

I need to make two simple points at the outset –

First, our passage assumes the merging of two distinct events – (1) what we call ‘the breaking of bread’ – the Lord’s Supper – the remembrance of the Lord – and (2) what was once known as a ‘love feast’.

The love-feast or ‘agapē’ was the communal meal of the early church – an expression of the brotherly love, the voluntary sharing and the warm fellowship which marked the church’s infancy. The actual word is found in the New Testament only in Jude 12 - in connection with certain false teachers and apostates, ‘These are spots in your love-feasts, while they feast (feed abundantly) with you without fear’ – the word ‘spots’ being better translated ‘hidden rocks’ or reefs in the sea – referring to men who by their ungodly conduct cause shipwreck to others. Acts 2. 46 tells us that the first Christians, ‘continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, ate their food with gladness and singleness (simplicity) of heart’. It’s clear from our passage that the remembrance of the Lord at Corinth was associated with some such a meal – the abuses which Paul mentions couldn’t have arisen in an ordinance involving only bread and wine. Communal meals were a regular feature of the countless religious clubs and associations found throughout the Greek-Roman world at that time – and having such a meal in the church wouldn’t have seemed at all strange to the Corinthians.

It seems likely that at Corinth the actual remembrance of the Lord *followed* the communal meal – in much the same way as the institution of the original ‘breaking of bread’ followed a communal meal – namely, the Passover ‘supper’, v. 25. The breaking of bread itself should, however, have always been seen as distinct from the ‘love-feast’ - if for no higher reason than that, as Paul makes clear, only bread and wine featured in the memorial instituted by Jesus.

My second introductory point is that the whole of the second half of 1 Cor. 11 is meant to be a very practical passage. The central, very well-known and precious section, vv. 23-26, features as part of Paul’s overall argument – hence the ‘for’ of v. 23, and the “wherefore” (therefore – ‘so that’, lit) of v. 27 – and is sandwiched between the section which reports the abuse, vv. 17-22 (beginning and ending with his censure – ‘I praise you not’) – and the section which – first noting the serious consequences of the abuse – sets out to correct it, vv. 27-34.

Our interpretation of the passage rests critically on how we understand the expression, ‘not discerning the body’ in v. 29 – because this clearly is the cause of many at Corinth eating and drinking ‘unworthily’, v. 27, and thereby incurring God’s disciplinary judgement.

As I read the passage, there are two related but distinct strands to the abuse – both of which stemmed directly from the Corinthians’ misunderstanding about the main purpose – about the most important element – of the meeting – of the combined agapē and breaking of bread meeting, that is. For it is clear that they were treating the Lord’s Supper as no more than an adjunct to the love-feast. They utterly failed to appreciate the significance of what they were meeting to do.

When Paul rebuked them for not ‘discerning the body’, v.29 – not ‘the Lord’s body’ – I suggest that he intended them to see a double meaning to his words. First, in his phrase ‘the body’ he undoubtedly included the Lord’s own literal body – a conclusion supported by the fact that he used the word ‘body’ to refer to the Lord’s actual body in both v.24 and v.27. To fail to ‘distinguish the body’ in this sense meant that the Corinthians failed to regard the bread which they broke as a symbol of the Lord’s body – they failed to see beyond the physical emblems to the spiritual realities of which they were but the symbols. They degraded the bread and cup to mere items of food and drink – and saw them as no more than an additional means of satisfying their appetite.

But I said that, in my view, Paul was giving a double meaning to the expression ‘not discerning the body’. We cannot help noticing that – although Paul has spoken consistently throughout vv. 21-29a of both eating and drinking, of both Jesus’ body and Jesus’ blood, of both the bread and the cup – at this critical point, he confines his comment to ‘the body’ and omits any reference to the Lord’s blood. Such an unexpected twist surely us to the fact that there is more to Paul’s meaning than at first meets the eye. Why single out ‘the body’ alone? Well, we know from Paul’s careful use of the word ‘head’ in vv. 4-5 of our chapter that he is not adverse to making a play on some key word and using it in a deliberately ambiguous sense – using it with two distinct meanings at the same time. More particularly we noted the double meaning which he gave to the actual word ‘body’ back in 10.16-17. I suggest that he is doing so here again.

