

## THE SEMINARY AS A DENOMINATIONAL ASSET.

ADDRESS BY P. I. LIPSEY, D.D.,  
ON FOUNDER'S DAY, JAN. 10, 1914.

The previous speaker (Dr. E. E. Bomar) has completely spoiled my speech. Not that he has said anything that I intended to say or ought to say; but his reminiscences of the Seminary as he knew it have opened the flood-gates of memory, swept me away from my theme and put me back twenty-five years. I have traversed the paths that we travelled in the period of transition from the old Waverly Hotel, the lecture rooms down on Fourth Ave., the temporary residence in the old Hotel of Tenth and Broadway and the moving into New York Hall when it was new. Things began to brighten up when he and I came. It began to be published abroad how many students there were and what a fine set of young fellows they had. Then there came the wilderness experience including the Red Sea of ink that was spilled on our Hebrew and Greek exercises, not many passing through dryshod, until we came to the Pisgah's height on Commencement day closing with a rocket sp—e—ech! that paled the stars.

Most of all there come to mind today the faces of the men who look down on us from the portraits on these walls, the men who made the Seminary; Boyce and Broadus and Manly. It was in these days that the body of the founder of the Seminary, Jas. P. Boyce, was brought back across the waters and rested for a day by the entrance to New York Hall, and then we followed and laid it reverently away in the cemetery on the hill.

But mine is the task of speaking today on "THE SEMINARY AS A DENOMINATIONAL ASSET," a subject assigned me by the faculty. As I have gotten the habit of preaching textually, I shall stick to the text, and

may from habit also stick to it a long time. The homiletical habit also of dividing it into three parts holds me still. You know if a preacher has less than three divisions he loses himself. If he has more than that he is likely to lose his congregation. This shall have the regulation *three heads*.

I wish to speak of,

### (I) THE DENOMINATIONAL IDEA.

There are three grounds upon which denominationalism may be justified. First, it is a means of efficiency. The churches are in the world for work and the first principle of effective work is organization. The larger the undertaking and the greater the number of people involved in it, the more necessity for organization. This is sometimes called an age of co-operative effort. It is true that men are recognizing the value of co-operation as never before, because bigger tasks are being undertaken. But there was never a time when it was not necessary for the highest efficiency. A man cannot lead a Christian life without association with others in church fellowship; and a church cannot accomplish its mission without co-operating with others in the great denominational enterprises. A denominational consciousness is the natural outcome of a desire to do good and denominational co-operation is a necessity to the accomplishment of this desire.

The denomination also expresses loyalty, loyalty to truth and to Him who is the truth. There is no finer sentiment in the heart of man than faithful adherence to what is to him the embodiment of what he believes to be true and right. Unfaithfulness to that is subversive of his own integrity and destructive of the elements of manhood. There is no desire here to produce antagonisms, nor to prolong any already existent; but if differences come we shall have to accept and acknowledge them. There is a significant clause in the description of

conditions of the Apostolic Church found in Acts 5:13. When he had spoken of the wonders wrought by the hands of the apostles and the disciples being of one accord, the historian adds, "But of the rest durst no man join himself to them." There is a unifying power in truth and Christian experience, which, while drawing men together, in the same act separates them from others. Denominationalism is the expression of fealty to what one believes to be true. It may not be true, but until men are convinced that it is not, they must in very faithfulness to themselves adhere to it. It is thus that the denomination not only expresses but preserves and develops the necessary disposition of loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever will intensify this attitude toward Him is worthy of profound respect.

But the denominational idea is deeper than all this. It is not a thing superimposed from without or adopted as a convenience; it is the necessary and inevitable expression of life itself. Life is that invisible, unexplainable something within, that works, that energizes, that takes form and makes for itself an outward body as it pleases. The lowest forms of life have few organs; the higher multiply organs as the expression of life and the necessary means of maintaining and perpetuating it. Thus, the oyster has no eyes, no ears, no hands, no feet, no fins. But man is at the other end of the scale and is highly organized. Not to enlarge upon the figure; if there is a strong tide of spiritual life, it will manifest itself in instruments of work. There was a time when a box-shaped room was sufficient for a church house because they came merely to sing and pray and listen to a sermon. But now the Sunday School, the B. Y. P. U., the W. M. U., the Y. W. A., the Sun Beams and many others are the vigorous manifestations of inward life and the organs for doing necessary and effective work. In the same way the denominational organism is the out-

come of strong spiritual life and the means of doing the work of the churches. It is inevitable, irrepressible and necessary.

