

**FULLY FURNISHED
or
THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S
EQUIPMENT**

A Series of Thirty-Four Concise
Studies embracing the Whole
Scope of Service for the Master

by

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**CHAPTER TWELVE
THE WORKER'S TRAIT**

THE gifts of I Corinthians 12 are capped with the grace of love, in I Corinthians 13, like the snow-capped mountain summit upon which the sun is shining with reflective glory. As the mighty St. Lawrence has many tributaries and lakes, which go to make up its grand volume of water; so the many traits which are given of love's character, tell out its power and perfection.

I - Patience of Love.

"Charity suffereth long" (verse 4) *Love is an enduring grace.*

When the love of GOD burns within the soul, hate cannot kill it, persecution cannot destroy it, nor envy stamp it out.

The noble army of martyrs illustrate the endurance of love.

The young men in the fiery furnace in Babylon, the faithful Christians hunted to death in Rome, the steadfast Huguenots in France, the unswerving believers in Spain, the unflinching Ridley and Latimer in Oxford, and the true and stalwart covenanters in Scotland, are a few illustrations of love's steadfastness.

- Love is like Jacob, laboring for Rachel (Genesis 29:20), it can brave disappointment.
- Love is like Nehemiah, when the enemies were sneering at his work, it pushes bravely on, undeterred by opposition (Nehemiah 4:1-6).
- Love is like Eliezer, carrying out Abraham's commission (Genesis 24:66), it never sits down till the task is completed.
- Love is like the gold that was used for the vessels of the tabernacle, which were hammered into shape (Exodus 25:21), it is beautified by the trials through which it passes.
- Love is like Rizpah, watching the dead bodies of her sons (II Samuel 21:10), it will not be driven from its post.

- Love is like Joseph (Psalm 105:17-20), it can suffer long, and patiently wait till its cause is vindicated. And
- Love is like Stephen, when being stoned to death (Acts 7:60), it will not give up its cause, but remains faithful to CHRIST to the end.

II - *Practice of Love.*

"**And is kind**" (verse 4).

- Love is an active grace; It has the heart of Mary, and the hands of Martha, without her cumbering.
- Love is as the fragrance of the flowers, it brings satisfaction to others, like Mary of Bethany, when she anointed the Saviour with the costly spikenard (John 12:3). [131]
- Love is as the fruit of the trees, which brings refreshment to man, like Jonathan, who, out of love to David, sacrificed all to him (I Samuel 18:1-4).
- Love is as the warmth of the sun, it awakens dormant powers in the heart, like the woman in the Gospel, who, out of love to CHRIST, washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head (Luke 7:47).
- Love is as the shining of the moon, which lights the weary traveler on his homeward journey, like Barnabas at Antioch, who encouraged the young believers to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart (Acts 11:23).
- Love is as the incoming tide, which cleanses the shore and removes the refuse, like Moses, when he prayed to be blotted out of GOD's Book, for Israel's sin (Exodus 32:32).
- Love is as the stored-up electricity in the motor, which moves the machinery to its work, like the apostle Paul, when he tells us the secret of his joyful sufferings and faithful service (II Corinthians 5:14). And
- Love is as the purling stream, which brings gladness and refreshment wherever it flows, like the good Samaritan, who succored the man who fell among the thieves (Luke 10:33).

The kind activity of love is well illustrated in the following incident:-

A well-known servant of CHRIST was working in a certain neighborhood, during a dreadful visitation of cholera and smallpox.

There was one case of awful despair, a poor dying woman, who refused to listen to any words of the mercy of GOD, saying only: "Too late, too late!"

To her he devoted much care and many prayers. It seemed as though no impression could be made upon her. Her repeated cry was: "Too late, too late; too late for me!" But tender fervor to bring her to faith and trust in her Saviour, prevailed at last.

CHRIST's servant said: "But you do believe in the love of those around you, now that JESUS sends it to you?"

With what seemed the last effort of life, she raised herself, clasped her arms round the neck of the sister who was attending to her, and, kissing her, answered: "Yes, it is love."