We know from other sections of his letters, including this letter, that Paul not infrequently described the church as the ‘body’ of the Lord. For instance, he spoke of ‘the church, which is his body’ in Eph. 1. 22-23 – and calls the church ‘the body of Christ’ – not only in Col. 4.12 – but in 12. 27 of this very letter. We note that, in the chapters either side of ours, Paul tells the Corinthians that ‘by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body’, 12. 13 – and – in the very context of ‘the bread which we break’ – that ‘we because it is one bread, we the many are one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread’, 10. 17. This latter reference is particularly important because Paul uses the same word ‘body’ of the Lord’s literal body in the verse immediately before, v.16. That is, Paul has already

introduced the Corinthians to the fact that the one bread speaks both of our Lord's actual body and of 'the church which is His body'.

And so – the Corinthians failed 'to discern' (distinguish) 'the body' – not only in that they failed to see beyond the physical emblem of the bread to the spiritual reality of the Lord's actual body which it symbolized – but in that they failed to distinguish between the church and the many religious clubs and associations around. The one loaf of bread which they broke and eat – supposedly in remembrance of the Lord – represented – not only His physical body given in death for them – but also His spiritual body, the church. By partaking of that 'one bread', they were professing to believe in the unity of the church, the body of Christ – they were professing their fellowship with the other believers at Corinth. But what a travesty! Their behaviour in the earlier so-called 'love feast' made a mockery of the whole thing! Their casual attitude to the 'body' – the church – left the rich free to indulge themselves and refuse to share their provisions with the poor – with 'them that have not', v.22 – thereby in practice denying the very unity which the remembrance of the Lord was meant to symbolise.

So much for the introduction. Now let's work through the passage and end with some comments about remembering the Lord.

**V. 17.** 'I praise you not' stands in obvious contrast to the 'I praise you' of v. 2. It wasn't even that they came together to no useful purpose – the sobering fact is that their coming together actually did more harm than good. Paul's purpose in writing was to warn them 'lest' – in 'coming together for the worse' – they 'come together to condemnation' – under God's judgement and discipline, v. 34.

**V. 18.** I take it from Paul's 'first' or firstly' that vv.18-34 deal with only part of the problem he could see there – that they came together for the worse – not only as a result of their abuse of social position with which Paul deals in this passage – but also as a result of their abuse of spiritual gifts with which he deals in chapters 12-14 – where the same word translated 'come together' occurs twice again.

Come together 'in the church' – literally 'in church' – makes no reference, of course, to any particular religious building – but to the type of the gathering – when they met together as a church – when the 'whole church came together', 14.23. It is always possible that they still met in the house of Titius Justus, next door to the synagogue, Acts 18.7. Yet, although they boasted no special church building, clearly their actions when they came together 'in church' could be distinguished from actions they were free to perform elsewhere – for example, in their own 'houses', vv. 22, 34 – which has some bearing I suppose on our proposed reconciliation of vv.5-6 with 14.34-35.

Paul speaks in v. 18 of 'divisions among you' and in v. 19 of 'heresies among you'. The word 'divisions' describes splits and schisms – and the word 'heresies' describes – not erroneous doctrine, as in later times – but parties and factions. Not that the divisions and factions in view here are the same as those in chapters 1-3 – those of the 'I am of Paul ... I am of Apollos' type – here we are dealing with social and class distinctions – with the difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of vv. 21-22.

How tragic that Paul is compelled to link the words 'divisions' and 'factions' with the expression 'come together' – what a contradiction in terms! – to 'come together' and yet to be divided – the more so in this case, I suppose, because the very purpose of their coming together was originally meant to be an expression of the fellowship and oneness which exists between believers.

**V. 19.** 'There must be' – not that God is the Author of divisions and parties in the church – as Jesus said of the sower of tares in Matthew 13, 'an enemy has done this', Matt. 13.28 – but God does overrule such evils – that those who resist it and refuse to get involved might be recognized as having His approval.

**V. 20.** 'It is not to eat the Lord's supper' – that is, 'It isn't possible to eat the Lord's supper' – and why not? Because – v. 21 – during the preceding so-called 'love feast' everyone has been greedily devouring 'his own supper'. It was out of the question, Paul is saying, that – following their deplorable excesses and selfish conduct at the one the Corinthians could properly observe and celebrate the other.

