

The Love of Jesus.

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In looking at Revelation 1: 5, 6, we can trace the following actings of love: first, love *thinks* of its objects. This marks the motive in operation to be unaffectedly pure, for when the heart regales itself by meditating on its object, it seeks not to be noticed, to be praised or exalted for thinking of its object; its reward is found in the very thought itself — a reward, a pleasure with which nothing can compare.

Secondly, love *visits* its object. It could not be content with merely thinking: the same principle that leads love to *think* with pleasure, induces it to *visit* its object; and, moreover, we can trace the same purity, elevation, and disinterestedness, in the visit as in *the thought*. It does not *think* upon its object in order to please or attract the attention of any one, neither does it *visit* in order to effect such ends; it has *its own real, substantial* enjoyment, both in thinking of and visiting *its object*.

Thirdly, love *suffers* for its object. It rests not satisfied with merely *thinking* of, or *visiting* its object — it *must suffer*. In order to exhibit itself in all its reality and intensity, love must put itself to cost for its object; it must spend and be spent, not because it expects a return, but simply because *it will* express itself in a way not to be mistaken. Love never thinks of what it may reap for itself in thus suffering. No: it simply contemplates *its object*, in thinking of, visiting, and suffering for it.

Fourthly, love *exalts* its object. This is the highest point. In the exaltation of its object, love sees the fruit of previous thought, visitation, and suffering. Hence, love feels exquisite happiness in exalting its object, for in so doing, it reaps the wished-for harvest.

Let us now apply the above blessed characteristics of love to the Lord Jesus, and see how His love exhibited all of them. Did not He ponder in His own eternal mind His much-loved Church before the foundation of the world? Yes, truly, "His gracious eye surveyed us ere stars were seen above." Did He rest satisfied with merely thinking about us? No: He laid aside all His glory; He came down into this cold, heartless world, as into a vast quarry, from whence He hoped to hew out stones for the temple. He made His way down into this "*rough valley*" of ours, which had "neither been eared nor sown." "*The day-spring from on high hath visited us;*" but He did not rest satisfied with coming down to look at us in our misery and degradation; He determined to *suffer* for us, to groan, to bleed, to die for us; He hath washed us in "*His own blood,*" which marks the intensity of His suffering for us. What, then, was all this for? Why those ineffable sufferings of Jesus? Why the groans and bloody sweat in the garden? Why the mysterious hour of profound darkness, together with the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" Simply that the love of Jesus might *exalt* its object. And He has exalted His object, yea, to the highest point of elevation: "He hath made us kings and priests unto God."

Thus we have seen how the love of Jesus has *thought* of, *visited*, *suffered* for, and *exalted* its object: this is for our comfort. But then we should remember that if we love Jesus, *we too* will often like to *think* of Him, to contemplate His grace, ponder over His perfections; moreover, we will pay frequent *visits* to the secret of His sanctuary, not to gain a name as persons of much prayer, but simply to indulge the desires of our hearts after Him "who is the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Again, we shall be ready to *suffer* for Him, not in order to commend ourselves to our brethren as persons of great energy and zeal, but to express the high estimation in which we hold His blessed Person. Finally, it will be our constant effort to *exalt* Him in every place; our constant cry will be, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Let us earnestly pray for such a deep

tide of Divine love in our poor, cold, narrow, selfish hearts, as will make our service not the mere spurt of imperfect zeal, kindled by the unhallowed spark of human opinion, but the calm, steady, constant flow of unalterable affection for Jesus — that affection which has its primary joy in *pondering* over its object, ere it comes forth as an *actor* or a *sufferer* in *His cause*.

"Come, saints, praise the Lamb, His mercies proclaim,
And lift up your heads and sing of His name;
His love to the Church, which He purchased with blood,
To make her His bride and the temple of God."