The last struggle followed almost immediately, and she was heard to say: "JESUS, save me!" - the words she had been entreated to use.

So prayer had been heard. She died in hope and faith.

It was love that conquered this woman's obstinacy and despair: a love which had its origin in the Saviour's dying love, and which had been fed by the Spirit's grace.

III - *Purity of Love.*

"Charity envieth not" (verse 4) *Envy is as cruel as the grave, and as dark as hell.* [132]

The beacon light of GOD's Word, shines out upon the black waters of envy, and reveals its sunken reefs, upon which many have made soul-shipwreck.

- Envy is the cause of persecution (Acts 5:17; 13:45),
- Envy is the mother of division (I Corinthians 3:3),
- Envy is the companion of jealousy (Acts 7:9),
- Envy is the sign of unbelief (Acts 17:5),
- Envy is the child of the devil (James 3:14,15),
- Envy is the worker of mischief (James 3:16), and
- Envy is the work of the flesh (Galatians 5:21).

Love will not companion with this child of hell, it keeps separate from it, and, like Phinehas with the Israelite and the Midianitish woman, will kill it, if it dares to come in the camp of the soul's presence (Numbers 25:1-8).

"Base envy withers another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach."

Not so love-

"True love welcomes another's joy,
And seeks that excellence it cannot reach."

Love has no irritating thorn in its hand, nor jealous look in its eye, nor depreciating words on its lips, nor sore feeling in its heart. Love sees the best in others, and the worst in itself. Love will wash another's feet, and think it is honoured by so doing.

IV - *Peacefulness of Love.*

"Vaunteth not itself" (margin: "Is not rash," verse 4).

Love ever takes a back seat, and is willing to work unseen.

Love is like the harp-string as it is struck by the musician, its vibrations cause it to vanish, but its music is heard and appreciated. The music of love is appreciated by Heaven, though not

acknowledged by man.

It is said that when some young pastors once paid a visit to one of the great ministers of the past generation, they found him preparing to go to a meeting, where a strong debate was expected. He was reading the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and then praying that its teaching might guide his conduct. He felt he needed the restraining hand of grace, and the calming power of love, lest he should be rash in speech. David said, in his haste, all men were liars. He would not have been so rash, if he had spoken in the calm moments of leisure.

V - Pufflessness of Love.

"Is not puffed up" (verse 4).

Puffery is not worth much anywhere. It is suggestive of smoke, unreality, uncertainty, ill-health, balderdash, wind, and self-seeking.

The HOLY SPIRIT had to chide the Church in Corinth with their being puffed up. [133]

The word **"puffed up"** only occurs seven times in the New Testament, and six out of the seven, occur in connection with the Church in Corinth. It was because there were those who were puffed up, that the Apostle had so much trouble with them. Being puffed up by self-assertiveness, division abounded among the Corinthians (I Corinthians 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1).

There is only one thing that can kill this puffupedness, and that is love.

Love is content with what GOD gives and allows, and says-

"Can I be stem, and another be wheat?
Can I be shell, and another be meat?
Another be head, while I am feet?
If GOD will."

It was said of Charles Lamb: "Whether he had won for his greedy listener only some raw lad, or a charmed circle of beauty, rank, and wit, who hung breathless on his words, he talked with equal eloquence; for his subject, not his audience, inspired him."

Thus when the love of GOD is the force that inspires us, like the "subject" did Lamb, we shall not be puffed up with self-seeking in order to self-aggrandizement, but we shall be humble in heart and lowly in life.

VI - Politeness of Love.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly" (verse 5).

"Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. The one secret of politeness is love."

The meaning of the word "gentleman" is a gentle man, one who does things gently in love. There are many who spoil a good deed by the uncomely manner in which they perform it.

Love is:

- the file that removes the roughness of uncouthness,
- the oil that banishes the squeakiness of uncourtesy,
- the knife that cuts out the cancer of inconsiderateness,
- the instrument which takes away the blight of rudeness, and
- the plane which is careful to do away with the unseemliness of evil appearance.

Love looks well to see that the house of the heart is kept pure, and sweet, and clean, but it is also careful that the outside of the house is beautiful, too.