Paul speaks of the remembrance as 'the Lord's supper'. He is the author of it – He is the subject of it – the Supper belongs to Him. As is well known, the word 'Lord's' is different to that in v. 26 – 'the Lord's death'. The word here occurs in only one other place in the New Testament – in the expression 'the Lord's day' in Rev. 1.10. The word is found, however, frequently in inscriptions and papyri in the sense of 'imperial' – for example, the 'lord's service' meant the 'imperial service' – the service of the emperor.<sup>1</sup> We note the change in emphasis between the first half of the chapter – where the stress is on the headship of Christ – and the second half of the chapter – where the stress is on His lordship – to which we find no less than 8 references in 18 verses.

**V. 21.** Far from the rich sharing their lavish provisions – they won't even wait for the poor to arrive – each goes ahead ('takes before') and eats his own supper. And so the poor leave hungry and the rich leave intoxicated. What a farce! A loveless 'love-feast'. What a misnomer! An 'agapē' without a trace of 'agapē'. A fellowship-meal which denied the very first principles of Christian fellowship. How utterly grotesque.

Yes. Maybe many of the Corinthians *had come* from a background of riotous meals given in honour of some pagan god. Maybe they *had once* been used to drinking heavily at their pagan feasts. 'Idolaters, greedy, drunkards' – yes, such *were* some of them, 6.9-10 – but *now* they are washed, sanctified and justified, 6.11 – and this is 'the church of God', v. 22!

**V. 22.** 'Haven't you houses to eat and to drink in?' Paul is shortly to set out the main reason they *should* be coming together as a church. But first he underlines the reason they shouldn't be coming together – their motive in coming should not be to eat and drink – to satisfy their appetite! After all, this was 'the church of God' – not a restaurant.

'Do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?' It's likely that the 'church of God at Corinth', 1.1, was largely made up of the poor rather than the rich. Paul had invited them in 1.26-29 to consider their calling, and pointed out to them that 'God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound (same word as 'shame' here) the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence' – and Paul could no doubt have added with James, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hasn't God chosen the poor of this world – rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But you have despised (dishonoured) the poor', James 2.5-6.

We read earlier in the chapter, vv. 4-6, of some who 'shamed' themselves by what they wore – now we read of some who 'shamed' others by what they eat and drank. (being the same word.)

**V. 23.** To focus their minds clearly on the main point and purpose of the Corinthians coming together, he reminds them of what he had previously taught them about the original institution and about the uniqueness, significance and real meaning of the Lord's Supper.

In Galatians 1, Paul says *of the gospel* which he preached, 'I neither *received* it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ', 1.12, and, again of that gospel, in chapter 15 of our letter, that 'I *delivered* unto you first of all that which I also *received*', 15.3. But the same was true, Paul insists, of the details of the Lord's Supper – these also he had by direct revelation.

The Risen Lord regarded His people's remembrance of Him as so important that He deigned to rehearse the moments of its original institution to the apostle – dare I say, to 're-live' for Paul's benefit – and the benefit of the gentile churches he would establish – the night of His foul betrayal by one of His twelve – the taking of the bread – the taking of the cup! What did these memories mean to Him? The very expression, 'the night in which He was being betrayed' literally, only serves to heighten the pathos of that moment in the upper room.

It is not without interest that, in setting out these details, Paul has provided us with what is probably the first written record of the institution of the Supper which we possess. But Paul's immediate concern lay – not with us – but with the Corinthians – and he is determined to bring home to them the gravity of what they have been doing.

**V. 24.** 'When He had given thanks' – and, as Matthew and Mark inform us – had 'blessed' God – for the bread, Matt. 26:26, 27; Mark 14:22, 23 – He broke it and said, 'This is My body'. I understand that the Jews spoke of the passover lamb which Jesus had just eaten with His disciples as *'the body of the passover'*.<sup>2</sup> But now Jesus speaks of another 'body' – His own. Given that the Lord was personally and bodily present with the disciples at the time, they would of course have understood Him to refer to the bread as a symbol and representation of His body – much as when He said that He was the door or the true vine. The disciples wouldn't have dreamt for a moment that Jesus meant that the bread in any sense was – or became – His body. Just as if I held up photo of Malcolm today and said 'This is me', you would know that I didn't mean that the photo was really me – partly because it would be obvious that Malcolm isn't a piece of photographic card and partly because I would be here holding it.

