewhat gentler in its tone.

In the current number of the International Journal of Ethics the Rev. T. J. Fraser, M.A., of St. Stephen's Church, New Brunswick, discusses in a clear, calm manner, "The Ethics of Prohibition." He tells us: "It has been facetiously said that the temperance question is being given over for its solution to 'ministers, women and cranks.' While I am proud to belong to this noble army of reformers, I must confess that there is too much truth in the saying, and that we do often seek a settlement of this question on a very narrow basis." He concludes that a priori prohibitionists and a priori anti-prohibitionists are both wrong, and he seems logically to cut the ground from under their feet. To the first he says the national basis of legislation is not absolute moral law, but the social weal, and to the second, the State has a right to protect the life of society, if that life is in danger. A great emergency might even justify total prohibition. The form of the question then ought to be, "Will prohibitory legislation if enacted do harm or good? Will it educate the nation into a healthy temperate sentiment, or will it be so openly, flagrantly violated as to lower the tone of public morality and lessen respect for law and order? Will it promote self-control or breed hypocrisy? Will it bring a national blessing or a national calamity, etc." The question, as thus stated, the essayist does not attempt to answer. A right statement of a question is, however, something gained.