Unseemly speech, uncomely actions, and unkind words, are not in the educational code of love.

Love, like Abigail in the gifts for David, not only gives its best, but gives it in the best possible way.

VII - *Preference of Love.*

"Seeketh not her own" (ver. 5).

There are three characteristics of love, namely, it does not think of itself, it does not save itself, it does think of others.

Love does not think of itself. [134]

It was said of Wilberforce, that he was asked one day by a friend, how his own soul fared in the midst of so much business, entailed upon him by his efforts to free the slaves. His reply was significant: "I forgot I had a soul."

Love does not save itself.

One of the true things said of CHRIST in derision, was: "**He saved others; Himself He cannot save.**" He did not save Himself, for He desired to save others. Love ever acts in this self-sacrificing way.

"An engineer on a locomotive recently, saw a train with which he must collide. He resolved to slow up his train and stand at his post, for there were passengers behind. The engineer said to the fireman: 'Jump! One man is enough on this engine. Jump!' The fireman jumped, and was saved. The crash came. The engineer died at his post."

Thus love ever acts. It acts for others, and not for itself. Love thinks of others.

It looks on the things of others (Philippians 2:4).

"I have been a member of your church for thirty years," said an elderly Christian to his pastor, "and when I was laid by with sickness, only one or two came to see me. I was shamefully neglected."

"My friend," said the pastor, "in all these thirty years, how many sick have you visited?"

"Oh," he replied, "it never struck me in that light. I thought only of the relation of others to me, and not of my relation to them."

Love's unconscious action is ever for others' good, at the expense of itself.

Love's song is, "Not my own, I'm purchased by the blood of CHRIST."

Love's work is, "Not my own labour, I am but an instrument to be used in CHRIST's service."

Love's aim is, "Not my own pleasure, I seek to please my Lord."

Love's desire is, "Not my own ambition, I'm constrained by the love of CHRIST."

Love's testimony is, "Not my own words, it is the message of CHRIST."

Love's ministry is, "Not my own honour, it is for the glory of CHRIST."

Love's seeking is, "Not my own way. I follow in the steps of CHRIST."

Love never says these things of itself, but its actions say them.

Love, like the face of Moses, is unconscious, and unconcerned about its own shining.

VIII - *Provokelessness of Love.*

"Is not easily provoked " (verse 5).

As long as love holds the reins of the soul, there is no danger of its being provoked to anger, and to spiteful action, which leads to sin; and yet love may be provoked in the Lord's service as it beholds that which is wrong. [135]

The Apostle Paul himself, is a case in point.

Twice in the Acts of the Apostles, we find him keenly provoked.

When he saw the idolatry of the Athenians, his spirit was "**stirred**," or "*provoked*," for the word "**stirred**" is the same as rendered "**provoked**" in I Corinthians 13:5.

Again, Paul was provoked at the action of Barnabas, when he would take John Mark with him; for we read that the "**contention was so sharp**" (same word as rendered "**contention so sharp**" is given "**provoke**" in Hebrews 10:24), "**that they departed asunder one from the other**" (Acts 15:39).

It seems Barnabas was wrong in wanting to take Mark with him. It is not without, meaning, that Barnabas is never mentioned again in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Lord Himself was provoked with the unbelief of Israel in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:15, 16).

The meaning undoubtedly is, love is not provoked to sin, and is never moved without some justifying cause.

IX - *Preclusion of Love.*

"**Thinketh no evil**" (verse 5).

"Rotherham expounds the words: "Imputes not that which is base." The word "**thinketh**" carries the meaning of "*imputeth*." It is thus given in Romans 4:8, 11, 22, 23, 24.

Love never condemns on mere suspicion, nor imputes evil without evidence.

An old writer says: "Love delights to think well and speak well of others. She talks well of their good actions, and says little or nothing, except when necessity compels her, of their bad ones. She does not look around for evidence to prove an evil design, but hopes that what is doubtful, will, by further light, appear to be correct. She imputes no evil as long as good is probable. She leans on the side of candor, rather than that of severity. She makes every allowance that truth will permit. She looks to all the circumstances which can be pleaded in mitigation; suffers not her opinion to be formed, till she has had opportunities to escape from the midst of passion, and to cool from the wrath of contention. Love desires the happiness of others, and how can she be in haste to think evil of them?"