**V. 25.** 'After supper' – that is, the Passover supper. Paul's point is that the institution of the remembrance was subsequent to, and distinct from, the Passover feast. We may perhaps detect a hint that the Corinthians should make a clearer distinction than they had been doing between the 'love-feast' and the remembrance of the Lord which followed.

'This cup is the new covenant in My blood' – the cup standing by an accepted figure of speech (metonymy) for the contents of the cup – the wine. No doubt, the Lord Jesus had in mind the ratification of the *old* covenant – 'Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you', Exod. 24.8. The 'new' covenant also – though differing from the old, not only in age but in nature – the significance of the word 'new' which Jesus chose – needed to be ratified by blood. But this covenant – which the writer to the Hebrews termed the 'better' covenant – called, he said also, for 'better' sacrifice, Heb. 8.6; 9.23! And so the confirmation of the new covenant required the shedding of His blood – 'His blood' denoting His violent, sacrificial death. 'Behold the blood of the covenant', Moses said – behold 'the blood of the eternal covenant', we say, Heb. 13.20. This is, Jesus said, 'My blood of the covenant being shed (poured out) for many for forgiveness of

sins', Matt 26.28 lit. Indeed the New Testament (Covenant) traces the whole range of our blessings to His blood – I'm not only forgiven – I'm purchased, redeemed, cleansed, justified, sanctified, reconciled to God, loosed from my sins, and have access into His immediate presence.

Twice in vv.24-25 Jesus said, 'This do in remembrance of Me' – that is, 'to bring Me to mind'. Outside of the records of the institution of the Supper, this word, 'remembrance', is only found only once again in the New Testament – at the beginning of Hebrews 10 – 'In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins', Heb. 10.3-4. That is, the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament served to bring sins to remembrance. The bread and wine of the Supper serves to bring to remembrance Him who – by His once-for-all sacrifice – has put them away for ever – so that they are remembered no more!

Each believer gives thanks and breaks the bread – it is 'the bread which we break', 10.16. The Passover meal was itself a commemoration – a remembrance of the time when Israel came out of Egypt. At the time of its original institution, Moses said to the people, 'Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place', Exod. 13.3. But we don't remember – as do the Jews – either a 'day' or an event – we remember a Person. We don't meet to remember *something* – we meet to remember *Someone*. We know the Lord Jesus today as He *is* – and one day will see Him as He *is* – but we do not remember Him as He *is*. Through the writings of the New Testament – and the gospels in particular – we are able to remember Him as He *was*. The Lord's Supper is very much His great 'forget-me-not' meeting.

Paul wants none of the Corinthians to ever forget that it is the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself which claim their 'remembrance'. Let us never forget that it is the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself which claim ours! – that, because of our Lord's tremendous love for us, it is a matter of tremendous importance to Him that we do remember Him. If He wasn't concerned about us, He wouldn't care whether we remembered Him or not. But He does care.

But His very request points to the possibility of our forgetting Him. Alas, we each know our tendency to do just that. How sad that we – who owe Him everything – should ever need to be told to remember Him - let alone need a visual aid to help us. But we do need it – and He knew it – just as He knew all things which were coming on Him, John 18.4 – and He didn't want to have to say of us – as He once had to say of Israel – 'My people have forgotten Me days without number', Jer. 2.32.

**V. 26.** 'As often ...' – I have no time to stay with this – suffice to say that – although we have no direct command to that effect – there is evidence in the New Testament that the early church left us the example of meeting on the first day of the week for this purpose.

'You show the Lord's death' – that is, 'you declare, you proclaim' – a word used throughout the book of Acts<sup>3</sup>, and often elsewhere in the New Testament<sup>4</sup> – including earlier in this letter – of preaching.

