

Implicit Obedience.

JOHAN CASSIAN makes mention of one who willingly fetched water near two miles every day for a whole year together, to pour it upon a dead, dry stick, at the command of his superior, when no reason else could be given for it. And of another it is recorded that he professed that if he were enjoined by his superior to put to sea in a ship which had neither mast, tackling, nor any other furniture, he would do it; and when he was asked how he could do this without hazard of his discretion, he answered, 'The wisdom must be in him that hath power to command, not in him that hath power to obey.' These are instances of implicit obedience to a poor fallible human authority, and are by no means to be imitated. But when it is God who gives the command, we cannot carry a blind obedience too far, since there can be no room for questioning the wisdom and goodness of any of His precepts. At Christ's command it is wise to let down the net at the very spot where we have toiled in vain all the night. If God bids us, we can sweeten water with salt, and destroy poison with meat; yea, we may walk the waves of the sea or the flames of a furnace. Well said the Blessed Virgin, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." My heart, I charge thee follow thy Lord's commands without a moment's question, though he bids thee go forward into the Red Sea, or onward into a howling wilderness.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

Canon Lefroy on the Latch-Key.

THE most important thing a young man carries about with him is not his purse, not his watch, but the latch key! What does it mean? A young man goes in and demands from his father and mother a latch-key. He thinks he ought to have one, for A., B., C., and D., all have theirs. The father looks solemn, and the mother distressed, and they have considerable misgiving about this young man possessing a latch-key. But a latch-key he must have, and a latch-key he possesses. Shortly after he has this latch-key, he announces that he will not be home quite so early to-night as last night, and the next night he is later still. In making these various excuses, he has first, a deliberate purpose in his mind to be out later than he ought to be, and second, there are others with whom he keeps company who have also resolved to be late home instead of early, letting the family prayers go by for the purpose of being in places of evil resort. Late hours and loose morals are twins; and you may depend upon it, if you have your latch-key, that your moral manhood is decreasing, that you are sinking instead of swimming, being carried on with the tide instead of breasting it, that you are, with others, pursuing a course which if continued will bring you to an early and unhonoured grave, leaving your father and mother to bemoan the day when they yielded to your entreaty for this latch key.

Alabaster Boxes of Human Sympathy.

DO not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words, while their ears can hear them, and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go. The flowers you mean to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way.

A Good Confession.—1 Tim. 6: 13.

ONE of Frederick the Great's best generals was Hans Joachim von Zietan. He was never ashamed of his faith. Once he declined an invitation to come to his royal master's table because on that day he wished to present himself at the table of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. It was sacrament day. The next time he appeared at the palace the king, whose infidel tendencies were well known, made use of some profane expressions about the Lord's Supper, and the other guests laughed at the remarks made on the occasion. Zietan shook his gray head solemnly, stood up, saluted the king, and then said, with a firm voice, "Your Majesty knows well that in war I have never feared any danger, and everywhere have boldly risked my life for you and my country. But there is One above us who is greater than you and me—greater than all men; He is the Saviour and Redeemer, who has died also for your Majesty, and has dearly bought us all with His own blood. This Holy One I can never allow to be mocked or insulted, for on Him repose my faith, my comfort, and my hope in life and death. In the power of this faith your brave army has courageously fought and conquered. If your Majesty undermines this faith, you undermine at the same time the welfare of your state. I salute your Majesty." This open confession of his Saviour by Zietan made a powerful impression on the king, who felt that he had been wrong in his attack on the faith of his general, and he was not ashamed to own it to his brave old general before all his other guests.—*British Workman.*