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**OUR MISSION:**

**A SERMON,**

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

OF THE

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,**

IN THE CITY OF UTICA.

May 16th, 1851

**BY D. H. RIDDLE, MODERATOR.**

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The thanks of the General Assembly were tendered to the Rev. Dr. RIDDLE for his excellent Sermon, delivered last evening, and a copy thereof requested for publication.

UTICA, MAY 16, 1851.

E. W. GILBERT,  
PERMANENT CLERK.

## DISCOURSE.

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ISAIAH, LXV: 8.

Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for my servant's sake, that I may not destroy them all.

These words were originally spoken of the Jewish church composed of the two tribes of Judah and "little Benjamin," after the secession and separate establishment of the other ten. The principle they embody is made more impressive and beautiful, by the figurative drapery employed and may be thus expressed: That church, however imperiled and apparently forsaken, was INDESTRUCTIBLE, till the blessings embosomed in it by God's purpose for the race, were actually secured. These blessings were infolded or existed elementally in that institute or religious organization, in the same way that "the new wine is in the cluster," even in its incipient or immature condition. As the destruction or preservation of the first rude formation of the fruit of the vine, involved also the preservation or destruction of the last and perfect product in the shape of the new wine, so the figure teaches that in the preservation and perpetuation of the existing Jewish church was involved, in God's plan, the preservation and perpetuation of great principles and unspeakable blessings, designed ultimately, for world wide expansion and everlasting continuance. Just as in ancient fable, the strangling of the infant Hercules by envious power, would have defeated the predicted achievements of his giant manhood, or the murder of the infant Jesus by Herod, would have quenched the light of a rival royalty, and defeated the accomplishment of all God's purposes.

The same general idea is conveyed in an earlier part of the prophecy of Isaiah by another figure: "As the teil tree and an oak tree, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed is the substance thereof;" i. e. living, indestructible principles abide in the church of God, whatever appearances, promising or dreary, it may in providence be called to assume. The woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars, was to bring forth in due season a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and be caught up to God and his throne; and meanwhile, whether in the wilderness, weeping by the river of Babylon, or in robes of royalty and rejoicing, she was secure, heaven's everlasting purposes being her defence from the attacks of earth and hell.

It might be pleasant and profitable to pursue the application of this principle in its primary relation to the ancient church, to show its sustaining and animating influence in the dreary midnight of captivity, and after centuries of growing degeneracy, amidst the dominancy of her proud oppressors in Babylon, and the severer spiritual tyranny of Phariseism and formalism, before the new wine of the spiritual kingdom was ripened from this sour and unpromising cluster, and the *indestructibility* of the underlying vital principle according to God's promise, through these dreary and wintry, leafless, and apparently lifeless ages of preparation. But this course of thought would carry us too far aside for our special purpose in the selection of these words in our present circumstances.

This general principle is legitimately deducible from this passage, and the illustration furnished by the history of God's providence with the ancient church, viz: any organization (brought into existence in any age by God's direct or permissive providence) which embodies or infolds in itself principles or blessings important to mankind, or indispensable to the development of God's purposes, will be **INDESTRUCTIBLE**, whatever influ-

ences are arrayed against it, or perils and calamities it may endure, until these principles or blessings are inwrought into the permanent heritage of men. Just as "the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith destroy it not, for a blessing is in it," so saith One, "whose purpose shall stand" against all opposition and notwithstanding all appearances of such organization as really as of ancient Judaism.

This is true even of secular organizations which came not into existence without God's providence, and enter, as all will allow, into the great plan of the Eternal Governor, King of Nations as well as of Zion. It might be illustrated in its application to all the more important organizations of this character which have figured on the past field of Providence and been treasured in history; to Egypt, Greece, Rome, in ancient times, and to many in modern times, among the rest especially England and our own country. Almost every national organization which has played or is now playing an important part in the world's drama, was, or is, a cluster in which some blessing is or was embodied. But here again we must not allow ourselves to wander.

The principle is eminently applicable to church organizations in every age, where any great vital principle is embodied, or enters into the originating causes of their existence. Of course the primitive church was of this character, and here was the secret of her marvellous perpetuity and indestructibility, so mysterious and inexplicable to the infidel historian, amidst her long continued and bloody persecutions, those ordeals by which "the faith" of primitive saints was tried so as by fire!" The Catholic Church also embodied blessings and embodied in an organic form, great principles, though the envelopment may have been sour and bitter and unpromising as the unripe cluster, and therefore she perished not amidst repeated barbaric eruptions, and notwithstanding nameless perversions and abominations, till "the new wine" was matured, and the blessings she bore in her bosom became the heritage of man. So the Protestant, the



Puritan, and the Presbyterian principle, in the different outward organizations they have assumed, have been several clusters of the great vine, each designed for the blessing of mankind, and indestructible till the great purposes of God in originating or permitting their existence have been accomplished. In speaking to Protestants, Puritans, and Presbyterians, we may surely make this assumption without elaborate proof, though the materials are abundant and lie all about in the pages of history. Hath not God said of these organizations hitherto, as really as of Judaism and with similar designs, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it;" and with this *fact*, fully before us, need we, ought we to fear that, till God's purposes are subserved, any of them will perish?

Brethren, in the permissive Providence of God, and by instrumental agencies which it would not be for edification now to trace, as a branch of the great Protestant, Puritan, and Presbyterian family, we have been exposed to influences interior and exterior which have threatened our existence and prosperity. We have passed through the dangers arising from extra loving kindnesses in some quarters, the processes of absorption in different directions, the lack of distinctive church life, and in some instances, of proper self respect: the mistakes in the period of reconstruction, amidst the volcanic phenomena connected with the unhappy severance of the original unit of Presbyterianism, and the not unnatural and certainly amiable, though non-reciprocated tendencies to re-unification while every honorable prospect seemed still before us. In all this, there seems obviously to every thoughtful observer, a voice issuing from the oracle, saying, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it," and warranting and indeed urging us to inquire, whether this church organization of ours does not embody *some principles of vital importance*, and *some blessings to mankind*, which, on the principle developed, will render it INDESTRUCTIBLE until God's purposes in our distinctive organization have been accomplished?