One of the great Jewish writers of long ago wrote, 'the passover *showed* that the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt; the bitter herbs *showed* that the Egyptians made the lives of our fathers bitter in Egypt; and the unleavened bread *showed* that they were redeemed. And all these things are called "the proclamation"'.<sup>5</sup> And in their treatise called, 'the *showing forth* of the passover', the Jews were careful to note the words of Moses, 'You will show your son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did to me when I came forth out of Egypt', Exod. 13.8.<sup>6</sup>

When we break the bread and drink the cup, we silently show – indeed – in a delightful paradox – we 'silently proclaim' the Lord's death. Rightly we sing, 'No gospel like this feast, spread for us, Lord, by Thee. No prophet nor evangelist, preach the glad news more free'.<sup>7</sup>

'The Lord's death till He come' – what a wealth and depth of meaning lie in these few words. I can't imagine two words more difficult to associate and join together – I can't imagine two more incongruous words – than 'Lord's' and 'death'. Surely they must rank alongside Paul's earlier statement in 2.8, 'they crucified the Lord of glory'.

And, by means of the bread and cup, we proclaim His death 'till He come' – when we will have no further need of symbols. For the Supper forges the connecting link between His two comings for us. It is the monument and memorial of the one and the pledge and promise of the other. It points back to the greatest accomplished event of the past and forward to – what is for us – the greatest expected event of the future. As the hymn so beautifully puts it, 'Here we would rest midway, as on a sacred height – that darkest and that brightest day, meeting before our sight'.<sup>8</sup>

**V. 27,** with its 'wherefore' ('so that'), brings us down with a bump to the practical application of all this. It is, Paul says, a serious matter indeed if we eat the bread and drink the cup – which are, Paul has just said, the appointed means of proclaiming the death of the Lord – 'unworthily' – in an unworthy manner. The word translated 'unworthily' occurs nowhere else in the New Testament – and only once in the Greek Old Testament – in Jer. 15.19 – where God says to the prophet, 'If you will bring forth the precious from the vile (ie 'worth'-less), you will be as my mouth'.

As we noted earlier, the Corinthians were eating and drinking in such an 'unworthy' and 'worthless' manner because they failed to 'discern the body' – on the one hand, they regarded the Lord's Supper itself as part and parcel of a common meal and the bread and cup – not as symbols of the Lord's body and blood – but merely as items of food and drink – and on the other hand, because they regarded the church as no different to the religious clubs and associations around, their attitude to other saints was altogether wrong – manifesting itself in the rich refusing to share their provisions – thereby in practice denying the unity of the church which the remembrance of the Lord is meant to symbolise.

In both senses, they were 'guilty' of disparaging the bread and wine – and therefore the body and blood of Jesus of which they were the symbols.

**Vv. 28-30.** Paul prescribes a strong dose of self-examination. Let such 'examine' – prove, test – themselves in regard to their attitude both towards the bread and cup and towards their brethren. In the latter instance, they were in effect to leave their gift before the altar and first be reconciled to the poor brethren they had so grievously wronged – and who therefore had something against them – and then they were to come and offer their gift, Matt. 5.23-24. Then – but only then – let them partake – let them eat and drink.

It's just possible that, in the expression 'so let him eat', Paul is alluding to the words which were used by the head of the family at the Passover meal, 'Everyone that is hungry, *let him come and eat* – and everyone that has need or ought, let him keep the passover'.<sup>9</sup>

In this short section, Paul uses the word 'judge' and 'judgement' – referring to a judgement visited 'by the Lord', v. 32. To some extent, it is astonishing that God should have felt so strongly about this particular example of their misconduct. If we had been told that there was one sin at Corinth which was so serious that it brought divine judgment – and had been asked which sin we thought it was – I wonder what our answer would have been? The scandalous case of incest referred to in chapter 5? The disgraceful lawsuits or the sexual immorality mentioned in chapter 6? The fellowship with idols and demons discussed in chapters 8-10? The refusal of some women in Corinth to wear a head covering when they ought – covered in the earlier part of this chapter? Well, we should have been wrong. It was none of these. If my understanding of the passage is correct, the Lord's disciplinary judgement was exercised in the case of saints who, on the one hand, partook of the bread and cup without recognising these as symbols of the Lord's own body and blood – failing to 'discern' the 'body' in that sense – and who, on the other hand, partook of the one bread without recognising this as a symbol of the unity of the church – leading to their lack of consideration for others failing to 'discern' the 'body' in that sense. Ouch.

