

possible form of rule, however excellent, could make it, but only the confidence in GOD, the death to self, the love which you learn to bring into your keeping of the rule. It must be Jesus Christ's Religion. His sacrifice coming out in your keeping of the rule.

But if this is to be, it must be in observing the rule *strictly* with the reverence due to an obligation which is very sacred because linking you to GOD.

Your rule will, no doubt, be distinctly different from other Religious Rules, but what matters most is that it be strictly kept; and the gracious strictness with which you begin *must be maintained*, or it would become not *true* Religion, but a Religious pretence.

You are not called to acquire the spirit of strict retirement, of perpetual silence. Children could never be won, converted, and encouraged by that life, holy as it is in its own place. Still less are you called to rigidity, coldness, affected indifferency. But you are called to strictness in keeping the rule which you have offered to GOD. Interior strictness with yourself, and exactness in insisting on outward discipline in yourself and others under you, will never make you rigid, or formidable to children. The only loveliness we know of that lasts and grows, is that which belongs to duty thoroughly carried out, that is, to perfect Christian character. That is the influence which children can hardly resist, and which grows more venerable and lovely in their recollection, as experience with years teaches them to understand the beauty and preciousness of it, you will find all your happiness as Religious, and all the beauty and influence of your service depend upon the strictness with which you keep your Rule.

We cannot love laxity under rule, because we cannot honor it; it means the failure of our sacrifice, the failure of love, the Religions of Jesus Christ, His offering Himself to the Father fading out of our life. What we do will have no influence, no delight for children, as it will have no inward joy or beauty. To be beautiful and joyous it must be offered *in strictness*, for that means, in truth; and the Religion which you profess to-day is *true* Religion.

And as Religious are called to strictness in keeping the Rule, so also to charity among ourselves. It is not the charity of an official department we are called to give, a legal dole to the poor, but Jesus Christ's charity, who in the least service that He did for anyone gave all His heart, the infinite love of GOD, to the children, to the poor, to all the disappointing people, this is the charity which is communicated to us as