'This special field of inquiry which my official position and present relations to the body justified me in exploring, in a proper spirit, I trust, and with a sincere desire to be useful, I take this opportunity of presenting. A consideration of these topics, is peculiarly appropriate at this juncture, when (if we have not misjudged) the pulses of hope and animation through the whole body beat stronger than at any previous period, and when, after the *processes* through which we have passed, there is not only a greater homogeneity of sentiment, but also a tenderer personal attachment among those "who have continued together in our temptations."

It is no "unpardonable sin," nor is it a case either of unfrequent occurrence, that individuals or organized bodies should ~~not~~ at once, come to a clear self consciousness of their own character or mission. In temporary ignorance of this, they may make mistakes, exaggerate the importance of particular tendencies and duties and go against the higher law of Providential leadings, by seeking elements of strength in unfortunate channels or improper combinations.

Luther, it is quite evident, when he began to oppose Rome, or when he took the solemn step of separation from the old church, did not know what God designed by him or the Reformation. From time to time, whereunto he attained in the way of light, he walked by that same rule, and minded that same thing, satisfied that if in anything he was otherwise minded or took wrong views of duty, God would reveal it unto him. Many times during the progress of the great struggle, also, he was strongly tempted to think it useless longer to contend for *principles* which had come to have a being and substance in his soul, against the strong force of the opposition and the more depressing influences of lukewarmness, rashness, indecision, or wrong tendencies among his friends.

An illustrious prototype, to whom the kingdom had been promised by oath and covenant, more than once, doubtless, felt, du-

ring the preparatory and procrastinated dispensation, as on one occasion he said, "I shall perish surely, one day by the hand of Saul: I can do no better than go over to the Philistines:" yea, a mightier than Luther or David, in the hour and power of darkness and under the pressure of the flesh, said, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me."

The strong conviction of many, and those among the best and most prayerful of both parties, has heretofore been, that it entered into the plans of Providence, that the elements of Presbyterianism in our country, unnaturally divided, and each shorn of strength by separation, were ultimately to be combined; and past analogies were adapted to strengthen that interpretation of the will of God concerning us. Not unnaturally or improperly, therefore, but in such a reading of God's providence with honesty and sincerity, their plans and hopes and prayers received impulse and direction from such an expected consummation, over which, whenever it occurs, we presume angels in glory and spirits passed from the prejudices and imperfections and excitements of earth would rejoice! Whatever may be in God's future and ultimate plans in this respect, we presume the universal sentiment of our body now is, that no expectation of the speedy occurrence, at least, of such an event, should govern us in ascertaining our mission, or working out the problem of our destiny. "We can do nothing against the truth"—of manifest Providence "but for the truth," by falling in with its obvious teachings and leadings.

There is a growing feeling, deepening from year to year, wide spread, and assuming in different minds more or less of definiteness and distinctness, that at *such a time as this*, we have been continued hitherto for some purpose that can only be accomplished by an independent and perpetuated position and influence.

What is then *the idea, the mission, the distinctive principles of our church*, placed in our present position by Providence, with

no direct agency of ours, and without predetermination on our part, and in the case of many, against our wishes and feelings, and involving sacrifices of personal attachments, and affections, and associations, which none that have felt can fail to appreciate? We answer, that in common with the rest of that branch of God's church which we deem to be in the line of succession, in the true genius of Christianity, we are Protestants; and as distinguished from Prelatists on the one side and independents or congregationalists on the other, but in common with a large number of denominations, we are Presbyterians. But we are not Reformed Presbyterians, ecclesiastically so called, or familiarly, Covenanters. We are not Associate Presbyterians, or Seceders; nor are we Associate Reformed Presbyterians, the body which grew out of an abortive effort to unite the other two, a great part of which at one time was absorbed by the General Assembly by a plan of Union then deemed constitutional, but which, notwithstanding, remains distinctively to this day; nor again are we Cumberland Presbyterians; nor finally, are we Old School Presbyterians: we use the term only as well understood, and to avoid circumlocution without invidious meaning, or any unnecessary inferences. *De facto*, whatever may be said *de jure*, there are two bodies which claim to be the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church; and it is simply ludicrous for either to ignore or deny the separate, distinct existence of the other, whatever identity of corporate name, or equal claims to legitimacy of succession or haughty self complacency either may assume. Together with what we have in common with other branches of the Presbyterian family, all of which we claim as our own by right of descent and legitimate inheritance, our distinctive peculiarities may be summed up thus:

I. In contrast with the special exemplification and maintenance of ecclesiastical power, we are the representatives of religious Liberty, by the antagonisms of which, the original unit

of American Presbyterianism came to be severed into two bodies!

II. Of a living Calvinism, as distinguished from a rigid dogmatic system enforced in the *ipsissima verba* of the formularies.

III. Of a co-operative christianity, in contrast with exclusive ecclesiasticism.

IV. Of the aggressive, in contrast with the exclusively conservative type of christianity.

In making this statement of what is distinctive and peculiar, we do not deny that individuals and sections of other bodies, may homologate in some or all these principles with us more than their own denominations, or, that among ourselves, there may not be some whose special affinities on these points are with other bodies. But what we wish to say is this: These are our characteristic peculiarities; these constitute the life and genius of our body; the blessings contained in our cluster of the great vine: these involve our peculiar mission and the reasons why we have not been destroyed! Now it is a grave question: Does this basis, embracing what is common to Protestants and Presbyterians, and what we may claim as distinctively our own, form a guarantee, on the principle of the text, that our existence will be perpetuated, progressive and influential, till all these elements shall be wrought into the glorious church of the future and the permanent?

On this point, we would answer, no church organization can be permanent which does not fall in with the line of Providential development, and the wants of the age or country; which cannot avail itself of, and work into its purposes, general prevailing tendencies of thought and action. Otherwise it must and will die out and become sooner or later embedded in the fossiliferous strata of ecclesiastic existence, after present excitements have passed away, or been displaced by others more stirring and contemporaneous in character and influence.

