

Home Truths.

BEING MISCELLANEOUS ADDRESSES AND TRACTS,

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE, M.A.,

*Honorary Canon of Norwich,
Vicar of Stradbroke, and Rural Dean of Hoxne, Suffolk..*

ARRANGED, REVISED, AND CORRECTED SPECIALLY FOR THIS EDITION.

EIGHTH SERIES.

“If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 COR. xiv. 8.)

LONDON:

WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

23, HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE; AND ALDINE CHAMBERS.

PATERNOSTER ROW.

IPSWICH: WILLIAM HUNT, TAVERN STREET.

1866AD

Have You Charity?

1 CORINTHIANS XIII. 13.

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

THE question before your eyes appears, at first sight, a very simple one. Hundreds would find it difficult to answer the questions,—“Have you faith? Have you hope? Have you grace?” But they would have no difficulty in replying to the question,—“Have you charity?”

Charity is a thing which all people profess to admire. It seems a plain practical thing which everybody can understand. It is none of those troublesome doctrinal points about which Christians are disagreed. Thousands, I suspect, would not be ashamed to tell you that they knew nothing about justification or regeneration, about the work of Christ or the Holy Spirit. But nobody, I believe, would like to say that he knew nothing about charity. If men possess nothing else in religion, they always flatter themselves that they possess charity.

Reader, a few thoughts about charity may not be without use. There are false notions abroad about it which require to be dispelled. There are mistakes about it which require to be rectified. In my admiration of charity I yield to none. But I am bold to say, that in many minds the whole subject seems completely misunderstood.

I. Let me show you, first, *the place the Bible gives to charity.*

II. Let me show you, secondly, *what the charity of the Bible really is.*

III. Let me show you, thirdly, *whence true charity comes.*

IV. Let me show you, lastly, *why charity is “the greatest” of the graces.*

I ask your best attention to the subject. My heart’s desire and prayer to God is to promote the growth of charity in this sin-burdened world. In nothing does the fallen condition of man show itself so strongly as in the scarcity of Christian charity. There is little faith on earth, little hope, little knowledge of Divine things. But nothing, after all, is so scarce as real charity.

I. Let me show *the place which the Bible gives to charity.*

I begin with this point in order to establish the importance of my sub-

ject. I do not forget that there are many high-flying Christians, in this present day, who almost refuse to look at anything *practical* in Christianity. They can talk of nothing but two or three favourite doctrines. Now I want to remind these people, if this book should fall into their hands, that the Bible contains much about practice as well as about doctrine, and that one thing to which it attaches great weight is “*charity*.”

I turn to the New Testament, and ask you to observe what it says about charity. In all religious inquiries there is nothing like letting the Scripture speak for itself. There is no surer way of finding out truth, than the old way of turning to plain texts. Texts were our Lord’s weapons, both in answering Satan and in arguing with the Jews. Texts are the guides we must never be ashamed to refer to in the present day.—“What saith the Scripture? What is written? How readest thou?”

Hear what St. Paul says to the Corinthians:—“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. xiii. 1–3.)

Hear what St. Paul says to the Colossians:—“Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” (Col. iii. 14.)

Hear what St. Paul says to Timothy:—“The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Tim. i. 5.)

Hear what St. Peter says:—“Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” (1 Peter iv. 8.)

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ Himself says about that love, which is only another name for charity.*—“A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John xiii. 34, 35.)

Hear what St. Paul says to the Romans:—“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” (Rom. xiii. 9.)

Hear what St. Paul says to the Ephesians:—“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.” (Eph. v. 2.)

* In the Greek language,—the original language of the New Testament,—one and the same Greek word only is used for “love” and “charity.” In our English version our translators have sometimes rendered this word one way and sometimes another.

Hear what St. John says:—"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John iv. 7, 8.)

Reader, I shall make no comment upon these texts. I think it better to place them before you in their naked simplicity, and to let them speak for themselves. If anyone is disposed to think the subject of this address a matter of light importance, I will only ask him to look at these texts, and to think again. He that would take down charity from the high and holy place which it occupies in the Bible, and treat it as a matter of secondary moment, must settle his account with God's Word. I certainly shall not waste time in arguing with him.

