

CHAIR OF THEOLOGY.

Professor Naylor Optimistic.

Invitation to Wealthy Citizens.

Professor Darnley Naylor addressed members of the University Theological Students' Association at the Y.M.C.A. on Friday evening regarding the suggested establishment of a theological chair and faculty at the Adelaide University. The chair was occupied by the President of the Association (Mr. R. C. Stevens), and the gathering included students representing various religious denominations. Prior to the lecture the Secretary (Mr. W. H. Johnson) announced that the association had communicated with Roman Catholic and Lutheran divinity students regarding membership, but no replies had been received from them. It was mentioned that the Anglican students were in accord with the aims of the association, but were unable to be present that night.

-All Knowledge Controversial.-

"If we ask ourselves what we mean by a university," remarked the speaker at the outset of a brilliant discourse, "we are bound to answer that the very name University implies universality of knowledge. We study law, philosophy, literature, history, and the sciences; but there is one subject which, after all, lies at the root of every other, pervades every other and gives it worth, and which has hitherto been neglected in our Australian universities. I refer to the subject of theology in its broadest sense—the philosophy which deals with the relation of the human to the Divine. (Applause.) The allegation is usually made that such a science is impossible in our universities because of its controversial nature. I confess that this objection has little force with me. All knowledge, in one sense, is controversial, for, any subject, treated academically, will involve the presentation of conflicting views, and in a university, of all places, we have a right to expect controversy. (Hear, hear.)

-A Childish Bogy.-

"We go on electing to chairs of philosophy and never once ask, 'Is the candidate a materialist or an idealist, a follower of Hegel, Comte, or Schopenhauer?' All we require is that he shall know his subject from Alpha to Omega, and that he should hide nothing, evade nothing, and colour nothing, leaving the student finally to choose for himself. (Applause.) In the chair of political economy we do not ask of a candidate, 'Is he a Protectionist or Freetrader, a collectivist, a Socialist, an individualist—or whatever else of fearsome nomenclature?' A professor of law is bound to have some political opinions, and a professor of history some views on the rights and wrongs of the Reformation. In short, not one of these chairs can escape from touching topics of a highly controversial nature. Hitherto we have always trusted, and I hope we shall always trust, our professors to treat their subjects academically and with perfect fairness so far as human limitations allow. (Applause.) Even a classical professor—a medieval curiosity—(laughter)—may provide an illustration. Although he goes to church on Sunday can he not still make the student sympathize with the gods of Homer, with the theology of Aeschylus, and the free-thought of Euripides? The fact is that this objection to a chair of theology on the ground of its controversial nature is a mere childish bogy which disappears with the lifting of a penny-dip. (Applause.)

-The Ideal Chair.-

"I want now to make perfectly plain what I am advocating. What I wish for is a chair of theology—not a chair which shall present only one portion of the facts, which shall deal only with Christianity and with only one aspect of that. Theology, I repeat, is the science of philosophy which treats of man's relation to the divine. It surely includes all religions and all varieties of these good, bad, and indifferent, as well as agnosticism, atheism and so on. My ideal chair of theology would include in its scope a knowledge of all religions, and of all theories in the universe. My ideal holder of this chair would know all about Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, and so forth, as well as of Christianity in all its varieties. What is more, any student, no matter which of these religions he favoured, would be able, if he possessed the necessary knowledge and capacity, to take his degree in theology and obtain the highest honours in his course. This is no mere dream of mine. The thing has actually been done in London, Manchester, and elsewhere. Wales from the start had a theological faculty, and Paris has not only

a Protestant faculty, but also a faculty of comparative religion. The new enterprising University of Tokio has also founded a chair in this latter subject. Coming nearer to home, Ottawa has set the machinery in motion for the formation of a theological chair. The Universities of Australia stand alone among the newer universities as exceptions to the foregoing rule. —£30,000 Required.—

"What are the possibilities in our own Adelaide University? I can merely express my opinion for what it is worth. In the first place, I venture to think that we should appeal to the generosity of our wealthy men who are interested in our aim. We shall require at least £30,000—(Voices—"Oh")—and I do not see why four or five citizens might not be found who would join in contributing this sum. I wish, however, to lay emphasis upon the point that if such generous donors be forthcoming they must be prepared to trust the University absolutely, for it would be impossible, in my opinion, for the University to accept money with any detailed conditions attached. When we get the chair of theology—for I believe we shall get it—(applause)—I would suggest that we seek a good New Testament and Hebrew scholar, and, above all, a first-class specialist in comparative religion. This last is the main qualification which should be required. (Applause.)

-The Study of the Future.-

"Whether my views commend themselves to you I know not, but this I know that the study of religion is going to be the study of the future. (Hear, hear.) Think what it demands quite apart from its special branches. A theological degree means knowledge of ancient and modern history, Latin, and, above all, Greek, in addition to German, and even the law. Yes this may be a heavy subject, but when we get it I believe one of the most valuable steps in the history of Australian education will have been taken, and Adelaide will deserve indeed, the reputation of being the City of Culture, because she will have found out how to get over the prejudices of ignorance and feeble faith, and to begin a fearless pursuit of truth in the atmosphere of liberal education." (Prolonged applause.)