Our faith in the permanency and indestructibility of our body turns on our conviction, not formed rashly or recently, that we are the lineal succession, not of such comparatively unimportant items indeed as property, vested funds, corporate prerogatives, and institutions and moneys, but of the true life and genius of American Presbyterianism, in the same sense that "*the holy seed*" of ancient Israël was the "*substance thereof*," both before and after the numerical majority was separated from it. *The life of Presbyterianism* is a noble thing, brethren: not a thing of yesterday by any means; taking rise at the reformation, out of the over-ripe and rotten cluster of Catholicism, and wrought out by manifold energies and amidst mighty conflicts, by giants in thought and action, under God's blessing, in the old world and intervening centuries, before it was transplanted to this theatre of its noblest expansion. Let us see whether we may not claim the legitimate succession of this Life, in the points already specified.

I. In regard to the first point, the life of Presbyterianism, from its origin and through all its subsequent vicissitudes, has been synonymous with religious liberty, and as inseparably and by legitimate consequence therewith connected, of civil liberty also. Any man, as a philosopher, mistakes the reason of things, and as a historian, falsifies the facts of the world's history, who denies that religious liberty does not embosom, as the new wine, the other blessing of civil freedom also; or that a fatal stroke at the one, does not sooner or later reach the other. The philosophy of this would not be difficult if this were the place and time to enter on it. We are satisfied now with the fact.

To the Puritans of England, even according to the testimony of Hume, Brougham and Macauley, the British Constitution owes all its great elements of freedom! On this point the fact is pertinent as it is undeniable, however accounted for, that at the era of the Revolution, Presbyterians, as a body,

were Whigs and not Tories, while other excellent bodies and their ministry, either left the country or sided with the royal party. Possibly, facts in the early history and antecedent struggles of these different bodies of christians, without imputation of bad motives to others or arrogation of exclusive excellence to our own, might throw light on the different convictions and courses of duty at that crisis in the different branches of the Protestant family. Religious Liberty, and all that is legitimately collateral or corollary thereto, finds, *somehow*, in Presbyterianism (in which we embrace now Puritanism also) its last lodgement and best defence. If surrendered there, it is like Spartan patriotism on the field of Thermopylæ, or as freedom's shriek when Kosciusko fell. Now, as the world knows, the very *punctum saliens* of our particular body, involves a question of Religious Liberty; we mean the right of the peaceable possession of our religious heritage, name, reputation and connected privileges, till disfranchised by due course of law, and the application of constitutional discipline, whatever disorder or heresy might be imputed, or rumors of common fame might be generated. This right (a precious result of previous conflicts,) is inherent and inalienable in all bodies living under an acknowledged constitution, and usually enters into the substance of every bill of rights. This is, indeed, the very *magna charta* of religious liberty; for if rumor, and allegations unsustained, be made to bear in an exigency upon the actually guilty, what other defence or refuge have the innocent when suspected or accused?

The right of secession, whatever may be the duty and expediency of its exercise at particular times, we grant to be inalienable, when the consciences of minorities are oppressed. This right is incorporated into Presbyterianism, and bodies now exist as its living representatives. The right of revolution, also, we admit and contend for, when the lawful and orderly and Constitutional provisions fail to

achieve unquestionable prerogatives, or redress insufferable wrongs ; and our country stands before the world as the embodied representative and great exemplification of that right. But secession and revolution, inside the constitution, and availing itself of the prestige or advantages of a constitutional proceeding, is a misnomer and an absurdity. No bill of spiritual attainder or *ex post facto* law, with retroactive force, can be enacted ; no legislative power transcending or violating express constitutional provisions, can be assumed or defended by fictions of civil jurisprudence without striking at the foundation of religious liberty, and implicating, in proportion to its extent and magnitude, the principles of civil freedom also. There can be no acquiescence in such a procedure, except by necessity and with distinct protest, without abandoning the attainments to which long ages of conflict have brought the church of God. We have no disposition to stir up the smouldering fires of feeling, or touch points of delicacy which we are sorry that history has recorded in lines never effaceable. But, brethren, why stand we here to-day as a separate body ? We answer in all good conscience, because just such power was assumed by an accidental majority and by a legislative act, to dispossess ministers, churches and christians (we do not array numbers, for the principle is the same if but one or ten thousand suffered) of their religious heritage and sacred rights in a common body without application of law or discipline, in violation of a written constitution. The unit of Presbyterianism exists no longer in this land, because legislative authority was exercised in a case where judicial proceedings alone were applicable, and because this assumption of power was attempted to be legalized by the courts of the country, and by men who, in matters ecclesiastical and religious, "are least esteemed in the church," whatever be their excellence in their own province. And what is still more remarkable, after being legalized to be possessed of the property, in



many places this act is now justified, excused, acquiesced in, and defended as revolutionary and necessary.

Principles of this kind may seem to some unimportant, and a recurrence to them unkind. Charity would seem to some to consist in the utter oblivion of all that entered into the vitals of this controversy; and if charity could thus blot out the facts or alter their character, it would gladly "cover the whole multitude of sins" connected with the past. We grant that to many the maintenance of such principles does not seem worth the struggles and sacrifices it has cost; and the honor and conscience that would bind any man to an identification with such a cause, amidst present difficulties and sensible disadvantages, may seem over nice and chivalrous. The great mass in church or state, while an administration is well conducted, and peace and prosperity is enjoyed, do not see the danger of allowing organic departures from the common bond of union and Palladium of rights. It has always been the fortune of those who have formed "the forlorn hope in the battle of principle," not to be appreciated by contemporaries. The Puritans failed to make good their case for the time, especially when success crowned the dominant influences and royalty and nobility, and wit and wealth graced the re-inauguration of unhallowed power. This case assumes now, however, a different aspect to all who have minds and hearts to view it in its true light and blessed results.

The time for contending for property and name, probably is past; at least, we have no wish or heart to engage again in that form of strife. But the time for contending for the legitimate succession of the true life of Presbyterianism is not past; probably is only now properly arrived. It is now specially pertinent to inquire, who in the Presbyterian church maintained, and who attempted to destroy religious liberty? who exist as the representatives and martyrs, and who as the murderers of inalienable rights, accessories before or after the fact?