To my own mind the evidence of these texts appears clear, plain, and incontrovertible. They show the immense importance of charity, as one of the "things that accompany salvation." They prove that it has a right to demand the serious attention of all who call themselves Christians, and that those who despise the subject are only exposing their own ignorance of Scripture. It is no light matter to be asked the question, "*Have you charity?*"

II. Let me show, secondly, *what the charity of the Bible really is.*

I think it of great importance to have clear views on this point. It is precisely here that mistakes about charity begin. Thousands delude themselves with the idea that they have charity, when they have not, from downright ignorance of Scripture. Their charity is not the charity described in the Bible.

The charity of the Bible does not consist in giving to the poor. It is a common delusion to suppose that it does. Yet St. Paul tells us plainly, that a man may "bestow all his goods to feed the poor," and not have charity. That a charitable man will "remember the poor," there can be no question. That he will do all he can to assist them, relieve them, and lighten their burdens, I do not for a moment deny. All I say is, that this does not make up charity. It is easy to spend a fortune in giving away money, and soup, and wine, and bread, and coals, and blankets, and clothing, and yet to be utterly destitute of Bible charity.

The charity of the Bible does not consist in never disapproving anybody's conduct. Here is another very common delusion! Thousands pride themselves on never condemning others, or calling them wrong, whatever they may do. They convert the precept of our Lord, "Judge not," into an excuse for having no unfavourable opinion at all of anybody. They pervert His prohibition of rash and censorious judgments, into a prohibition of all judgment whatsoever. Your neighbour may be a drunkard, a liar, a Sabbath breaker, a passionate man. Never mind: "It is not charity," they tell

you, “to pronounce him wrong.” You are to believe that he has a good heart at bottom! This idea of charity is, unhappily, a very common one. It is full of mischief. To throw a veil over sin, and to refuse to call things by their right names,—to talk of “hearts” being good, when lives are flatly wrong,—to shut our eyes against wickedness, and say smooth things of immorality,—this is not Scriptural charity.

The charity of the Bible does not consist in never disapproving anybody’s religious opinions. Here is another most serious and growing delusion. There are many who pride themselves on never pronouncing others mistaken, whatever views they may hold. Your neighbour, forsooth, may be an Arian, or a Socinian, a Roman Catholic, or a Mormonite, a Deist, or a Sceptic, a mere Formalist, or a thorough Antinomian. But the “charity” of many says, that you have no right to think him wrong! If he is sincere, it is uncharitable to think unfavourably of his spiritual condition! From such charity may I ever be delivered! At this rate the Apostles were wrong in going out to preach to the Gentiles! At this rate there is no use in missions! At this rate we had better close our Bibles, and shut up our churches! Everybody is right, and nobody is wrong! Everybody is going to heaven, and nobody is going to hell! Such charity is a monstrous caricature. To say that all are equally right in their opinions, though their opinions flatly contradict one another,—to say that all equally are in the way to heaven, though their doctrinal sentiments are as opposite as black and white,—this is not Scriptural charity. Charity like this pours contempt on the Bible, and talks as if God had not given us a test of truth. Charity like this confuses all our notions of heaven, and would fill it with a discordant inharmonious rabble. True charity does not think everybody right in doctrine. True charity cries, “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not.” (1 John iv. 1; 2 John 10.)

Reader, I leave the negative side of the question here. I have dwelt upon it at some length, because of the days in which we live, and the strange notions which abound. Let me now turn to the positive side. Having shown you what charity is not, let me now show you what it is.

Charity is that “love,” which St. Paul places first among those fruits which the Spirit causes to be brought forth in the heart of a believer. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” (Gal. v. 2.) Love to God, such as Adam had before the fall, is its first feature. He that has charity desires to love God with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Love to man is its second feature. He that has charity desires to love his neighbour as himself. This is indeed that view in which the word “charity” in Scripture is more especially regarded. When I speak of a believer having “love” in his heart, I mean that

he has love to both God and man. When I speak of a believer having “charity,” I mean more particularly that he has love to man.

The charity of the Bible will show itself in a *believer's doings*. It will make him ready to do kind acts to every one within his reach,—both to their bodies and souls. It will not let him be content with soft words and kind wishes. It will make him diligent in doing all that lies in his power to lessen the sorrow, and increase the happiness of others. Like his Master, he will care more for ministering than for being ministered to, and will look for nothing in return. Like his Master's great Apostle, he will very willingly “spend and be spent” for others, even though they repay him with hatred, and not with love. True charity does not want wages. Its work is its reward.