## (II) THE SEMINARY AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE DENOMINATIONAL IDEA.

Fifty-five years ago or more the need of a Baptist Seminary in the South got into the heart of J. P. Boyce. It was a time of growth, of separation, of differentiation. There was need for it to conserve what we had and to make the Baptist life more abundant. It was a good seed in fine soil and it must needs grow. There is just as much life in an acorn as there is in the oak. Given a chance it will prove it. When a truth gets into a man's heart something is going to happen. It will eat up all that is in him, his time, his thought, his energy, his past knowledge and experience. With apologies to your professor of Homiletics, that is the way your sermons grow, your best sermons, those that are really worth while. The truth will take up into itself all that is within you, and embody it into something visible and tangible. That is the way the Seminary did with its founders. It took root and grew because it was the expression of denominational life and the embodiment of a great need.

It grew till it materialized in brick and mortar, in lots and houses, in men and money, in history and traditions, in faculty and students, in alumni and churches, in missions and scholarship.

What is the Seminary? Different answers would be given to this question. Some men would direct you to the buildings on Fifth and Broadway. Some think of the student body, or the faculty, or the alumni, or the trustees, or the endowment, or the work accomplished the world over, or the spirit of the men who are here or have been here, the standards and ideals it has created, the traditions it has fostered. All these are the Seminary. The Seminary is everywhere, its name and its in-

fluence. But the other day one of the most distinguished of its alumni stopped in the midst of a sermon and with more than usual shade of thoughtfulness said, "I never preach but I think of Dr. Broadus." Perhaps it is the exceptional man who does not think of Broadus when he preaches; and it is well if he does, so he does not make other people think of him. This shows when and how the work of the Seminary has spread, and its influence has been always to build up the denominational idea.

### (III) THE VALUE OF THE SEMINARY AS AN ASSET.

It remains for me to speak as briefly as I can of the value of the Seminary as an Asset. That word asset is a strange thing. That which is an asset may be at the same time a liability. It may belong in one or the other column, or both, according to your method of recording. That is true of a bank, and it is true of the Seminary. Assets have to be carefully guarded and faithfully handled, or they are quickly converted into liabilities. Assets have their value in their intrinsic worth, and in what men believe them to be worth. The one is cash, the other is credit. Every friend of the Seminary should be jealous of both its character and its reputation. We must make and keep it what it ought to be, and we cannot afford to ignore the judgment of others as to what it is and should be.

There are certain things for which the Seminary stands which make it a valuable denominational asset. One of these is *scholarship*. I put this first not as the most important but as distinctive. Other qualities it does possess in common with other departments of our denominational work, but it is the province of the Seminary to insist upon scholarship. It has always stood for hard work. There is no easy route through the Seminary, and there ought never to be any. Dr. R. C. Buckner has written, "Without work it is impossible to please

God," and he is right. Most of us may not have learned to love work, but we can thank God it is compulsory. The preacher ought to know his subject and something about many subjects and *ought to know that he knows*. The Seminary has insisted and will insist that its young men take their places among men without embarrassment. This means hard work, and those who wish to dodge it will not come here.

Again, the Seminary has been our largest *missionary* asset. From its foundation it has turned its face to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. It has sought to train all its men to help in bringing the good tidings to them. It can never afford to let these fires be less bright from which the torch is carried to every dark corner.

Closely allied to this is the business of *personal evangelism*. This is the heart of Christianity. No vague concern for the lost millions of other lands, and no desire merely to christianize the social order can excuse the failure to save the individual man or woman. That is what your missions here in Louisville mean; that is the reason for your gospel wagon and street preaching. I am glad of the plan to study social conditions and the desire to improve them, but nothing must be allowed to become a substitute for the first duty of man to man, evangelism. No Philanthropic endeavors and no skyscraper sermons can atone for failure here.

Add to this in your column of assets that the Seminary stands for personal *spiritual life and power* in those within its walls and those who go out from them. There is a rather widespread notion that the habit of study even in a school of the prophets tends to prevent the development of the spiritual life. If one may speak for others his testimony shall be that he never found any place where it was easier to grow than here. To him the study of the Bible with a teacher like John A. Broadus was a spiritual feast; and the study of Systematic Theol-

ogy so far from being dull and dry, was corn from Canaan that filled his soul more than all the mush and slush of the effervescent scribes of today. Along with the social meetings for prayer and worship, the little clock on the mantel pointed him to God for a season of private communion whenever the long hand pointed upward. Let all the fuel go to making power for the inward life and outward service.

The last thing that this school stands for is first, last and all the time, *loyalty to the Book*. This is its one foundation, the reason for its existence. If we stumble on this we shall be broken, if it fall on us we shall be scattered as dust. Our fundamental articles commit us to it as the flawless and complete revelation of the will of God. Our acceptance of it in its fulness and entirety is our salvation, our exemplification of it our glory, and our unflinching, unfaltering proclaiming of it as *the* word of God is the salvation of the world.