

## Those State Divinity Degrees Again

The following further communication was forwarded to the 'Otago Daily Times' in reply to two paragraphs in last Saturday's issue by its contributor, 'Civis,' which were chiefly made up of angry and vulgar personalities against the editor of the 'Tablet'—

Sir,—Your contributor, 'Civis,' has, I think, by this time realised that he 'spoke before he was ready' when he advocated the proposed conferring of divinity degrees by the New Zealand State University. He tossed overboard Sir Maurice O'Rorke's fatuous scheme and submitted instead a little 'invention' of his own which was to settle the matter forthwith. His new patent is, in its way, a gem of purest ray serene. 'The essentials of a degree in divinity,' says he, 'should be, first, an arts degree, and on the top of that a pass in four subjects, (1) Hebrew, (2) Greek, (3) Bible literature, (4) Church history.'

And thus it turned out that, after all, the good man did not know the meaning of the word 'divinity' when he propounded his great scheme, which (he assured his readers) was the only one that could be got to work. It was, therefore, necessary to point out to him that Hebrew and Greek are in themselves no more divinity than is Hindustani or Cherokee, and that 'one may study much Bible literature and very much Church history without setting foot in the domain of divinity.' Any smart Sunday school child might not unnaturally be expected to know so much.

A great authority has declared that right definition is the first, the second, and the third 'essential' of right discussion. 'Civis's'

### Ludicrous Slip

over 'the essentials of a divinity degree' made it necessary to define the term divinity or theology. Stated in briefest terms, it is 'the science of divine things.' The accepted Protestant division of the science of divinity sorts it out into exegetical, historical, practical, and speculative or dogmatic. This last is, in turn, subdivided into doctrine or teaching regarding God, doctrine concerning man; doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ; doctrine concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine of salvation; the doctrine of the Church, the Sacraments, and the means of grace; and the doctrine of the last things.

All this is the veriest A.B.C. of the tyro in theology. But it comes as a great surprise to 'Civis.' He now alters his plea and asserts that all the departments of the vast field of divinity are 'comprehended in, and may be got out of, Bible literature. If,' he adds, 'the "Tablet" editor does not get them there, where does he get them? It is an awkward question, and I forbear to press it. The matter may stand at that.'

Well, your contributor 'got them' in Hebrew and Greek. Why does he exclude Sanscrit and 'Cingalese'? As for the 'Tablet' editor, the only thing he thinks 'awkward' in the matter is the necessity of teaching your contributor the most elementary and 'essential' notions of a science on which he ('Civis') presumed to start a discussion 'before he was ready.' The definition of 'divinity' already supplied to him reveals at a glance the plain and simple answer to his 'awkward question.' 'Bible literature' is an ambiguous term, and no matter which of its possible meanings you place upon it, it does not necessarily include divinity. The Bible itself is a grand 'fount' or 'source' of divinity. But it is by no means the only one. It is not itself a treatise or a set of treatises on divinity. For divinity, as defined above, is a science. Now science (in this connection) is knowledge co-ordinated and systematised—in other words, it is knowledge arranged on a scientific method. And this systematised form or scientific method is precisely what is not to be found in the Bible. Not so much as one book or chapter of God's Written Word is, or ever was intended to be, a set scientific treatise on any branch of theology. And so 'Civis's' little 'invention' resolves itself into a scheme for conferring

### Divinity Degrees Without Divinity.

I am very curious to know how he is to get up steam in his patent divinity machine. He must begin by radically altering its 'essential' details so as to get his divinity. You must first catch your hare. When he has succeeded in doing so I shall take the liberty of pressing upon him once more the following 'awkward questions,' to which, up to the present, he has refused the courtesy of a reply—

1. On what principle of statecraft could the New Zealand Government arrogate to itself the right of dragging theology within its domain?

2. Who is to determine what brand of divinity, and how much or how little thereof, are to be required for the proposed State divinity degrees?

3. If the New Zealand Government has (as 'Civis' contends) the right to indirectly teach divinity, on what principles may it not also directly teach it?

4. If the Government may exercise this alleged right in our highest schools, on what grounds does 'Civis' suppose (as I understand he does) the extension of the same principle to the State primary schools of the Colony?

5. 'Civis' has shown a fine contempt for the rights of conscience of minorities in this matter. I ask him once more: At what numerical percentage do religious minorities begin to enjoy, in New Zealand, this elementary right of conscience—immunity from compulsory contributions towards the propaganda of the theology of faiths in which they do not believe?

I have some further and very 'awkward questions' to press upon your contributor. But if he bends his energies to the solution of the difficulties already before him, he will, I think, have no space left to fling at me any more of those angry and irrelevant insinuations of lying and hypocrisy which furnish such a pitiful evidence of the vulgar temptations to which a man is exposed when he writes with a mask upon his face.—Yours, etc.,

EDITOR, 'N.Z. TABLET.'

Otautau, March 6.

## DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

In description of new church at Otautau (page 6, 2nd column) 'principals 9 feet by 4 feet' should obviously be '9 inches by 4 inches.'

The new church in Invercargill is rapidly approaching completion, and the interior is being cleared of scaffolding. It is expected that the opening ceremony will take place before Easter, and will be performed by His Grace the Archbishop of Wellington.

The mission which was being conducted in the Wrey's Bush parish by the Rev. Father Brown, S.J., and the Rev. Father Claffey, S.J., was brought to a close on last Sunday. The Jesuit Fathers will open missions in Gore and Invercargill on next Sunday, and it is expected that a mission will be opened in the Riverton parish in a few weeks' time.

A meeting of the musical committee of the St. Patrick's Day celebration, to be held at His Majesty's Theatre, took place on Friday evening, and was well attended. The report showed that a splendid musical programme was in hand, full particulars of which will appear shortly in the press. Efforts have been made to secure the best talent, and we think a very fine entertainment will be the result. It is to be hoped that, as this will be an entertainment in every way worthy of the occasion, the efforts of the promoters will be rewarded by a crowded house. Tickets may be obtained from the leading parishioners and the school children.

The Christian Brothers' cadet corps has just completed its first annual musketry course, and the shooting on the whole has turned out satisfactorily. The targets used were the same in every way as adult corps use, and the ranges from 200 to 500 yards. The highest scorers receive each a badge from the Government. The following were the winners: Color-Sergeant E. Joyce, Sergeant Salmon, Cadets Mooney, Connor, W. Heffernan, Keyes, Mellick, Spain, Smith, T. Laffey. Captain Hussey and Lieutenant Bryant, who are not eligible for badge firing, made top scores, both putting on over 75 of the possible with the Martini-Enfield carbine. A ladies' challenge belt is being presented to the corps by a committee of ladies, with Miss Heley as organiser, and is being fired for in three competitions, the winner to hold it for a year. The prize competition in aid of the corps funds is to be drawn at the end of the month.

## Redemptorist Foundation in New Zealand

(By telegraph from our own correspondent.)

Wellington, March 7.

The clergy and laity of New Zealand will be pleased to hear that on the invitation of His Grace Archbishop Redwood the Redemptorists have decided to establish a foundation in Wellington. The preliminary arrangements were made by the Provincial (Very Rev. Father Bovlan) and the Vice-Provincial (Very Rev. Father O'Farrell) during their recent visit here. Temporary premises have been taken at Kilbirnie, and here the Rev. Father Clune, as Superior, with the Rev. Fathers MacDermott and Pidgeon, are now stationed. Their postal address is Totara Lodge, Kilbirnie, Wellington.

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