X - *Propriety of Love.*

"**Rejoiceth not in iniquity**" (verse 6) The word *adikia* is generally means "**unrighteousness**."

Love does not, like Balaam, love "**the wages of unrighteousness**" (II Peter 2:15);

- nor has it "**pleasure in unrighteousness**," as the followers of anti-Christ will have (II Thessalonians 2:12); [136]
- nor will it yield its members as "**instruments of unrighteousness unto sin**" (Romans 6:13);
- nor will it have fellowship with unrighteousness (II Corinthians 6:14).

Love prays to be cleansed from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9), and, in consequence, departs from it (II Timothy 2:19). Anything that is off the straight path of rectitude, love discards, and keeps straight onwards, like the kine who were yoked to the cart on which was the ark of the covenant: they "**took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh**" (I Samuel 6:12).

Love in action says: "In business I give thirty-six inches to the yard, sixteen ounces to the pound. No two prices for one article sold under the same conditions. Everything is sold for what it is said to be. No cotton-wool goods sold for only wool. In the home I seek to be true in utterance and right in action; in the Church I seek to love all; and in the world I endeavor to do to others, as my Lord would wish."

XI - *Pleasure of Love.*

"**Rejoiceth in the truth**" (ver. 6) One may rejoice in the truth, in admiring its suitability, its

inspiration, and the fruits it produces, and yet not know the power of the truth in the life, even as a man may assent to a given proposition as being the right thing to follow, and yet not practice its teaching. To rejoice with the truth means, that we have fellowship with it, in carrying out its teaching.

In six other places in the New Testament, the same expression occurs, and in each instance there is the thought of fellowship.

- The neighbours and cousins of Elizabeth "**rejoiced with her**" (Luke 1:58) at the birth of John the Baptist.
- The good shepherd, when he had found the lost sheep, and the woman, when she discovered the lost piece of silver, both called their friends together, and said, "**Rejoice with me**" (Luke 15:6,9).
- All the members of the Body of CHRIST, as they are in sympathy with the Head, "**rejoice with**" anyone member that rejoices (I Corinthians 12:26).
- There was a mutual joy between the Apostle Paul and the saints in Philippi; hence he says, I "**rejoice with you**," and ye "**rejoice with me**" (Philippians 2:17, 18).

Thus, to rejoice in the truth means to have fellowship with it.

XII - Paths of Love.

There are four paths in which love walks.

(1) "**Beareth all things.**" Love is never quick-tempered. The same word as rendered "**beareth**" is translated "**suffer**" in I Corinthians 9:12, and "**forbear**" in I Thessalonians 3:1, 5.

Love is like Issachar - willing to be the burden-bearer for others (Genesis 49:14,15). [137]

(2) "**Believeth all things.**" The same word as "**believeth**," is rendered "**trust**" in I Thessalonians 2:4, and "**committed**" in Galatians 2:7.

Love is not suspicious. It has confidence, and looks on others with the glance of faith.

(3) "**Hopeth all things.**" The cheery smile of hope lights up the countenance of love.

Love is like the lark: it loves to soar high, and sing in the blue of Heaven.

(4) "**Endureth all things.**" Love is never tired - or if it is weary in the work, it is never weary of it.

Paul is one of love's examples (II Timothy 2:10), and CHRIST is the Example (Hebrews 12:2, 3).

XIII - Permanence of Love.

"**Charity never faileth**" (verse 8). The word *ekipto*, translated "**faileth**," means *to fall, or fall*

away, as when the stars fall from Heaven (Mark 13:25), or one falls from grace (Galatians 5:4), or the passing away of the flower's beauty (I Peter 1:24); but love ever keeps and shines in her orbit, keeps her place, and retains her beauty.

The permanence of love is further emphasized, when we are told it "**abideth**." The word "**abideth**," signifies *to remain, continue, dwell, endure*.