The charity of the Bible will show itself in a believer's *readiness to bear evil* as well as to do good. It will make him patient under provocation, forgiving when injured, meek when unjustly attacked, quiet when slandered. It will make him bear much and forbear much, put up with much and look over much, submit often and deny himself often, all for the sake of peace. It will make him put a strong bit on his temper, and a strong bridle on his tongue. True charity is not always asking, “What are my rights? Am I treated as I deserve?” but, “How can I best promote peace? How can I do that which is most edifying to others?”

The charity of the Bible will show itself in the *general spirit and demeanour* of a believer. It will make him kind, unselfish, good-natured, good-tempered, and considerate for others. It will make him gentle, affable, and courteous, in all the daily relations of private life; thoughtful for other's comfort, tender for other's feelings, and more anxious to give pleasure than to receive. True charity never envies others when they prosper, nor rejoices in the calamities of others when they are in trouble. At all times it will believe, and hope, and try to put a good construction on other's doings. And even at the worst, it will be full of pity, mercy, and compassion.

Reader, would you like to know where the true Pattern of charity like this can be found? Look at the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, as described in the Gospels, and you will see it perfectly exemplified. Charity shone forth in all His doings. His daily life was an incessant “going about” doing good.—Charity shone forth in all His bearing. He was continually hated, persecuted, slandered, misrepresented. But He patiently endured it all. No angry word ever fell from His lips. No ill-temper ever appeared in His demeanour. “When He was reviled, He reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not.”—Charity shone forth in all His spirit and deportment. The law of kindness was ever on His lips. Among weak and ignorant disciples, among sick and sorrowful petitioners for help and relief,

among publicans and sinners, among Pharisees and Sadducees, He was always one and the same,—kind and patient to all.

And yet, be it remembered, our blessed Master never flattered sinners, or connived at sin. He never shrunk from exposing wickedness in its true colours, or from rebuking those who would cleave to it. He never hesitated to denounce false doctrine, by whomsoever it might be held, or to exhibit false practice in its true colours, and the certain end to which it tends. He called things by their right names. He spoke as freely of hell and the fire that is not quenched, as of heaven and the kingdom of glory. He has left on record an everlasting proof that perfect charity does not require us to approve everybody's life or opinions, and that it is quite possible to condemn false doctrine and wicked practice, and yet to be full of love.

Reader, I have now set before you the true nature of Scriptural charity. I have given you a slight and very brief account of what it is not, and what it is. I cannot pass on without suggesting to you two practical thoughts, which press home on my mind with weighty force, and I hope may press home on you.

You have heard of charity. Think, for a moment, how deplorably little charity there is upon earth! How conspicuous is the absence of true love among Christians! I speak not of heathen now, I speak of Christians. What angry tempers, what passions, what selfishness, what bitter tongues, are to be found in private families! What strifes, what quarrels, what spitefulness, what malice, what revenge, what envy between neighbours and fellow-parishioners! What jealousies and contentions between Churchmen and Dissenters, Calvinists and Arminians, High Churchmen and Low Churchmen! "Where is charity?" we may well ask: "Where is love? where is the mind of Christ?" when we look at the spirit which reigns in the world. No wonder that Christ's cause stands still, and infidelity abounds, when men's hearts know so little of charity! Surely, we may well say, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find charity upon earth?"

Think, for another thing, what a happy world this would be if there was more charity. It is the want of love which causes half the misery there is upon earth. Sickness, and death, and poverty, will not account for more than half the sorrow. The rest come from ill-temper, ill-nature, strifes, quarrels, lawsuits, malice, envy, revenge, frauds, violence, wars, and the like. It would be one great step towards doubling the happiness of mankind, and halving their sorrows, if all men and women were full of Scriptural charity.

