

an improved state of things. If children can be taught the history of the Old and New Testament, and the formularies accepted by all Christians—the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments—this will be something, and a great deal more than we have at present. Of course there would be a conscience clause exempting from religious instruction those children whose parents may object to the same. Surely the most susceptible of the unbelievers in Christianity can hardly object to religious instruction provided with these safe-guards.

Divorce.

THE resignation of the larger number of the Divorce Committee of the Dominion Senate has drawn more than ordinary attention to the anomalous state of law in Canada on this subject. There are two theories on the subject of divorce, the one is, that no divorce should be allowed for any reason, the other is, that divorce should be allowed for reasons defined by law.

Undoubtedly the former of these theories represents what may be called the ideal state of things. When man and woman are united in matrimony, they take each other for the term of their natural life; and it would seem to follow from this that, if for any reason they decided that they could not live together, they should agree to live apart in the single state. This is the theory of the Church of Rome. Divorce is not allowed on any grounds. Only the Pope has the right to dissolve the marriage bond, and even he does not profess to have this right. He separates so-called married people, and gives them a right to marry again; but he does so on the ground that the previous marriage was invalid, and therefore no marriage at all. To outsiders this may seem to be an evasion; but it is a way of maintaining the theory of the indissolubility of the marriage tie.

Some such theory seems to underlie the law as it was in England until the last few years, and as it is in Canada at the present moment. Formerly a divorce could be obtained, in England only through the House of Lords, just as at present, in Canada, it can be obtained only through the Senate.

The consequence of the former law in England was that only rich men or women could obtain divorces. Now, however beneficial such a system may have been in preventing divorces, it is quite evident that it was inequitable and unjust. If it was right for a rich man to obtain a divorce, it could not be wrong for a poor man. Nor could that law be maintained which practically made the rich man to have rights which were denied to the poor. Consequently the law in England was changed; and a Divorce Court was established. It is very likely that the number of divorces has been increased; but the inferences deducible from this result do not all lie in one direction.

We have, then, come to this pass in Canada that something like a deadlock has occurred; and this because of the conflicting sentiments prevailing in the different provinces of the Dominion. Quebec would probably forbid divorces altogether. Ontario would probably adopt the system of having a Divorce Court as one of the regular courts of law. The maintenance of the present system is, therefore, of the nature of a compromise. And this compromise seems to be breaking down.

Now the question that will soon have to be decided is, whether we are going to continue the present system with all its inconveniences—or whether we are to abolish divorce altogether—or whether some different system should be adopted, for example, that each Province should manage the matter in its own way.

We are in presence of two opposite dangers—the danger of having no divorce allowed at all and the danger of having divorce made too easy. We say that both are dangers. From the downfall of the first Napoleon until some time after the downfall of his nephew, France had no law of divorce. Does any one imagine that, during that time, the morality of France was higher? And, after all, from the point of view of the State, this is a practical question. The Churches may make any laws they please, and enforce them on their own members; but the State must consider the well-being of the community.

The danger which lies in the other direction is illustrated in Germany and in some of the American States, where a divorce can be obtained for almost any reason or for no reason at all. The result of such a system is almost to destroy the sacredness of the marriage bond. In some places it is almost as easy for unmarried people to get divorced as for celibates to get married. We are informed that, in some of these places, it is not unusual for people to be divorced two or three or four times. There is no great fear of any such state of things prevailing among ourselves; but it is well to be forewarned. It might come about in two different ways—from the gradual relaxing of public opinion on the subject of divorce, or by a reaction from rigorist opinions on the subject. It may be well for us to keep these dangers in view.

The Unsolved Educational Problem.

SOME members of the Toronto Public School Board have been stirred by the aspersions cast upon the Public School system at many of the denominational anniversaries, in respect to the alleged want of moral and religious training in the schools, and are girding on their armour for the defence of the system, especially as wrought out in the city schools. At a recent meeting of the Board, Dr. Hunter proposed a series of resolutions, of which the following are the second and third:—

"That the fundamental principles of Christianity are just as consistently recognized and practiced by the teachers and pupils of our Public Schools as they are by the clergy and laity of any branch of the Church."

"That the very orderly and becoming manner in which the present religious exercises are conducted, the influence of the teachers' example, and the thorough discipline of our Public Schools are potent factors in building up moral and religious character."

These are brave assertions. The first is either a serious reflection upon the clergy and laity of the Christian churches, or a most remarkable tribute to the teachers and scholars of the Toronto schools. Leaving, however, the parties to the controversy to settle these and other questions raised by them, we venture to remark that we are amazed by the singular faith the Board seem to have in the efficacy of the perfunctory reading of a few verses of the Bible—for it is too much to expect that this exercise should be anything better than perfunctory in the majority of cases, unless and until the Department can take upon itself to examine into and guarantee the religious as well as the scholarly qualifications of all its licentiates—as a means of producing high moral and religious character. But how is the conduct of any more elaborate religious exercise to be prevented from becoming equally perfunctory and spiritually lifeless if similarly prescribed? For our own part, we are persuaded that a great good would be done should some influential clergyman or layman follow up the challenge of the Toronto Board by showing how little effect upon the average boy or girl's character such exercises are fitted to produce. Setting