

19<sup>th</sup> August 2023

## Actions

**“When faith and hope fail, as they do sometimes,  
we must try charity, which is love in action.**

Dinah Craik, *Christian's Mistake* (1865)

I conducted a wedding a while back. The couple were to have two rings, and, as we prepared for the wedding, we discussed the significance of that: two rings, given and received on a wedding day, as a symbol of the gifts of life and love which were to be exchanged in the marriage. So, with the marriage vows, and *then* the exchange of rings, at the centre of their marriage were words and actions together, each confirming the other.

That's not just confined to weddings. We *say* things, and then find that the confirmation by an action makes the meaning even stronger. A greeting followed by a handshake or a back-slap; a "sorry" emphasised by a hug or a smile of forgiveness; an "I love you" confirmed by a gift or a loving gesture. Words and actions combined, what any good marriage – and, indeed, any committed relationship – should be founded upon.

Nearly two centuries ago, Dinah Craik pointed to "love in action". Here's what I wrote about that following my pre-marriage discussions, words which were my gift to the couple on their wedding day.

*“Hello,” he said, and shook my hand. “I hope you’re keeping fine.”  
His handshake, firm and strong, was now with cheerful words combined.  
For actions and the words together made it genuine.*

*“I’m sorry. Yes, I am,” she said, accepting my embrace.  
“And I forgive you now, my love,” and wiped tears from her face.  
With words and actions intertwined, we both were blessed by grace.*

*“To love and cherish, have and hold, till death us part ...” we vow.  
Then rings are given, two made one, before our heads we bow;  
Our promises and gifts exchanged, in holy blessing now.*

*“I love you. Oh, I love you,” are the words we often hear.  
But when they’re joined with loving deeds, new fullness can appear.  
So, say the words, and mean them, when your actions make them clear.*

*I’ll love you, with my heart and mind, my body and my will,  
And I will love you always as my promise is fulfilled.  
I love you, and I’ll show it! Yes, dear God, I always will.*

### **A prayer for today**

*Charity? Love in action? Thank God, that’s what Love calls me to. Amen*