

home, and found a grave!—But, for the most part, the victims were “strangers in a strange land” and little will ever be known respecting them. Over some the desolate survivors will shed bitter tears, but others, who have not even one friend left to weep over the emigrant’s tomb, will lie uncared-for in an alien land. But in that far-away land whence they came—in some crowded “close” or sequestered glen,—there are eyes that will pay to their memory the loving tribute of sorrowing affection, and hearts and homes that will be desolated perhaps for life,—when the terrible tidings shall arrive. May He who dried the tears of the weeping household at Bethany be the stay and support of all the mourners bereaved by this sad calamity.

It would be easy to sentimentalise at length on such an event as this, but we have something to do with it more intimately concerning ourselves! Is there any ear so deaf that it cannot distinguish the solemn notes of warning that speak from the wreck of that burned steamboat,—words uttered on a similar occasion by Him who “spake as never man spake”—“Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” “Be ye also ready.”—Are not the warning words sufficiently distinct, sufficiently startling to awaken every slumbering conscience out of its guilty repose? Are there not among those who may read these pages some who on that fatal day were journeying by land or water and in at least as great apparent danger as those to whom the morrow never came? And would you have been ready, had the unexpected summons come to you? If conscience answers “no,” think what is your position, your turn might have come. *may* come soon;—“What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul.”—Let not another night pass over you and find you in this state. If business engrosses you, lay it aside for a time; no business can be so important as that of securing eternal weal instead of eternal woe, your Heavenly Father’s loving favour instead of His offended frown. Lose not a moment in making your peace with God. The winged thunderbolt, the poisoned shaft, that is to lay you low, may be even now on its way, and, ere you are aware, may fix your condition for eternity. Oh, then, for your soul’s sake, for the sake of Him who died for you, let not sleep again visit your eyelids till you have brought your sins where there is such full and free remission, and, leaving the downward path, have entered earnestly and truly on the way of Eternal Life. The present, and the present *alone*, is yours. “God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

There are other lessons of a very grave nature to be learned from the late catastrophe.—In common with many other re-

cent incidents, it has brought to light a startling amount of immorality,—irreligion, recklessness and want of principle,—which is becoming frightfully common in our country. We have all heard or read of dangers far more desperate, positions far more hopeless, in which heroic valour has been called forth and daring hearts have saved from the impending, it seemed, inevitable danger. But, in the burning of the *Montreal*, who can read without burning indignation the narrative of the want of uprightness, recklessness and disregard of human life in circumstances where it would have seemed that without the greatest carelessness and infatuation nearly all, if not all, of those two hundred and fifty human beings might have been saved; or of the cold-hearted robbery that, instead of aiding, thought only of robbing the victims. We do not wish to mark out those concerned as examples of signal wickedness. It is but an index of the time. Unfaithfulness, roguery and crime seem to be universally prevalent, and infidelity and irreligion are extending their deadly influence in every direction. And yet we hear of much good being done, of philanthropic enterprises undertaken, of earnest labours pursued for the good of souls. But, whatever is done, we see plainly that there is much, *much* more to be done. Surely, then, we are all called upon for redoubled exertion in every department of Christian labour. The young especially are yet within our reach. It depends much on our care for them *now*, whether they shall grow up respectable and Christian citizens, or unprincipled and immoral, to fill our prisons and penitentiaries, or to cause in future years more such “accidents” as the one we have been considering.

The earnest Cecil remarks that “such is the state of the world and so much depends on action that everything seems to say loudly to every man, “Do something, do it, do it.” More emphatically than ever this call is now addressed to us. And, if every Christian reader of the *Presbyterian* would now rise and go forth with renewed determination to “do something” and to do his utmost, what blessed results would follow! Think how many centres of Christian influence would be scattered throughout the land, spreading their ever widening undulations till at last the bright circles should meet and intermingle. We are responsible for our influence over others as well as for our individual actions. This is a consideration calculated to excite us to the greatest activity and zeal of which we are capable. Let us not become “weary in well doing,” but rather go on with double vigour, “remembering the words of the Lord Jesus how He said” “Work while it is day, for, behold, the night cometh when no man can work.”

“Think not of rest, though dreams be sweet,
Start up and ply your heavenward feet;
Is not God’s oath upon your head,
Ne’er to sink back on slothful bed.”

Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master’s midnight call.”

ONOMA.

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN CHURCHES.

FRANCE.

THE Convener of the Committee on Foreign Churches is persuaded that the following admirable, comprehensive and encouraging view of the labours of our brethren of the National Reformed Church of France will be perused with great interest. The paper is transmitted for the purpose, if possible, of awakening and giving practical effect to the interest which was evoked in every bosom by the successive appearances of the ministers they deputed to represent them in the General Assembly. Twice have they appeared there within three years: twice have they received assurances of sympathy and promises of support, and not once, as yet, have the circumstances of the Church seemed to warrant a collection or any effort whatever in their favour. The Committee are in hope that such a proof of our sympathy might soon be asked, and generally and liberally given.

The Central Protestant Society for Preaching the Gospel was founded in 1847.

The Confession of Faith prefixed to its constitution enacts that, in order to be a member of the Society, there must be an adhesion to the great doctrines of Christian orthodoxy.

The object of the Society, in terms of its regulations, is to labour for the development of faith and life in the bosom of the families of France; to seek their extension by all methods which, in God’s providence, present themselves, but methods which must always be in accordance with the law of the land, and the principles and practice of evangelical churches.

To attain this twofold object, the Society has instituted and maintains two departments of labour. With the view of promoting the interior development of churches already formed, it endeavours to provide for the spiritual wants of those numerous Protestants that are scattered over every part of the French soil by securing that they are visited by ministers or missionaries, and enjoy the benefits of public worship, wherever the means and the permission to establish it can be procured.

To provide for the increase of these congregations, the Society cherishes and confirms the religious movements which from time to time take place among the Roman Catholic population, or endeavours to form new congregations from that source, and provide them, as its means allow, with ministers and teachers, and whatever their spiritual welfare and special circumstances appear to require.

These two objects of the Society, distinct in principle, are almost uniformly found one in reality—the new Catholic stations stirring up the zeal of their Protestant brethren; and their churches in return forming a nucleus to which Romanists resort for instruction, and attach themselves ultimately in communion.

The Society, which was divided, at its commencement, into five sections, at present comprises eight. Paris, Bordeaux, Normandy, Middle-west, South-west, Bearn and Vannay. These sections are directed by a general committee, which meets at Paris three times a year, and by a permanent commission by which the labours of the whole are directed.

In this arrangement, simple at once and effective, the Society follows those old and revered Churches of France which it labours to serve, and before which it is ready to retire,