When this great act (we use no reproachful epithets of indignation and abhorrence) was perpetrated, and the subsequent pacificatory processes were completed, but three courses presented themselves to honest Presbyterians. One, actively to sanction as well as acquiesce in it; another, to acquiesce passively with a clear protest against its unrighteousness, to save a good conscience and stand acquitted by posterity; and a third, neither actively nor passively to acquiesce, but to repudiate and contend against the whole proceedings by continuing the church on its original basis, or identifying themselves with the body thus constituted. Among the first of these, no doubt, many are ranked conscientiously. At first it was fewest in number, for it staggered the faith and courage of most. This division, however, is gradually filling up from the ranks of the second class with some loss of character for entire loyalty, and in some instances with stinging reproaches as eleventh hour converts. In the second class are many whom we know, and love, and honor; for whom charity finds abundant justification.

Of the third class our body is composed. On this basis heretofore, we have continued, and by God's help, and with better auspices and more cheering omens, we propose to continue! protesting calmly and firmly, by conduct and position rather than loud exhibitions against "spiritual wickedness in high places."

The principle involved is worth, in our estimation, all it has cost or may cost hereafter. We are not suffering and contending for ourselves, or our age, or generation only, but for the whole family of Presbyterians, and for all the friends of religious liberty and civil rights in the race and the world. On these points, posterity, after present clouds are past, will accord its impartial judgment. Even now the sympathies of many in all branches of the great Protestant and Presbyterian family are with us, not excluding those who from stress of circumstances,

belong to the body from which we are ecclesiastically separated. Away from partial and local influences, many in the old country and all countries, when the facts become fully known, will decide where the great principles of religious liberty have been embosomed, as the new wine in the cluster, and will see reasons for turning the promise into a prayer, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

This one thing, if nothing else existed, places us in the true succession of Presbyterianism, identified in all ages and countries with religious liberty; and for this alone, if no more, future generations will rise up and call us blessed.

II. The life of Presbyterianism, when it assumes a form or body in the way of doctrine, takes that of Calvinism; that system which, in opposition to Arminianism, Pelagianism, and all other isms, and for want of a better and less obnoxious title, history has thus baptized and we are willing to assume.

Whatever difficulties may attend the philosophical explanation or theological genesis of the fact, it is plain to every one that the idea of Presbyterianism actualizes itself theologically in the form of Calvinism; in other words, if we may be allowed so to express it, the "*moral vertebra*" of Presbyterianism, are found in that great system of which Calvin was the heaven appointed elaborator, the first fruits of scientific theology after the reformation. This is repulsive enough when skeletonized, or even reconstructed with ever so much ingenious moral anatomy as a mere system, but still it is indispensable as the underlying foundation of every theology, either of the intellect or feeling, which has the true elements of power and of ultimate success in our world. There is an element in Calvinism with which true Presbyterianism, and we say, also, true Christianity in every age, consciously or unconsciously, has assimilated, and which in the form of dogma or of life, it must appropriate to be perfect. In our apprehensions, our physical frame could about as well be erect and adapted for

its purposes without a back bone, as the glory and the life of piety be complete without the great truths called Calvinism.

That there is an everlasting purpose or plan, according to which all things came to pass, existing archetypally or ideally in the Infinite Mind, before it is actualized in time, by creation, providence and redemption : that there is a supreme will and infinite laws, to which all are subject who are creatures of God, and by which they are influenced so as to make certain, ultimate and eternal purposes, without interfering with the liberty of individual will, or the responsibility of individual persons : that there is a sovereign power, whose counsels are guided by infinite wisdom and kindness, to whose management and not to chance, caprice, or creature influence, the universe is indebted for its stability, and by which its progress and final consummation is made certain : these are truths which both reason and piety, the profoundest reflections of philosophy, and the deepest demands of our moral nature and actual necessities alike require in constructing an "intellectual system of the universe," and grappling with the dark problems of present existence. No man, or body of men, can have strength or continuity in church or state ; can meet successfully the actual difficulties in the way of movement in this world, without grasping, digesting and assimilating these great elemental ideas. In the convulsions of this state of existence, no other system will furnish anchorage of safety, or in its more dangerous calms, certain impulse to activity. This will be testimony even of those who do not understand its philosophy and have never felt its power. But this strongly vertebrated system, more than any other probably, for its perfection needs to be clothed all over, made living, beautiful, influential, true, by the addition and harmonious influence of vital godliness, the infusion of inward life, and the free working of genial piety. Around the triangle, quadrangle, hexagon or polygon, if we may use the figure, there must be described a circle in which, while the points are all enclosed, the

strong affections and activities of regenerated nature may have ample scope and verge for their appropriate manifestation.

From the settlement of the great Augustinian controversy, and the re-establishment of the same great fundamental truths by the herculean labors of Calvin, this has been the difficulty and *desideratum* with a nature such as ours, and tendencies to extremes, such as history in all cases shows to belong to it. It has always been our favorite sentiment and strong conviction, confirmed by study of the past, that the life of genuine Presbyterianism, especially of American Presbyterianism, as expressed in the adopting act, presents the reconciliation and actual harmony of these great elements, amidst the perpetual one sided tendencies which circumstances and controversies have occasioned, developed, and strengthened! Presbyterianism, or Calvinism, could not be complete without the life and warmth, vital forces and free play manifested in the revivals of the era of Whitfield and the Tennants, any more than in the moderatism of Scotland. It took form from the pressure of the times in the "New Side" section of the church, and found refuge and reproductiveness in the "Log College" and its affiliated influences and lineal successions. Without this element it is but a stalwarth skeleton, a sepulchre of departed glory, a valley of dry bones, exceeding dry! "A constitutional history of American Presbyterianism," (as appears in the admirable little work entitled the "Log College,") with these elements left out or crowded into a corner, resembles the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet omitted, or the drama of the Reformation dissociated from the life of Luther, or the Revolution viewed apart from the genius of Washington. New Side and the Log College were in the true line of succession. Thence came Nassau Hall in New Jersey, Liberty Hall in Virginia, and Jefferson College in Western Pennsylvania, centres of wide and growing radiation, which embosomed for the times then present, the new wine of living Presbyterianism, even as the clusters of all antecedent periods of the church.

