

growing with the growing numbers and spiritual necessities of the population. I do not say that our Church is in this respect doing all she might do; but when here and elsewhere we see new churches rising, new congregations forming, new parishes organised, new centres of Christian activity created wherever there arises the demand for them, I think I may confidently appeal to this as one among many proofs I might adduce that her ancient endowments have not strangled the life of the Church of Scotland, and that, as to all that constitutes the health and vigour of a Christian Church, she is not in an effete or moribund condition. And this, too, let me only add, is the best Church-defence argument. Public meetings and platform speeches have their use. It is well to meet argument with counter-argument, and to show, as able and eloquent men have been doing, that on this question we are not afraid of an appeal to reason and common sense. But such efforts are but too apt to generate odious and unchristian animosities, and to lend fuel to the unhallowed fire of party spirit. The best bulwark of the Church is the character of the Church itself. The best way to save the Church is to show that she is worth preserving. Be it yours and mine, my friends, in our several spheres of duty, by our Christian zeal and self-denying efforts for the spiritual welfare of the community, to present in its most cogent and convincing form this argument to the world. Be it yours and mine, even amidst the storm that threatens her existence, by quietly continuing our efforts to extend her boundaries and increase her efficiency, to show that we at least have not lost faith in our Church's future."

AN AMERICAN VIEW.

PROFESSOR C. A. BRIGGS, D. D., of New York, a well-known author and joint-editor of the *Presbyterian Review*, sends an article to *The New York Independent* on the Scottish General Assemblies at which he was present. It is interesting to observe how the discussions of our Supreme Courts strike a thoughtful American Presbyterian. He reports both General Assemblies to have been distinguished by an earnest, spiritual tone such as has not been noted for many years. In the practical work of the churches what seems to have struck him most was the Report of the Christian Life and Work Committee of the Church of Scotland. He dwells with approval upon the proposed organisation of Women's Work, and he regards the proposals as to deaconesses as embracing the advantages of the English and Continental systems without their objectionable features. The Young Men's Guild receives commendation,

and the learned Professor evidently considers its constitution as in some respects in advance of the American Young Men's Christian Association; he says it is "more comprehensive in work and less comprehensive in organisation." He describes the Disestablishment debate in the Free Church, and takes notice of the enthusiasm awakened in the Established Church by the Report on Church Defence. He also furnishes the American public with a very fair account of the Union discussion in last Assembly. He sums up the situation as regards the Church in these words:—

"There can be little doubt that the Established Church has a certain advantage in the situation at present. In the struggle against Disestablishment and Disendowment they have all the weight of the conservatism of the nation on their side. They have organised the entire Church into local societies to agitate in Church defence, and their organisation has certainly been conducted with masterly skill. They have one thousand working Committees in different parts of the land. They have also rallied to their standards a considerable number of the Free Church, especially the Highlands, who are opposed to Disestablishment and Disendowment, and also very generally members of the Episcopal Church, and that increasing body of influential men, outside of all ecclesiastical connection, who admire the breadth of opinion in the Church of Scotland, and have little care for ecclesiastical and dogmatic principles. There are not a few even in the United Presbyterian Church who hesitate to rob the ancient Church of its endowments. The campaign has been conducted with greater skill in the defence of the Establishment than in the attack upon it. For the present, at least, the Established Church has the confidence of success in its defence, and feels that it is gaining largely upon the other churches. It claims to be considerably larger than all the other Presbyterian churches combined."

ERRONEOUS STATISTICS.

WE quote the following very mild yet weighty rebuke from the Scottish *Mission Record*, to teach our readers to beware of published Reports which mislead by many tens of thousands:—

"THE DISTRIBUTION AND STATISTICS OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCHES. (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, 2s. 6d.) The idea of this book is good. It is important to see at a glance the number and relative strength of congregations of all denominations in each place. It is to be regretted that the statistics, as far as the Church of Scotland is concerned,