III. Let me show, thirdly, *whence the charity of the Bible comes.*

Charity, such as I have described, is certainly not natural to man. Naturally, we are all more or less selfish, envious, ill-tempered, spiteful, ill-

natured, and unkind. We have only to observe children, when left to themselves, to see the proof of this. Let boys and girls grow up without proper training and education, and you will not see one of them possessing Christian charity. Mark how some of them think first of themselves, and their own comfort and advantage! Mark how others are full of pride, passion, and evil tempers! How can we account for it? There is but one reply. The natural heart knows nothing of true charity.

The charity of the Bible will never be found except in a heart prepared by the Holy Ghost. It is a tender plant, and will never grow except in one soil. You may as well expect grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles, as look for charity when the heart is not right.

The heart in which charity grows is a heart changed, renewed, and transformed by the Holy Ghost. The image and likeness of God, which Adam lost at the fall, has been restored to it, however feeble and imperfect the restoration may appear. It is a “partaker of the Divine nature,” by union with Christ and sonship to God; and one of the first features of that nature is love.

Such a heart is deeply convinced of sin, hates it, flees from it, and fights with it from day to day. And one of the prime motions of sin which it daily labours to overcome, is selfishness and want of charity.

Such a heart is deeply sensible of its mighty debt to our Lord Jesus Christ. It feels continually that it owes to Him who died for us on the cross, all its present comfort, hope, and peace. How can it show forth its gratitude? What can it render to its Redeemer? If it can do nothing else, it strives to be like Him, to drink into His spirit, to walk in His footsteps, and, like Him, to be full of love. The love of Christ shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the surest fountain of Christian charity. Love will produce love.

Reader, I ask your special attention to this point. It is one of great importance in the present day. There are many who profess to admire charity, while they care nothing about vital Christianity. They like some of the fruits and results of the Gospel, but not the root from which these fruits alone can grow, or the doctrines with which they are inseparably connected.

Hundreds will praise love and charity, who hate to be told of man’s corruption, of the blood of Christ, and of the inward work of the Holy Ghost. Many a parent would like his children to grow up unselfish and good tempered, who would not be much pleased if conversion, and repentance, and faith, were pressed home on their attention.

Now I desire to protest against this notion, that you can have the fruits of Christianity without the roots,—that you can produce Christian tempers

without teaching Christian doctrines,—that you can have charity that will wear and endure without grace in the heart.

I grant, most freely, that every now and then one sees a person who seems very charitable and amiable, without any distinctive doctrinal religion. But such cases are so rare and remarkable, that, like exceptions, they only prove the truth of the general rule. And often, too often, it may be feared in such cases, the apparent charity is only seeming, and in private completely fails. I firmly believe, as a general rule, you will not find such charity as the Bible describes, except in the soil of a heart thoroughly imbued with Bible religion. Holy practice will not flourish without sound doctrine. What God has joined together, it is useless to expect to have separate and asunder.

The delusion which I am trying to combat is helped forward, to a most mischievous degree, by the vast majority of novels, romances, and tales of fiction. Who does not know that the heroes and heroines of these works are constantly described as patterns of perfection? They are always doing the right thing, saying the right thing, and showing the right temper! They are always kind, and amiable, and unselfish, and forgiving! And yet you never hear a word about their religion! In short, to judge by the generality of works of fiction, it is possible to have excellent practical religion without doctrine, the fruits of the Spirit without the grace of the Spirit, and the mind of Christ without union with Christ!

Here, in short, is the great danger of reading most novels, romances, and works of fiction. The greater part of them give a false or incorrect view of human nature. They paint their model men and women as they ought to be, and not as they really are. The readers of such writings get their minds filled with wrong conceptions of what the world is. Their notions of mankind become visionary and unreal. They are constantly looking for men and women such as they never meet, and expecting what they never find.

Reader, let me entreat you, once for all, to draw your ideas of human nature from the Bible, and not from novels. Settle it down in your mind, that there cannot be true charity without a heart renewed by grace. A certain degree of kindness, courtesy, amiability, good-nature, may undoubtedly be seen in many who have no vital religion. But the glorious plant of Bible charity, in all its fulness and perfection, will never be found without union with Christ, and the work of the Holy Ghost. Teach this to your children, if you have any. Hold it up in schools, if you are connected with any. Lift up charity. Make much of charity. Give place to none in exalting the grace of kindness, love, good-nature, unselfishness, good temper. But never, never forget, that there is but one school in which these things can be thoroughly learned, and that is the school of Christ. Real charity comes

down from above. True love is the fruit of the Spirit. He that would have it, must sit at Christ's feet, and learn of Him.