The life of Presbyterianism expressed in the adopting Act of 1729, and the principles it embodied, were incorporated into the basis adopted in the memorable period of secession in 1758. The authors and advocates of that measure meant just what they said. Ingenious efforts have been made, indeed, to prove that they meant something else or nothing, or designed to stultify themselves by stickling for trifles at this solemn crisis : But beyond question they purposed to preserve, in the period of re-unification and amidst the joyous pæans attending it, the principle for which they had contended and suffered, and were reproached and afflicted, viz. : that while they held the great vitals of the system intact and sacred, they were to be allowed to give it power and influence and life, in practice, without incurring suspicion of heresy, or being condemned by the cold hearted and formal for disloyalty to truth, or disorderly measures for doing good and saving souls. They testified plainly their conviction, that while there were torrid regions of fervor, which should be eschewed, there were also polar regions towards which the sluggishness of human nature is ever tending and threatening to bear with it the church of God. This principle can never safely be overpowered. Whenever men, where circles of activity and general influence have still the inscribed orders of Calvinism, or where free play of muscles and life have the underlying system of orthodoxy to preserve them from improper manifestations, come to be repressed, repudiated or crushed ; whenever mere accuracy of system, or swearing in the *ipsissima verba* of formulary is the sole recommendation of excellence, and efforts to do good and save men and souls by a genial adaptation to existing tendencies or resistance of actual perversions, is deemed recreancy to faith and order, there must be, in the nature of the case, a living protest in the body and a perpetual controversy, or it must assume, for the time, the form of a distinctive and separate life somewhere else.

The struggle in this case is not for latitudinarian forms of

expression, or capricious opposition to hallowed phraseology, or license for wild and paradoxical measures, though it is always liable to be carried to these extremes, but for the life and soul of a chosen system of faith and order. It is the old and ever perpetuated controversy between the dogma and the life, whether consciously or unconsciously of its true bearings on the parts of the advocates, which cannot be relinquished with a good conscience and divine approbation. In such a case, the "higher law" of doing good and fulfilling, as far as in us lies, the great dispensation of saving men and preserving the life of piety and of the church, must govern if there is a plain conflict forced upon individuals by circumstance or the exercise of power. Here again, posterity and impartial contemporaries must decide, and history, written when the prejudices and passions engendered by the collisions have passed away, must record where in the Presbyterian church, once a unit and now separated, the life of the system is found, and who are the men, and which is the body that is the living representative of the system of doctrine taught in the scriptures, embodied in our standards, and which lived in the hearts of our fathers.

Any body which embosoms the great principles of living Calvinism, an activity held aloof from licentiousness and disorder by its orthodoxy on the one hand, and preserved from inaction and formalism by its piety on the other, we may confidently expect will remain indestructible, until these great blessings are matured and engrafted into the living and united church of the future and the permanent. The Petrine and Pauline type of christianity was harmonized in a higher form by the apostle John, in whom law and life were reconciled in love. So it may be God's good purpose at some future period to unite the bones and the life of Presbyterianism in the form of love.

III. The true life of Presbyterianism has manifested itself in the form of co-operative christianity, in distinction from ecclesiastical exclusiveness. The tendencies or peculiarities con-

veyed by these terms, we presume are altogether intelligible and have always existed. On the one hand, there is a disposition and determination to conduct the work of doing good denominationally. True, the words church and ecclesiastical are used, sometimes indeed, as if the opposite pole was worldly or pagan. But by church is meant only the section or subsection to which the party belongs, and not "all that in every place" profess the true religion and "call upon our Lord Jesus Christ both theirs and ours."

By this miserable contraction of a glorious word, this confounding the church with a particular denominational organization, to the exclusion of all other evangelical christians, much that is hallowed in association is gained for this form of benevolence, and indirect disadvantage is done to the other system.

On the other hand, co-operative christianity takes the church in the true sense, and purposes to unite the energies of evangelical Christians, in making a common christianity as widely and speedily prevalent as possible. The great principle which lies at the ground of this style of christianity, is, that the body of Christ has different parts, each with distinct functions and adaptations, but all designed to work harmoniously, "knit together in love," towards a common result. The parts have mutual need of each other, and "by that which every joint supplieth, in the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love," and to the ultimate accomplishment of God's great purposes. Whatever may be said of the truth or scriptural excellence or ultimate expediency of these two tendencies, their existence cannot be doubted. Voluntary associations and ecclesiastical organizations are not names, but things arising from honest convictions, and expressive of settled tendencies. The Judaistic spirit of law and authority, and the Gentile spirit of liberty and life which have existed in the church from the beginning, are here reproduced.



Now if any one feature characterised the early and excellent period of Presbyterianism in America, formed its peculiar glory tended to make it what by God's blessing it became, constituted its life and signature, it was this spirit of co-operative christianity. This spirit expressed itself in the original composition of the Presbyterian church. It is well known to all students of that period, and acknowledged by all impartial historians, that different types of christianity entered into the first American Presbytery, viz: New England, and Scotch Irish. This spirit also manifested itself in the plan of union, originating in the true spirit of liberal piety and benevolence, combining some of the very best elements of then existing christianity, though destined to endure rough handling in a later period, when "a generation arose which knew not Joseph," and on whom the mantle of Moses, the meekest of all men, did not fall. This spirit also gave birth to the noble cluster of modern charities, so eminently characterising the period in which we live, and called voluntary associations; associations, not of unbelievers or of persons out of the church, or worldlings, or pagans, but of Christians, who agree in the great vitals of truth, and are supremely devoted to the propagation of a common christianity, or the common salvation over our land and world. Among those who originated, and who have nobly sustained these institutions by their prayers and contributions and efforts, were found the very flower of the Presbyterian church. American Presbyterianism denies her parentage, and must forget her past history, if instead of being liberal, catholic and co-operative, she becomes sectarian, denominational, and exclusive.

The other tendency has been developed, and whether for ultimate good or evil, has become one of the distinguishing characteristics of some parts of the church. There is in our age, a high church tendency, the very genius of which is to do their business in their own way; to build schemes of benevolence on a separate basis, to operate through distinctive Boards, and

withdraw more and more from all forms of co-operative christianity. Gradually, the adherents to old and enlarged organs of benevolence, in some branches of the church, are becoming fewer and fewer. Some may still be seen, whose affinities and feelings and education, or circumstances, bind them to their earlier love and cherished objects. But tendencies in that direction, are beginning to be viewed by the dominant powers, with increasing suspicion and distrust. Even if some are allowed to follow their preferences, without thereby endangering their reputation and loyalty, it is because greater evils are presumed to attend a more rigid construction of duty in particular cases and localities, than that which grows out of temporary acquiescence or tacit connivance. Liberty of co-operation without impeachment of orthodoxy, is the exception to the general rule, not only in the case of individuals, but of institutions which betray affinities of this kind in other branches of our common christianity, Prelatical and Presbyterian.