-Enthusiastic Advocates.-

The Rev. W. Wragge (Anglican) Dr. Torr (Methodist), Rev. A. J. Wade (Presbyterian), Rev. J. Paynter (Baptist), and the Rev. W. J. Eddy (President of the Victorian Council of Churches) discussed the feasibility of establishing a chair. The general belief was that it would cause not the least friction between religious denominations. In reply to a question, Professor Naylor considered a professor of theology would have to be paid a salary of about £800 a year. He expressed his belief that the project would probably be favoured by the majority of members of the University Council, and he did not anticipate great difficulty in raising the £30,000.

A motion was unanimously adopted as follows:—"That this meeting requests that the Council of the Adelaide University, provided the necessary means be forthcoming by private benefaction, will take immediate steps to secure the foundation of a theological faculty in that University."

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THEOLOGICAL FACULTY.

Adelaide theological students belonging to all denominations, excepting Roman Catholic and Lutheran, formed themselves into an association about three months ago. There are about 40 members in the body, and almost its first movement was to formulate a scheme for a theological chair and faculty at the Adelaide University. At a recent meeting it was decided to write to the Education Commission asking that witnesses should be called to consider the question. The secretary (Mr. W. Johnson) reported to a meeting on Friday evening having received a reply from Mr. T. Ryan, M.P. (chairman of the Commission), that the Commission felt that the council of the University were the proper persons to deal with the matter, and the association's letter had been forwarded to them. Mr. A. C. Stevens (president of the society) said he had seen the acting registrar of the University, and the matter would probably be considered next Friday, when the council met. He intended forwarding to them a digest of that evening's meeting, with the feelings expressed by the different denominations toward the matter, so that the council would have something definite before them. Professor Darnley Naylor addressed the meeting on the question, and in supporting the movement outlined a comprehensive scheme. The Rev. W. J. Eddy (secretary of the Council of Churches in Melbourne), Dr. Torr, M.A. (honorary governor Brighton Methodist Training College), Rev. W. Ragg (warden St. Barnabas Anglican College), Rev. A. J. Wade (Presbyterian), Rev. J. Paynter (Baptist), and Messrs. D. H. Hollidge (principal Kyre College), and W. Wiberly (Adelaide University Christian Association), also spoke in favor of the idea. It was resolved, on the motion of Mr. H. Giles, seconded by Mr. J. H. Hill—"That this meeting requests the council of the Adelaide University, provided the necessary means be forthcoming by benefaction, to take immediate steps towards securing the foundation of a theological faculty at the Adelaide University."

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HIGHER PUBLIC EXAMINATION.

Several alterations are proposed by the Council of the University of Adelaide in the regulations for the Higher Public Examination, and the matter will be dealt with at next Thursday's meeting of the University Senate. Necessity for some revision of the regulations has arisen in consequence of the changes in the rules relating to the award of Government bursaries tenable at the University, which, instead of 10, as previously, have been increased to 12 of considerably widened scope. These bursaries are granted upon the results of the higher public, and it has been argued that the regulations for that examination as they stand at present are—in the matter of the marks awarded for certain subjects—less in favour of those who have chosen subjects likely to be most helpful to them in science or medical courses for which they intend subsequently to enter at the University, than they are to prospective students in the B.A. course. The alterations proposed are an attempt to overcome the objections that have been raised in this respect. The subjects have been so re-grouped for the approval of the senate that prospective arts, science, law, and medical students may all have an equal opportunity of gaining the number of marks which would place them on the list of bursary winners. The recommendations on which the Government bursaries are to be allotted are to be determined by the aggregate marks gained by the candidate in not more than five higher public examination subjects, "together with the marks obtained for an English essay specially set for bursary candidates." The essay is a new departure, as it was held that without some such test a student who contemplated entering for a science or medical course with the aid of his bursary could do so without giving any heed to English at all.

HIGHER PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS.

The Senate of the University of Adelaide will among other business at its meeting on Thursday next consider the new regulations approved for the higher public examination by the University Council. The suggested regulations include the division of pure mathematics into two subjects and the revision of the arrangements in respect to bursaries. The council have approved of an alteration in regulation vi of the degree of bachelor of music, which was allowed on December 3, 1902. They suggest the substitution of the following regulation in its place:—"At the second examination for the degree of bachelor of music every candidate shall be required to satisfy the examiners in each of the following subjects:—Harmony and counterpoint, double counterpoint, canon and fugue, history and literature of music, form and analysis, and one of the following practical subjects:—(a) singing, (b) pianoforte, (c) organ, (d) violin, (e) violoncello, (f) or any other instrument approved by the faculty." The section (f) has been added, and this alteration will come up for ratification at the meeting of the Senate on Thursday.