

Then how changed the scene! The bell of a neighboring church was tolling the funeral knell. I joined in the service. At its close, a few in company with the mourners, were permitted to take a last view of the departed. There lay the young mother in the robes of death. Her life had not changed. Disease had smitten her violently, and reason slept. During a brief interval of delirium she earnestly inquired of her physician:

‘Am I in danger?’

Replying rather in the affirmative, she exclaimed in terror:

‘O, I am not ready to die! Save me, if you can! I am not ready to die!’

These were her last words. Delirium returned, giving her no opportunity of seeking that Saviour who had called and been refused, until his Spirit, had forever taken its flight. In a half hour’s time, she breathed her last.

O reader! There is an hour when the Spirit calls—calls too, for the last time.—You have received his gracious call. Have you listened? Have you obeyed? Or have you said, ‘Go thy way for this time; there surely will be a more convenient season?’ Be not surprised if the hearts to mourning friends be wrung with anguish by your last words, ‘O, I am not ready to die.’

### THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE.

Israel of old were not allowed to have any plans of their own. Jehovah planned and arranged everything for them. He told them when and where they were to move and halt. At various intervals, He signified His sovereign pleasure to them by the movement of the cloud above their heads. “Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed,” (Num. ix. 22–23.)

Such was the happy condition of the Lord’s redeemed while passing from Egypt to Canaan. They never could have *their own way*, as regards their movements.—If an Israelite had refused to move when the cloud moved, or halt when it halted, *he would have been left to starve in the wilderness.* The rock and the manna followed them while they followed Jehovah; in other words food and refreshment were alone to be found in the path of simple obedience.

Just so it was with Elijah; he was not permitted to have a will of his own—he could not fix the time of his sojourn at Cherith, nor the time for his removal to Serephath; “The word of the Lord” settled all for him, and when he obeyed it he “found sustenance.”

What a lesson for the Christian in all this! The path of obedience is alone the path of happiness. If we were more successful in doing violence to self, our spiritual condition would be far more vigorous and healthy than it is. Nothing so ministers to health and vigour of soul as undeviating obedience; there is strength gained by the very effort to obey.

This is true in the case of all, but specially so as regards those who stand in the capacity of ministers of the Lord. Such must walk in the obedience if they would be used in the ministry. How could Elijah have said, as he afterwards did upon Mount Carmel, “If the Lord be God, *follow Him*,” if his own private path hath exhibited a wilful and rebellious spirit? Impossible.

The path of the servants must be the path of obedience, otherwise he ceases to be a servant. The word *servant* is an inseparable link with *obedience*, as is *work* with *workman*. “A servant,” as another has observed, “must move when the bell rings.” Would that we were all more alive to the sound of our Master’s bell, and more ready to run in the direction in which it summons us!

‘*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*’ Here is our proper language. Whether the word of the Lord summons us from our retirement into the midst of our brethren, or from thence into retirement again, may our language ever be, “*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*” The word of the Lord, and the attentive ear of a servant,