We leave these tendencies to work out their results, watching the while, with a curious eye, and in some cases an anxious heart, the progress of exclusive ecclesiasticism, till it arrives at its predestined acme of universality.

But, brethren, we are the living representatives of another kind of christianity in the Presbyterian church. If we have suffered denominationally for this catholicism; if our contributions and co-operations have redounded less to the extension of our peculiar body and distinctive principles than to the grand interests of christianity; if our magnanimity has not always been fully reciprocated, and occasionally we have been restive, still none can deny that this has been hitherto our spirit, and we think, heretofore our glory. We have united our energies with others, and given liberally our means in distributing the Bible over the land and the world, leaving its sanctifying and transforming influence on individual minds and communities, to assume its own free form of external christian-

ity. We have not been unwilling or afraid again to assist in circulating the so called "Baxterized Calvinism" of the Tract Society, lest in saving men's souls unconstitutionally it may not swell our own numbers. We have not been afraid either, that the noble army of colporteurs, in teaching men the "way of life" would trench upon the dignities of the clerical office or the preponderance of Presbyterian power. We have cooperated cheerfully and liberally in carrying a common christianity and common Calvinism through the channel of the Home Missionary Society over the waste places of the land, though sometimes, possibly oftener than we expected or might have desired, it has assumed external organizations not precisely Presbyterian, and benevolence seemed sometimes to be like giving our means to hamper or limit our own enlargement. We have gone, too, into the American Sunday School Union, and continued with it, and prayed for it, and rejoiced in its success, though its benefits may have enured to others more than to us. And so have we given our men, and our means, and our prayers to the American Board, with no stipulations previously ratified, that we should be represented in the foreign field in proportion to our contributions in distinctly Presbyterian church organizations. Nor have we any disposition to regret our catholicism in any of these respects. The great cause is one, and "all are ours:" what was lost to us, if there was any loss by this generous course, was gain for Christ, for truth, and God's glory. And now, having obtained help of God, and having continued hitherto, and believing ourselves called of God to a great work, and with brighter omens than ever in the future horizon, let us see the bearings of this subject. We are prepared to speak to our christian brethren, and especially our brethren of New England and of the Congregationalist body, with whom we have so many affinities in common, for attachments to whom we have suffered so much, with whom social ties and family relationship bring us in such close

contact, in the language of sincere christian frankness. If you will meet us as Presbyterians by profession and principle, in the same spirit of magnanimity, here are our hands, and hearts, and purses. We desire no amalgamation of bodies, or giving up of distinctive peculiarities. We shall allow no unhallowed compromises. But we are willing, on proper principles, to continue and increase these ties of brotherhood and co-operation. We are anxious to prove what can be done for our common country and wretched world by this catholic spirit. We desire to demonstrate that the cause of our glorious Master with us, is dearer than denominational glory or personal and party exaltation. Brethren, "let us not fall out by the way." The natural affinities of Scotch Irish Presbyterians, are with our Old School brethren, but that way seems hedged up by Providence. Now the world knows where we stood on the question of the abrogation of the plan of union; in other words, whether the principle of co-operative christianity, as embodied in that plan, was constitutional to Presbyterianism, or whether the life of Presbyterianism allows of this element without self-destruction. The world, also, will judge and does judge where the sympathies and co-operations of New England naturally tend. We acknowledge and admire this New England Christendom: it is a great fact which cannot be ignored: it has most happily kept itself from unnecessary embroilment hitherto in our family quarrels; but, brethren, on the broad basis of a common christianity, there are elements of strength, and special rights and mutual duties and obligations, which neither they or we can fail to recognize and appreciate, as we look forward to the future, and project our plans for saving our country and the world. We can exist alone. We have a work to do that none can do for us. We are, and purpose by God's help, to remain Presbyterians: but, we are Christians also. We know the power of union, and desire to have all this power with us that we can conscientiously and

consistently invoke. With high church *jure divino* Presbyterians, Congregationalists or Prelatists, co-operative christianity is, on principle, impossible ; but I speak for one, not knowing how far my faith is that of the body : this is not my faith and never has been, though I was taught it by the ecclesiastical Gamaliel of Presbyterianism at Princeton, twenty-five years ago. We were inexpressibly gratified, after preparing what we have now said, to meet so noble an endorsement of these views in the instructions given at Andover to the missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. We accept gladly the pledge thus given, that New England, as she is best represented by that Board, is ready to unite with us in the use of a co-operative christianity, to spread the gospel through the earth—"substantial unity with a circumstantial variety"—leaving the form it shall assume externally, in every case to be governed by circumstances and the wants of the regenerated and sanctified heart.

IV. The life of Presbyterianism, manifests itself characteristically once more, in the aggressive, as distinguished from the merely conservative type of christianity. It is an element of progress, rather than of retrocession or retardation. These tendencies have existed and been exemplified by human nature and in human history, in the regenerate and unregenerate, from the beginning. It was the first distinct divergence of primitive christianity. By the interaction of these two antagonistic elements, the world has heretofore moved on and is kept in its present position. There are men and bodies whose creed is, that "the chief end of man" is to hold back ; that "the grace of God is given to man" that the world may be kept quiet and orderly, and that the chief peril of our fallen humanity, even partially sanctified, is undue activity and excessive zeal. There are men whose idea of the church is, that it is a high wall around the waters of salvation to keep them pure and unwasted ; to transmit them undefiled and undiminished to future generations. They do not seem to apprehend any peril

of feculence, or the formation of miry and marshy places from such a process. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the chief end of man, his duty, destiny, delight, and the necessity of his nature, is to be active; that the glorifying of God which conducts to the enjoyment of him forever, consists in doing something; that "the grace of God is given to every man to profit withal," and that all Christians are "workers together with God" in the progressive development of his plans; that the church of God is a great river, the streams whereof should make glad, not only the city of God, but all the tabernacles of the Most High among men: yea, "which being brought forth into the sea" of human corruption, "the waters thereof shall be healed, and every thing that moveth whithersoever this river cometh, shall live;" and that the only way to preserve the church itself, in any way or form from becoming a great marsh of feculence and pestilence, "given to salt" and incurable, is to have these waters always in motion, always issuing forth, always brought into an aggressive and transforming contact with the corruptions of the world and its influences, and institutions of evil.

