

folly and turmoil. There is a banded liquor interest in the land which, by the votes it controls, blocks all efforts at limiting its destructive influences. *There is no hope for the future of our Sabbath and the effectual staying of the ravages of intemperance save by the arousing of the Christian consciousness of the community.* And what human instrumentality has God for so dispensing His capital than by the New Testament church and its ordinances?

ACTS ix. 31 is a truth in history. The church was working its way amidst opposition that seemed to stamp the struggle as hopeless, but it multiplied, and, by being edified, built up. This is the very opposite of disintegration. Whoever aids in *that* is not the Saviour's friend. Let that be well understood. The devil destroys, God builds, so do His servants (1 Cor. iii. 10), and this edification is a reciprocal work: the spirit—*love*—in which we must build (1 Cor. viii. 1), and thus only can be fulfilled Eph. ii. 21.

THU our denomination, if it would do its share, must "edify itself," not dissipate its energies. It has a history; it has, or should have, its own autonomy and its own especial work. The words of Principal Fairbairn, as he gave this year his address to the English Union, of which he is chairman, are suggestive when he speaks of the Spirit life of the Christian church as being not so much broken up by, as distributed among, the different sections of the universal church. It becomes, therefore, a pertinent enquiry, What is our especial gift in the exercise of which we go forth to the work? This we might better understand if we as others traced our pedigree a little more thoroughly, and go back, as others cannot, to the early Independents, as distinguished from the Puritan. Puritanism never freed itself as Independency did from political and doctrinal intolerance. Cromwell and his secretary, Milton, were Independents; so were Robinson, of Leyden, and John Owen; Richard Baxter was not, though of all the Puritans he, perhaps, was the broadest in his Christian charity. The States of Massachusetts and Connecticut that persecuted the Quakers and burned witches were Puritan, but the Pilgrim Fathers had learnt the true liberty which conscience demands, and were Independent.

It will not hurt us to remember *our fathers*, and we may be pardoned if we recall for a moment Cromwell and his Ironsides—true friends of liberty, let prejudice distort as it may; and Independents we may do well to remember. How invincible they were, those Ironsides! The gay Cavaliers were brave, ready to dash fearlessly on the foe; but they wavered before the stern yeomen of Cromwell's army. The Spartans of Thermopylae did not excel in sterling bravery, nor equal them in high principle. They won on every field; their enemy never saw their backs. Never! When the recalled Charles returned to rule and curse the realm that, in a weak hour, welcomed him back, this army must needs be disbanded. Grim and stern they marshalled on Blackheath, knowing that their work was done, a new order of things beginning, their leader dead, his relentless foes in ascendancy. They must have had forebodings of the scorn in which their heroes would be held and their God dishonoured, and yet at the call of duty they disbanded quietly; no mutiny, no protest, because they deemed it the right thing to do, and they entered the peaceful avocations of life, that army of invincibles! Not one single instance of violence or cruelty has been brought home to their disbandment. Not one instance of profanity or lawlessness, and their foes had lynx eyes. Fifty thousand men, whose skill and courage had driven the finest infantry of Europe before them like chaff before the gale, who had carried the day on every field they trod at the voice of duty, disappeared without a word among the peaceful workers of the empire; and so nobly bore they the work of peace that it passed into a proverb did any work or tradesman stand out conspicuously among his fellows, "Ah, one of Cromwell's Ironsides." England is only beginning to learn what she owes to-day to those sturdy Independents. They were a preserving salt amid the court corruption, the leaven of liberty and worth which makes the Anglo-Saxon world to-day the world of the noble and the free. No Briton need be afraid to own kin with that old land working out the problem of religious liberty; and America owes its freedom to the men of Plymouth Rock, and they and the Ironsides were brethren.

Theirs was a faith broader than the creeds of our present denominationalism; the Evan-