The Greek word "*meno*" is applied:

- to the Word of GOD, which "**abideth for ever**" (I Peter 1:23),
- to CHRIST, who in His High Priestly office "**abideth continually**" (Hebrews 7:3),
- to the fruit of the believer, which "**should remain**" (John 15:16),
- to the HOLY SPIRIT, of whom CHRIST said, "**He dwelleth with you**" (John 14:17);
- and the word is also rendered, "**might stand**," in calling attention to GOD's purpose of electing grace.

Further, the word "*meno*" rendered "**abideth**," is the one which is generally used, when the believer is exhorted to abide in CHRIST (John 15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10), and in describing the believer's dwelling in GOD, and GOD's dwelling in the believer (I John 3:17,24; 4:12,13, 15, 16).

From this we gather, that love is no fickle flame which soon dies out, but a permanent steady one, which burns like the light of the golden lampstand, continually (Leviticus 24:2).

"Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself," says Napoleon, "founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? upon force. JESUS alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions are ready to die for Him."

Where are the empires of Alexander and Caesar to-day? We look upon their ruins, and in those ruins we behold, that what is gained by might and not by right, will work out its own destruction. What was the end of Napoleon's achievements? The artist's pencil has well depicted it, in the solitary figure, who, with bowed head and sorrowful countenance, paces up and down in his confinement in St. Helena. [138]

On the other hand, where love has acted, the name of the actor lives. The names of Howard, the prisoner's friend; Florence Nightingale, the soldier's nurse; Wilberforce, the slave's emancipator; Muller, the children's benefactor; Moffatt, the ardent missionary; Spurgeon, the faithful preacher; and Carey, the devoted worker, live on with honour, and will live on, for their deeds were wrought in love, and prompted by love; therefore, they being dead are yet speaking.

XIV - *Pre-eminence of Love.*

"**The greatest of these is charity**" (verse 13).

Love is the greatest of all graces, for it is that which makes the rest of the graces graceful; yea, may we not say, every other grace is an expression of love.

What is mercy, but love compassionating the guilty?
What is kindness, but love ministering to the needy?
What is pity, but love's thoughtfulness for the suffering?
What is faith, but love's confidence in the Saviour?
What is hope, but love's expectation of her Lord?
What is courage, but love's fortitude in conflict?
What is righteousness, but love's conformity to GOD's law?
What is holiness, but love's imitation of the Divine?
What is joy, but love's exultation in the Saviour?
What is peace, but love's repose in the Redeemer?
What is patience, but love's endurance in the race?
What is meekness, but love's unselfishness, in giving way to others?
What is prayer, but love's supplication for the aid of the Almighty?
What is worship, but love's offering of praise?
What is penitence, but love bewailing her short-comings?
What is justice, but love paying her dues?
What is beneficence, but love distributing her bounties?
What is faithfulness, but love's fidelity in performing her promises?
What is zeal, but love's ardor in fulfilling her trust?
What is testimony, but love telling out the glory of the Gospel?
What is fruit, but love's life manifesting itself?
What is work, but love's employment in serving the Lord?

So might every trait of Christian life and labour be summarized.

- Love is the backbone of truth,
- Love is the lever of grace,
- Love is the heart of the Gospel,
- Love is the summary of Christianity,
- Love is the motor of true service,
- Love is the meaning of the Cross, and
- Love is the nature of GOD;

therefore, it must have the pre-eminent place, and be like the Beloved, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.

XV - Pursuit of Love.