IV. Let me show, lastly, *why charity is called the "greatest" of the graces.*

The words of St. Paul, on this subject, are distinct and unmistakable. He winds up his wonderful chapter on charity in the following manner:—"Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Cor. xiii. 13.)

This expression is very remarkable. Of all the writers in the New Testament, none, certainly, exalt "faith" so highly as St. Paul. The Epistles to the Romans and Galatians abound in sentences showing its vast importance. By it the sinner lays hold on Christ and is saved. Through it we are justified, and have peace with God. Yet here the same St. Paul speaks of something which is even greater than faith. He puts before us the three leading Christian graces, and pronounces the following judgment on them: "The greatest is charity." Such a sentence from such a writer, demands special attention. What are we to understand when we hear of charity being greater than faith and hope?

We are not to suppose, for a moment, that charity can atone for our sins, or make our peace with God. Nothing can do that for us but the blood of Christ, and nothing can give us an interest in Christ's blood but faith. It is unscriptural ignorance not to know this. The office of justifying and joining the soul to Christ, belongs to faith alone. Our charity, and all our other graces, are all more or less imperfect, and could not stand the severity of God's judgment. When we have done all, we are "unprofitable servants."

We are not to suppose that charity can exist independently of faith. St. Paul did not intend to set up one grace in rivalry to the other. He did not mean that one man might have faith, another hope, and another charity, and that the best of these was the man who had charity. The three graces are inseparably joined together. Where there is faith, there will always be love; and where there is love, there will be faith. Sun and light, fire and heat, ice and cold, are not more intimately united than faith and charity.

The reasons why charity is called the greatest of the three graces, appear to me plain and simple. Let me show you what they are.

Charity is called the greatest of graces, because it is the one in which there is *some likeness between the believer and his God*. God has no need of faith. He is dependent on no one. There is none superior to Him in whom He must trust.—God has no need of hope. To Him all things are certain, whether past, present, or to come.—But "God is love:" and the more love His people have, the more like they are to their Father in heav-

en.

Charity, for another thing, is called the greatest of the graces, because *it is most useful to others*. Faith and hope, beyond doubt, however precious, have special reference to a believer's own private individual benefit. Faith, unites the soul to Christ, brings peace with God, and opens the way to heaven. Hope fills the soul with cheerful expectation of things to come, and, amid the many discouragements of things seen, comforts with visions of the things unseen. But charity is pre-eminently the grace which makes a man useful. It is the spring of good works and kindnesses. It is the root of missions, schools, and hospitals. Charity made Apostles spend and be spent for souls. Charity raises up workers for Christ, and keeps them working. Charity smooths quarrels, and stops strife, and in this sense "covers a multitude of sins." Charity adorns Christianity, and recommends it to the world. A man may have real faith, and feel it, and yet his faith may be invisible. But a man's charity cannot be hid.

Charity, in the last place, is the greatest of the graces, because it is the one which *endures the longest*. In fact, it will never die. Faith will one day be swallowed up in sight, and hope in certainty. Their office will be useless in the morning of the resurrection, and, like old almanacs, they will be laid aside. But love will live on through the endless ages of eternity. Heaven will be the abode of love. The inhabitants of heaven will be full of love. One common feeling will be in all their hearts, and that will be charity.

Reader, I leave this part of my subject here, and pass on to a conclusion. On each of the three points of comparison I have just named, between charity and the other graces, it would be easy to enlarge. But time and space both forbid me to do so. If I have said enough to guard you against mistakes about the right meaning of the "greatness" of charity, I am content. Charity, be it ever remembered, cannot justify and put away our sins. It is neither Christ, nor faith. But charity makes us somewhat like God. Charity is of mighty use to the world. Charity will live and flourish when faith's work is done. Surely, in these points of view, charity well deserves the crown.

1. And now, reader, let me ask you a simple question. Let me press home on your conscience the inquiry which heads this address. Do you know anything of the grace of which I have been speaking? *Have you charity?*

The strong language of the Apostle St. Paul, must surely convince you that the inquiry is not one that ought to be lightly put aside. The grace, without which that holy man could say, "I am nothing," the grace which the Lord Jesus says expressly is the great mark of being His disciple,—such a grace as this demands the serious consideration of every one who is

in earnest about the salvation of his soul. It should set him thinking,—How does this affect me? Have I charity?

