

place to review their proceedings or express an opinion on what had been decided. Only in regard to one feature of those discussions and decisions he might surely congratulate the House, namely, that amid all their differences they professed to be united in keeping fast to the inspired Word and to the Confession of Faith. It was at any time base and dishonourable for a man to subscribe the Confession, or to keep his name attached to it, while conscious that he was at variance with its teachings—(applause)—but they had not found such dishonesty within their borders. (Applause.) All of them, ministers and office-bearers, put their names to the Confession *ex animo*, not in some vague sense, and with mental reservation. Their students could not fail to have noticed that; and in passing might he make a remark about their students which might seem somewhat playful, but which they might perhaps ponder, for it had truth in the heart of it. They need not be very much surprised that those young ‘sons of the prophets’—(laughter)—were rather prone to question the positive conclusions of older men. (Great laughter.) That was the tendency of ‘the sons of the Prophets’ even in the days of Elisha. (Continued laughter.) It would be remembered how they were not quite satisfied with the fact of Elisha’s translation—(great laughter)—but insisted that fifty of the most gifted among them—(laughter)—should go and search hill and valley for themselves. The Prophet assured them that it would prove only a waste of time—(renewed laughter)—and when at length he yielded, and they had put out their strength in all the confidence of youth—(laughter)—how did it end? They came back to report that after all he had been in the right. (Laughter and applause.) No doubt he smiled with mild satisfaction as he reminded them ‘Did I not say unto you, go not.’ They would understand his parable. (Continued laughter and applause.) But to return to their subject, their students could not fail to have observed that their discussions had proceeded on that understanding; for the contention of disputants on either side was to show what was and what was not consistent with the Confession of Faith—(applause)—no one proposing to admit teaching which could be fairly shown to be inconsistent therewith. (Applause.) Improvements might be suggested on phrases and expressions, and explanations given, but the doctrines themselves satisfied them and were heartily received among them. (Applause.) That was well, but at the same time, while they regarded the Holy Scripture as the infallible Word that was their guide unto all truth, ought it not to be their aim more than ever, and their prayer, to have such experience in the study of it as Jonathan Edwards recorded as his own:—‘Oftentimes, in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart, I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading—often dwelling long on one sentence to see the wonders contained in it, and yet almost every sentence seemed full of wonders.’”

#### WHAT THE MISSIONARY MEETINGS SAY IN REPLY.

There is no thermometer in the world more sensitive to the state of the surrounding moral and spiritual atmosphere than the *voluntary gifts* by which missionary and benevolent institutions are sustained. Does the income of the Protestant Evangelical Societies that hold their anniversaries—some fifty-five in number—show any symptom of a decline of heart-belief in the great doctrines