

to rue the day in which they refused to wait for providence!

3. We should follow providence. We should engage in nothing because we choose to do so; but should give up all our concerns to our Saviour's management, and in everything obey the intimations of his pleasure. He may be beckoning us through a circuitous or rugged path, where everything is repulsive to our nature; but we are to advance because he bids. Or the course which he appoints may seem to human view the path which leads to poverty or infamy; still we must pursue it only because he directs. Our continual inquiry must be, "Lord! what wouldst thou have me to do?" And when his providence grants a reply, we are implicitly and unmurmuringly to do just what he commands. If we refuse to yield to his direction, and pursue our own course, he will suffer us to wander through regions of anxiety and disappointment, and probably through seas of trouble and temptation, till we are taught our folly, and then bring us into the position in which he would have us be, after all our wayward disobedience. Remember Jonah. Whereas if we make his providence our guide, and tread closely in its steps, he will sustain us and cheer us and bless us through all the way, however trying it may be, and show us in the end how infinitely better it is to follow his perfect wisdom than our own short sighted folly; his all-gracious will than our own self-chastising wish. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Who ever yet repented having followed providence?

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CHRISTIAN SOLITUDE.

"Enter thou into thy closet and shut the door, and pray to thy Father who seeth in secret, and he will reward thee openly."—JESUS CHRIST.

While the present age is distinguished by the public display of religious feeling and zeal, there is reason to fear that this is not accompanied by a corresponding regard to devout retirement. There are many things which may induce men to go with the multitude to holy scenes, which cannot operate as to secret wor-

ship. The bustle of a crowd is exhilarating to an active mind, curiosity is roused by the efforts made to excite interest, and vanity is gratified by the consequence attached to one's presence and exertions. In solitude, a man is left to himself, his attention is fixed on his own heart and character, and feelings of shame and terror are excited too mortifying and painful to be relished by a carnal mind. It does not surprise us, that retirement should be avoided by such persons, and that they gladly mingle in public scenes, where they can forget what they have been, and where the part they have to act requires the sacrifice of no passions, and leads to no scrutiny into their secret faults. But pious retirement is the privilege, as well as the duty of the good, and their happiest hours are spent in its shade. To this devout retirement we are called in various parts of Scripture. Thus, the Psalmist enjoins us to stand in awe, and not to sin, and to commune with our own hearts. And this, as you notice above, was the charge of our Lord. "Enter thou, &c." This devout retirement has been the care of good men in all ages. Behold David in the wilderness of Judah, Moses in the mount with God, the captives musing by the rivers of Babylon, and Peter going out from the hall and weeping bitterly; and see how piety works in the lonely scene, and pours out the heart before God. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." The morning and evening are two periods in which we should retire for the exercises of secret piety, and if it is in our power, a pause in the middle of the day, for a few minutes' serious reflection, will be refreshing to the heart. And while some have commodious apartments in which they can be alone, a willing mind will find in the poorest hovel a corner in which it can hold fellowship with God. How many are the scenes to which nature invites us (especially at this season of the year) by their stillness and seclusion; and those whom infirmity or disease prevents from walking whither they would, may seize the period when their dwellings are in quiet, or, like Heze-