No one who has studied the genius of Presbyterianism and the facts of its history, can doubt in which of these two categories she has heretofore stood and ought always to stand. No one who has analysed that glorious manifestation of living Presbyterianism and Calvinism in the free church of Scotland, can hesitate to say, that the true spirit is there exemplified, and that the residuary church in contrast, resembled the crispy caricature which the locust leaves behind when it emerges to life, or the caterpillar grave which the butterfly at its resurrection leaves to mark whence its joyous flight began. Conservatism in its place is good and necessary. There is a great branch of the church, ancient and venerable, ponderous with precedents and power, wedded to the state and compromising with an evil world, which acts as a great power of conservatism. It is eminently

the *remora* to progress, the massive drag on the wheels of advancement, immensely conservative. Standing like a mighty breakwater, there is little danger of the world going forward to fast, however impelled and agitated while it exists. Other churches, however, have sometimes emulated this special dispensation, and gloried in their ultra conservatism. Institutions and oracles have sometimes felt themselves called of God to throw themselves abreast of the advancing tide of what they deemed fanatical velocity of development; men have interposed to save imperiled orthodoxy, and devoted influence and talent to embalm antique forms of thought, reproduce obsolete modes of worship, or oppose the too rapid accomplishment of the world's salvation. The croakers against progress, the genuine successors of the let alone and keep quiet generation, every where have shouted hosannas of applause and encouragement, and offered holocausts of flattery. But these do not represent the true life of Presbyterianism or christianity; these cloistered Protestants against progress and aggression, have not sufficiently mingled with the active spirit of the age: their vision is distorted by a kind of mental *musca volitantes*, arising from over study, without healthful exercise of the humane sympathies and activities in this every day working world. "Verily they have their" work and "reward." But the spirit of Presbyterianism is aggressive, and whoever, as individuals or a body, possesses this spirit, are in the lineal succession of its original and glorious life. Circumstances and Providences indeed give shape to obligations and responsibilities. There may have been times and places where conservatism was a dispensation. It may have been glory enough sometimes at critical periods, when all christian attainments, and the citadel of christianity itself was threatened, to be ecclesiastical Charles Martels to stop the progress and turn back the tide of spiritual Saracenism. But however this may have been, this is not the time, nor is this country the place of such a dispensation. As the Lord once said to

Moses, so he now says to every standard bearer in the sacramental hosts, "Why cryest thou unto me? Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward." "Go up and possess the land." Our body, brethren, to so large extent the fruit of revivals, occupying fields won by aggressive efforts, representing in an eminent degree the progressive spirit, and bearing within itself a genial system of combined strength of doctrine, and vigor of living piety, must "take the responsibility" of being prominent in this representative spirit of aggression. By an intenser spirit of piety and benevolence, and growing extensiveness of outward influence, by means of our organized agencies, which link us at once with the remotest portions of our land and the darkest parts of our globe, we must carry on aggressive movements till our whole country is thoroughly christianized, and then, and in the meanwhile, also, assist in the aggressive movements which embrace the world.

The circumstances of our age and country call especially that we should thus worthily actualize the life of Presbyterianism, not in collision with other co-ordinate and co-operative influences, but still as a distinctive body, in perfect friendship with all other Christians, even the most conservative, but with just the freedom and independence of action and elevation above all depressive anxieties about their good opinion of our order and orthodoxy, as if they existed not.

The special theatre for the life of Presbyterianism in this, its aggressive feature, is the middle class of our country, where the power, and usually the numerical majority is found. It is a fact, whatever be its philosophy, that just here has generally been the field of Presbyterian influence, and the chief element of Presbyterian power. We do not admit that the gospel, according to Presbyterian and Calvinistic administration, is not adapted to the poor. "To the poor the gospel is preached," and to the poor especially it is adapted. But (possibly owing to our failure, sin, sloth or mistakes) this field in many parts of the



land is pre-occupied and nobly filled by other portions of the general church, to whom be all praise; and even if the gospel finds men in this condition, it very soon lifts them above it in the ascending social scale. On the other hand, we do not allow the royal taunt of the renegade Presbyterian, that our form of religion is not fit for a gentleman. William of Orange, a Calvinist and Presbyterian, would compare well as a Christian and gentleman, with James VIth of Scotland and Ist of England, this royal reviler of a system to which his native land owed then, and owes still, all its glory. Perhaps, here too, we have erred, and have sometimes allowed our ourselves to

"Draw too rough a copy of the Christian face,  
Without the smile, the beauty and the grace,"

and in our honest zeal against worldly conformity, may have neglected too much the æsthetic in man's nature, and the lovely and beautiful in christian character. But still the fact is, that most of "the wise, and noble, and mighty of this world," do not feel any special affinities or desire of identification with the doctrines of Calvinism or the forms of Presbyterianism. We must take things and men as they are, and acquiesce in our dispensation, and a great and glorious dispensation it is, to occupy the ground and material for which our system, with its peculiarities and appliances, has special adaptations, and which has always had special appetences and predispositions towards us. We must try to make Christians and Presbyterians of that class in our country, where activity, and learning, and political power, and moulding influence are usually found, and thus try to work both upwards and downwards in the social scale, along with all who in high and low places are engaged in the same work. And then again it is exceedingly significant and encouraging and admonitory, that our great field of operation as Presbyterians, and especially New School Presbyterians, the place of our strength and the land of our promise, is in the new and giant States of the West, the destined seat of power in our country.

Western New York is in miniature, what the West generally promises to become, under aggressive measures wisely and energetically and patiently prosecuted by evangelical Christians, and by none more propitiously than our body.

Let aggressive movements then be our watchword, let our country, for the sake of the world, be our inspiration, and we need not fear but that conservatism enough will be found in sound Calvinism and good taste and common sense, to preserve us from perils in that other quarter. As one has well remarked, "in the processes of properly conducted activities, sufficient conservatism will usually be generated," a remark marvelously verified by history, both in church and state, in individuals and organizations.