"Follow after charity" (I Corinthians 14:1). Here love is made to be a person, whom we are to follow. Where can such an One be found? Only in CHRIST, therefore, He is THE Expression of love's traits, as brought before us. Think then of CHRIST, in pondering the characteristics of love, for no one except Him answers to them fully. [139]

His Suffering Love - "**Charity suffereth long.**"
His Compassionate Love - "**Is kind.**"
His Contented Love - "**Envieth not.**"
His Abasing. Love - "**Vaunteth not itself.**"

His Humble Love - "Is not puffed up."
His Wise Love - "Does not behave itself unseemly."
His Unselfish Love - "Seeketh not her own."
His Patient Love - "Not provoked."
His Unsuspicious Love - "Thinketh no evil"
His Holy Love - "Rejoiceth not in iniquity."
His Truthful Love - "Rejoiceth in the truth."
His Bearing Love - "Beareth all things."
His Expecting Love - "Hopeth all things."
His Trustful Love - "Believeth all things."
His Enduring Love - "Endureth all things."
His Unchanging Love - "Never faileth."
His Excelling Love - "Greatest of these is charity."

Thus our thoughts are led along the "**more excellent way**" (I Corinthians 12:31), to the MOST EXCELLENT ONE.

Let us follow HIM, for as we do so, we must catch His spirit.

- Follow Him, as Ruth did Naomi, *tenaciously* (Ruth 1:16-18);
- Follow Him, as the Levites did Moses, *faithfully* (Exodus 32:26-28);
- follow Him, as the 300 men did Gideon, *earnestly* (Judges 7:17);
- follow Him, as Ittai the Gittite did David, *consecratingly* (II Samuel 15:19-22);
- follow Him, as Elisha did Elijah, *determinately* (II Kings 2:1-6);
- follow Him, as Peter did the angel, *obediently* (Acts 12:8); and
- follow Him, as Israel did Ehud, *triumphantly* (Judges 3:28).

XVI - *Power of Love.*

Our study would be incomplete, if we were to stop without calling attention to the secret cause of all true loving, viz., the moving power of CHRIST's indwelling presence, for when we think of the power of love, we refer not to the influence which emanates from those who love, but rather to the power which makes us love in truth, and to love truly; that is, to Him, whose name is Love.

Some years ago, a well-known professor brought out a booklet entitled, *The Greatest Thing in the World*, in which he sought to show that man's love to GOD was the greatest thing in the world, but surely this was a misnomer, for is not GOD's love to man the greatest thing in the world? [140]

Therefore to say the former is, is to cause the thoughtful Christian to endorse what the late kindly Archbishop Tait said, when he called the treatise, *The Strangest Thing in the world*.

- Our love to GOD is but the reflection of GOD's love to us, even as the moon reflects the glory of the sun.
- Our love to GOD is but the outcome of GOD's love to us, even as the rain is but the result of the sun's exhalation of the moisture from the earth.

- Our love to GOD is but the result of GOD's love to us, even as the fruit is the result of the growth of the tree.
- Our love to GOD is the flowing forth of GOD's love through us, even as the stream is the flowing forth of the spring.

William Tyndale, the translator of the Scriptures, had many enemies, who persecuted him with cruel hatred, but to whom he bore the tenderest charity.

It is recorded that to some of them he said one day: "Take away my goods, take away my good name! Yet so long as CHRIST dwelleth in my heart, so long shall I love you not a whit the less."

In these words, Tyndale gives us the secret of all loving. CHRIST the loving One must indwell us, if we are to love as He directs, Otherwise we shall be driven to despair, like the Brahmin, who, when he heard Dr. Duff read the 13th of first Corinthians, exclaimed: "'Who can act up to that!' Who, indeed!

There is only One who can, and that is the One who has already lived out every trait of Love's character.

Let us but trust Him, and CHRIST will do it.

If we delight in Him with a simple faith, He will demonstrate through us, His sanctifying love. There will be no doubt of this, if we can say with Suso:-

"As the bridegroom to his chosen,
As the king unto his realm,
As the keep unto the castle,
As the pilot to the helm,
So, Lord, art Thou to me.

"As the fountain in the garden,
As the candle in the dark,
As the treasure in the coffer,
As the manna in the ark,
So, Lord, art Thou to me.

"As the ruby in the setting,
As the honey in the comb,
As the light within the lantern,
As the father in the home,
So, Lord, art Thou to me.

"As the sunshine to the heavens,
As the image to the glass,
As the fruit unto the fig-tree,
As the dew unto the grass,
So, Lord, art Thou to me." [141]

~ end of chapter 12 ~