

man, borne on the billows, to make efforts to save himself from destruction? Ought you then to have need of our ministrations on this subject?

Your last hour is just at hand; in the twinkling of an eye you are to appear before the tribunal of your God. You may usefully employ the moment which remains. The most of those who die daily under your eyes, suffer that moment to pass, and die without improving it. You imitate their negligence; the same fate awaits you; like them, you will die before you have begun to lead better lives. They were warned of their danger and you also are warned; their unhappy lot makes no impression upon you, and the death which awaits you will have no more effect upon these who shall survive.

There is a succession of blindness which passes from parents to children, and which is perpetuated on the earth: all determine to reform their lives, and yet most people die before they commence the work of reformation.—*Maisillon*.

#### THE SURPRISE OF DEATH.

THE surprise which you have to fear is not one of those rare, singular events which happen to but a few unhappy persons, and which it is more prudent to disregard, than to provide for. It is not that an instantaneous, sudden death may seize you,—that the thunder of heaven may fall upon you,—that you may be buried, under the ruins of your houses,—that a shipwreck may overwhelm you in the deep: nor do I speak of those misfortunes whose singularity renders them more terrible, but at the same time less to be apprehended.

It is a familiar event; there is not a day but furnishes you with examples of it; almost all men are surprised by death; all see it approach, when they think it most distant; all say to themselves, like the fool in the gospel;—

“Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.”

Thus have died your neighbours, your friends, almost all those of whose death you have been informed; all have left you in astonishment at the suddenness of their departure. You have sought reasons for it, in the imprudence of the person while sick, in the ignorance of physicians, in the choice of remedies; but the best and indeed the only reason is, that the day of the Lord always cometh by surprise.

The earth is like a large field of battle where you are every day engaged with the enemy; you have happily escaped to-day, but you have seen many lose their lives who promised themselves to escape as you have done. To-morrow you must again enter the lists; who has assured you that fortune, so fatal to others, will always be favorable to you alone? And since you must perish there at last, are you reasonable in building a firm and permanent habitation, upon the very spot which is destined to be your grave?

Place yourselves in whatever situation you please, there is not a moment of time, in which death may not come, as it has to many others in similar situations.

There is no action of renown, which may not be terminated by the eternal darkness of the grave; Herod was cut off in the midst of the foolish applauses of his people: No public day which may not finish with your funeral pomp; Jezebel was thrown headlong from the window of her palace, the very day that she had chosen to shew herself with unusual ostentation: No delicious feast which may not bring death to you; Belshazzar lost his life when seated at a sumptuous banquet: No sleep which may not be to you the sleep of death; Holofernes, in the midst of his army, a conqueror of kingdoms and provinces, lost his life by an Israelitish woman, when asleep in his tent: No crime which may not finish your crimes; Zim-