And now brethren and fathers, without apologizing for the length of our discussion, which if done at all, could not possibly be done aright without trenching somewhat on usual proprieties, let me say in conclusion : Such in our humble, but honest apprehension is the idea, and such are the distinctive peculiarities and special mission of our body, our reasons for the hope that is in us, that we are the lineal succession of the life of Presbyterianism ; the reasons also, on the principle of the text, why we have not been hitherto destroyed, and why we have a right to believe ourselves indestructible till our mission is accomplished. Is it not a glorious idea, and a blessed mission ? Does it not link us in God's covenant and providence, with the best interests of his church and his future plans towards the world ? Have we any reason to be ashamed of our position, amidst the common forces of our King, in preparation for "the last conflict of great principles ?" Have we occasion for any sentiment but pity and compassion for those, who, under the pressure of circumstances and temptations, have forsaken us, or of good will to those who, from honest convictions have not joined us, or who from mistaken views of duty have opposed or persecuted us ? "Father forgive them, they know not what they do," and how much they themselves are interested in our integrity and preservation.

Others, who are Christians, Protestants and Presbyterians, as well as ourselves, must find out and fulfill their mission and dispensation, for there is room enough for all. Like the ancient Patriarch, let them with our good wishes and prayers, finish their "generation work and fall in sleep," a sweet sleep after life's fitful fever or faithful toil.

If it is the special mission of others to defend ecclesiastical power against supposed or actual encroachments, to curb the spirit of the age and the over-joyous influences of freedom, it is ours to be the representatives and advocates, the defenders, and if necessary, the martyrs of religious liberty. There is "a glorious army of martyrs" in the same cause, embalmed in the memories and affections of God's people, "of whom the world was not worthy," whose example is animating, and whose spirit we trust is not dead. It is glory enough to suffer or be identified with them in their position, and then share with them their reward.

If others are specially called to watch the underlying vertebræ of the glorious body, and see that none are dislocated or disarranged; if some are raised up to show the naked anatomy in its completeness, which we hold equally with them, or to shake these dry bones in terror against all unhallowed efforts to steal any away, it is ours to show the working of the great system in living power, to clothe it with beauty and have it animated by inward energy, and bring it to bear in its majesty and might against actual forms of error and unrighteousness in this wicked and cursed world, usurped by Satan but purchased, all of it and every one of its millions by our great Redeemer, and thus to bring it in willing allegiance to Him to whom it is the will of God our Father it should be restored by the instrumentality of his church. If conscious of orthodoxy, let us not be over careful of the reputation. Let us ever aim to *be*, rather than *seem* in every thing right and honest and true and lovely. Thus we will best prove to our sister body, in the language of holy writ: "Thou

hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam of the timber shall answer it; Wo to him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity."

Others may feel it their duty and dispensation to demonstrate what particular sections and denominations can do alone and with exclusive agencies and organs, whether Prelates in fear of the destruction of Prelacy, or high church Presbytery in fear that christianity will take precedence of particular and preferred forms. Some may feel called on by conscience or conviction, or as the result of education or morbid influences, to say practically, "stand back" or aside, for we cannot co-operate with you without diluting the truth, or sanctioning imperfect or erroneous views. It may be the glory and mission of others, to exemplify the power of isolated action, and demonstrate the expediency of exclusive ecclesiasticism; be it ours to show the power and beauty and energy and results of co-operative christianity. Let us try to actualize, in combined efforts to do good, our Savior's ideal of the church, embodied in his high-priestly intercession, though we may not thus be able so fully to "sacrifice to our own drag and net," or glorify as greatly the church in the narrow signification of modern practical hermeneutics. Then, "though our brethren that hated us and cast us out in God's name, said Let the Lord be glorified, he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" and repent, and in one stick, "bands and beauty," Judah and Israel yet be united.

And finally, if others are called specially to the dispensation of conservatism, to keep the world from moving too fast and far, and the church from fanatical and unconstitutional methods of obeying the great command of a common and ascending Savior; if men and institutions are called to the work of holding back, using the supposed or actually necessary frictional influences on the great wheels of advance-

ment and aggression, let us, without envying a temporary popularity, be thankful that ours is a different and more delightful mission: one, which falls in sweetly with the natural activities of our regenerated spirits: one, imperatively demanded from some persons and bodies at present, by the circumstances of our age, and country, and world. Let us meekly, and humbly, and trustfully, and hopefully come up to the mission of aggressiveness. Let us war always and increasingly with spiritual weapons, against every form of evil and anti-christian power. Let us go forward, though Red Seas stretch before us, and Piahiroths frown on either side. Let us go up and possess the land with all the Calebs and Joshuas of the times. Let us project our schemes of expansiveness on the large scale which Providence plainly leads us to construct, and our country's crisis demands. And, having done our part in our day and generation to give our country to its rightful sovereign, let us, in the use of gloriously adapted agencies, which reach "from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strands," "from the rivers to the ends of the earth," do what in us lies to have our world, also, speedily and universally redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled by the spirit of the gospel of the great God and our Saviour. Brethren, we may die; some of us must, before long. Our activities, at farthest, will be put forth only for a small period, for "the night cometh." But principles will live. Let us so labor, and live, and struggle, that when we are resting from our labors our "works may follow us," and our successors may bless and not blame us, as they take up what we leave of the great work God has given us to do.

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The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income. The document also highlights the need for regular reconciliation of accounts to identify any discrepancies early on.

In addition, the document provides a detailed breakdown of the accounting process, from the initial recording of transactions to the final preparation of financial statements. It explains how each step contributes to the overall accuracy and reliability of the financial information. The document also includes a section on the importance of internal controls and how they can be used to prevent fraud and errors.

The second part of the document focuses on the practical aspects of accounting, including the use of accounting software and the preparation of financial statements. It provides a step-by-step guide to using accounting software, from setting up the system to entering transactions and generating reports. The document also explains how to interpret the financial statements and what they tell you about the financial health of the business.

Finally, the document discusses the importance of staying up-to-date on changes in accounting standards and regulations. It provides a list of resources for staying current on these changes, including professional organizations and industry publications. The document concludes with a summary of the key points and a final reminder of the importance of accurate financial reporting.