

and careful about many things, but one thing is needful," Luke x. 41. We think we have many important things to do, and yet we have but one. If that be performed, all others are included in it. If that miscarry, whatever success others may seem to have, they will all come to nothing. Why should we then divide our heart and our care? O my only concern, thou shalt henceforward have my only attention! In the rays of divine light, I will each moment peaceably perform, according to my abilities, what Providence puts in my way. I will be careful for nothing else, because nothing else is my business.

2. "I have finished the work, which thou, O Father, gavest me to do," John vii. 4. Each of us should be able to say as much at the day of judgment. I ought to consider that the business which occurs in the daily order of Providence as the work which God appoints me; and I should apply myself to it in a manner worthy of God, namely, with exactness, and with tranquillity. I ought not to neglect any thing, or be passionately vehement about any thing; for it is dangerous to do the work of the Lord negligently on the one hand, or, on the other, to appropriate it to ourselves by self-love and false zeal. In this last case, our actions arise from a principle of self-will; we are eager and anxious for their success, and that, under the pretence of seeking the glory of God. Thus self-love disguises itself under the appearance of zeal; and grieves, and is afflicted, when it miscarries in its designs. O God, grant me thy grace to enable me to be faithful in action, and resigned in success! My only business is to do *thy* will, and do it *as thy will* not forgetting thee in the performance of it. It is in thy pleasure to give my feeble endeavours success, or to frustrate my every effort.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Of preparing for death.—1. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Luke xii. 20. Deplorable is the blindness of those who will not think of death, but divert their minds continually from an event that is inevitable, and which they might render happy by anticipation. Nothing is so dreadful as death to those who are fond of life. It is strange that the experience of ages should not have caused us to judge soundly of the present and the future, so as to have taken proper measures for the one and for the other. We doat upon this world, as if it were never to have an end; and we neglect the next, as if it were never to have a beginning.

2. "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh," Matt. xxiv. 44. These words were addressed to every individual; yet all men (for few even among persons of piety are to be excepted) reckon upon a long life, and form projects accordingly. And what is the reason of such an obstinate hope of life? It is because we love it passionately. And whence is it that we affect to remove death at such a distance from us? It is because we do not love the kingdom of God and the grandeur of the world to come. O gross and stupid mortals who cannot rise themselves above this

earth, wherein, even by their own confession they are miserable! The true manner of preparing for the last moment is to spend all the preceding well, and to live in constant expectation of that event.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Of our hopes in eternity.—1. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. What proportion is there between what we do upon earth, and what we hope for in heaven? The primitive Christians rejoiced through this hope incessantly: heaven seemed ever open before them. Neither troubles nor disgraces, neither torments nor cruel death, could divert them from the cheering prospect. They knew that infinite bounty would reward their sufferings; and that therefore to suffer was their duty. They were transported with joy when they were found worthy of some great humiliation; and we, lukewarm souls, we would suffer nothing; and the reason is, because we want those hopes that should support us. We sink under the lightest crosses, even under those that spring from our pride, folly, or weakness.

2. "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy," Psalm cxxv. 5. We must sow that we may reap, and this life is the seedtime; in the next we shall reap the fruit of our labours. The carnal man, idle and impatient, would reap without sowing. We would serve God at little cost. We would have the ways to him made wide, and smooth, and easy. To hope much and suffer little is what self-love aims at. Blind that we are, shall we never see that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and that only those who do themselves violence are worthy to enter it? Let us mourn and grieve while here below, since "blessed are they that mourn;" and we are pronounced to those who receive their consolation in this life. The time will come when all vain joys will be confounded. The world shall weep in its turn, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Of our daily bread.—1. "Give us this day our daily bread." By this bread is meant not only the bodily food which Providence supplies us with, but also that nourishment of truth which he daily provides for our souls; it is the bread "which nourisheth to eternal life;" which makes the soul increase, and grow strong in the trials of faith. This God allots us each day; appointing precisely those inward dispositions and outward circumstances which are most proper to make us advance in faith and self-denial, and we receive our daily bread from him, in accepting, as from his hand, all his appointments.

2. Hunger gives a relish to food, and makes it digest. Why have we not a hunger and thirst for righteousness? Why are not our spiritual appetites as keen as those of the body? We think the man sick who has lost his appetite; and so it is with our souls; they languish and are in an evil state as long as they are without spiritual hunger for that food which cometh from God. The nourishment of the soul is truth and righteousness. To know what is truly good,