

free, free from error, free from terror. Ever should we pastors in preparing sermons bear in mind the truth which our Confessions express in the words: "If there is to be a Christian church and a Christian faith, they must preach and teach a doctrine which places the soul, not upon error or sand, but on a foundation on which it may firmly rely and trust." (*Apology. De Justificatione, No. 119.*)

VIRGINIUS.

MISCELLANY.

Facts about Divorce. *The Christian Statesman*, organ of the National Reform Association, has gathered some facts which go to show that divorces are proportionally more numerous in the United States than in any other country furnishing statistics, and that there have been years when more divorces were granted in the United States than in all other civilized countries together. From 1870 to 1890 the ratio of divorce to marriage nearly doubled. It was 3.5 per cent. in 1870, it had become 6.2 in 1890. Statistics of our great cities will be found of special interest. Those in New York State stand best, the metropolis slightly better than Buffalo. Together these show 40 marriages to one divorce. Then follows Baltimore with 28 marriages to a divorce and Philadelphia with 20. Then the ratio of divorce gradually rises. Washington and Pittsburg with 18.9 and 18.5 rank above Boston and New Orleans, with 14.1 and 13.9, in spite of the exceptional strength in both of the Roman Church. Then by successive steps of social decline we pass from Denver to Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Providence, Indianapolis, San Francisco, and close the list with Kansas City, where there was a divorce for every four marriages in 1901—ten times as many as in New York City. The discrepancies between these great cities in this matter can hardly be attributed to race, to climate, or to confession of faith. Some of the cities, New York and Buffalo, for instance, no doubt owe their

good record to wholesome law and its careful administration. Conspicuous laxity in both regards will account for the figures in San Francisco and Kansas City, but hardly explains why Providence should have proportionally nearly three times the divorces of Boston, or seven times those of New York. To improve these conditions the Inter-Church Union was organized a few months ago in New York City. Its ultra-scriptural ideal is: Prohibition of divorce in the Protestant Church.

F. B.

Religious Bodies of America. Dr. Laidlaw, a statistician of much experience, has undertaken to estimate the strength of the 150 or more religious bodies in this country. The population of the United States, he thinks, is not far from 82,000,000; the Census Bureau would accord us 81,000,000. Of these, about 30,000,000 are church members, and of this number Dr. Laidlaw accords to the Roman Catholics 9,820,114, which, by the way, is more than 2,000,000 less than is claimed by the Catholic Directory. This number is that of the baptized. Nearly one-tenth of the whole Roman Catholic population is in New York City, showing that the gain has been very largely due to immigration. Meantime, since 1890, the communicants of various Protestant bodies have increased 35 per cent.; and if, as Dr. Laidlaw estimates, every two communicants represent five adherents, we should have under Christian influence 60,680,000 persons, or very nearly four-fifths of the population. Leaving immigration aside, there is every reason to believe that Roman Catholicism is not relatively holding its own, startlingly rapid as its growth has been in some quarters. He divides the Protestants into groups, according as they follow episcopal, synodal, or congregational polity. The Congregationalists, 7,535,580, are the most numerous. Episcopal government is recognized by 7,268,518, a Presbyterian polity preferred by 4,063,577. Dr. Laidlaw believes that Protestantism will continue to be the dominant religion in our land.

F. B.