You have some knowledge, it may be, of religion. You know the difference between true and false doctrine. You can even quote texts, and defend the opinions you hold. But, remember that the knowledge which is barren of practical results in life and temper, is a useless possession. The words of the Apostle are very plain,—“Though I understand all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

You think you have faith, perhaps. You trust you are one of God’s elect, and rest in that. But surely you should remember that there is a faith of devils, which is utterly unprofitable, and that the faith of God’s elect is a “faith that worketh by love.” It was when St. Paul remembered the “love” of the

Thessalonians, as well as their faith and hope, that he said, “I know your election of God.” (1 Thess. i. 4.)

Reader, look at your own daily life, both at home and abroad, and consider what place the charity of Scripture has in it. What is your temper? What are your ways of behaving toward all around you? What is your manner of speaking, especially in seasons of vexation and provocation? Where is your good-nature, your courtesy, your patience, your meekness, your gentleness, your forbearance? Where are your practical actions of love in your dealing with others? What do you know of the mind of Him who “went about doing good,”—who loved all, though specially His disciples,—who returned good for evil, and kindness for hatred, and had a heart wide enough to feel for all?

What would you do in heaven, I wonder, if you got there without charity? What comfort could you have in an abode where love was the law, and selfishness and ill-nature completely shut out? Alas, I fear that heaven would be no place for an uncharitable and ill-tempered man! What said a little boy one day? “If grandfather goes to heaven, I hope I and brother will not go there.” “Why do you say that?” he was asked. He replied, “If he sees us there, I am sure he will say, as he does now,—‘What are these boys doing here? Let them get out of the way.’ He does not like to see us on earth, and I suppose he would not like to see us in heaven.”

Reader, give yourself no rest till you know something by experience of real Christian charity. Go and learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart, and ask Him to teach you how to love. Ask the ‘Lord Jesus to put His Spirit within you, to take away the old heart, to give you a new nature, to make you know something of His mind. Cry to Him night and day for grace, and give Him no rest until you feel something of what I have been describing in this address. Happy indeed will that year be, which finds you “walking in love.”

2. But I do not forget that I am writing to some who are not ignorant of the charity of Scripture, and who long to feel more of it every year. I will give you two simple words of exhortation. They are these: “Practice and teach the grace of charity.”

Practice charity diligently. It is one of those graces, above all, which grow by constant exercise. Strive more and more to carry it into every little detail of daily life. Watch over your own tongue and temper throughout every hour of the day, and especially in your dealings with servants, children, and near relatives. Remember the character of the excellent woman: “In her tongue is the law of kindness.” (Prov. xxxi. 26.)—Remember the words of St. Paul, “Let ALL your things be done with charity.” (1 Cor. xvi. 14.) Charity should be seen in little things as well as in great ones. Remember, not least, the words of St. Peter: “Have fervent charity among yourselves,”—not a charity which just keeps alight, but a burning shining fire, which all around can see. (1 Pet. iv. 8.) It may cost pain and trouble to keep these things in mind. There may be little encouragement from the example of others, but persevere. Charity like this brings its own reward.

Finally, teach charity to others. Press it continually on servants, if you have any. Tell them the great duty of kindness, helpfulness, and consideration, one for another. Press it, above all, on children, if you have any. Remind them constantly that kindness, good-nature, and good temper, are among the first evidences which Christ requires in children. If they cannot know much, or explain doctrines, they can understand love. A child’s religion is worth very little if it only consists in repeating texts and hymns. Useful as they are, they are often learned without thought, remembered without feeling, said over without consideration of their meaning, and forgotten when childhood is gone. By all means let children be taught texts and hymns; but let not such teaching be made everything in their religion. Teach them to keep their tempers, to be kind one to another, to be unselfish, good-natured, obliging, patient, gentle, forgiving. Tell them never to forget to their dying day, if they live as long as Methuselah, that without charity, the Holy Ghost says, “we are nothing.”

Reader, I commend these things to your attention. Lay them to heart, and you will do well.