**V. 30** doesn't actually say that it was the offenders themselves who suffered or had been removed – only that some of the company had been – but this surely is the implication of **v. 31**. We are told that, as a result of their selfish and unthinking behaviour, 'many' were weak and sick, and 'a significant number' had died – 'sleep' being a delightful Christian euphemism for death. Yes. God obviously considered a considerable number of the saints to be fit for the courts in heaven but not fit for the church in Corinth!

**V. 32.** But 'when we are judged', Paul assures them, 'we are chastened of the Lord'. The judgement which had fallen wasn't a judge's condemnation of a criminal – but a father's discipline of his wayward children. And, as always, back of God's interventions in judgement lay both His love and His holiness. For His love is His motive – 'whom the Lord loves, He chastens (disciplines), and scourges every son whom He receives', Heb. 12.6 – and His holiness is His goal – 'that we may be partakers of His holiness', v. 10.

**V. 33-34.** Paul's overall conclusion and correction for the abuse. 'Wherefore' – 'so that' – when the believers come together – for the love feast and the Supper – they are to wait for one another – in obvious contrast to the description given in v. 21 – 'each one takes his own supper before (ahead of) others'.

'But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home' – that is, 'Don't mistake the love feast – still less, the Lord's Supper – for a common meal'. His question back in v.22 – 'Have you not houses to eat and drink in?' – had prepared the way for this instruction. The satisfying of their appetite should never have been their motive for coming even to the love feast – the purpose of which was to promote a spirit of love, sharing and fellowship among the saints – let alone to the Lord's Supper – the purpose of which was to proclaim both the Lord's death and, in a way incidentally, that 'we being many are one body'.

But in conclusion, I want to go back to the Lord's words in vv. 24-25 – 'This do in remembrance of Me'. It goes without saying, of course, that none of us have ever met, seen or heard the Lord Jesus in the flesh. We have no mental picture of His face, form or features by which to remember Him. And yet we *can* see Him, can know Him and can remember Him through His word (principally the four gospels). With the help of His Spirit :

- **We can remember Him in the manger** - the rich One who became poor. Who relinquished the glory which He had with Father before world was, who exchanged the throne of heaven for an animals' feeding trough and the

gorgeous robe of the Lord of hosts for swaddling clothes. Who 'entering the world, said, A body hast Thou prepared Me. I come do Thy will, O God.'

- **We can remember Him in the temple at the age of 12**, explaining to His mother Mary that He 'must' be about His Father's business – and He wasn't referring to Joseph!
- **We can remember Him in the river Jordan**, being baptised by John, leaving the water, the heaven opened, the Spirit of God descending like a dove, the voice out of heaven, 'My beloved Son, in whom well pleased'.
- **We can remember Him in the wilderness**, the One who vanquished Satan. On the occasion when the lion who is our spiritual adversary and the mighty lion of Judah's tribe met and fought together. Never had been such a battle as this, when the great overlord of evil concentrated all his power in one great attempt to topple and throw the seed of the woman. But Jesus proved more than match for him; his fiery darts found no combustible material in Christ.
- **We can remember His miracles** - displaying His power, glory and compassion. I remember the crowd saying, 'We have seen *strange* things today', Luke 5.26. I remember Him saying to a healed demoniac 'go home to friends and tell what *great* things (how much, lit) the Lord has done for you', Mark 5.19. I remember that the chief priests and scribes saw the *wonderful* (marvelous) things that He did', Matt 21.14-17. I remember an occasion when 'the people rejoiced for all the *glorious* things that were done by Him', Luke 13.17.
- **We can remember His teachings** - how He held crowds spellbound when they pressed on Him to hear the word of God, Luke 5.1; how the crowds were astonished because He taught with authority and not as scribes, Matt 7.28-29; how congregations in the synagogues were astonished at His wisdom, Mark 6; and marvelled at His words of grace, Luke 4.22.
- **We can remember His majesty as revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration** - the brilliance of His garments and the radiance of His face; the glory cloud of God's presence, the voice from that magnificent glory which spoke to distinguish Him from the finest and best of men, the three disciples who, suddenly looking around, saw no-one but Jesus only.
- **We can remember the years of toil, trouble and opposition**. Of brothers who did not believe in Him. Of the reproach and continual insults which He bore – being accused of being in league with the devil, of having a demon, of being mad, of being a glutton and a drunkard.
- **We can remember the shady garden of olive-press** – Gethsemane. Of how exceedingly sorrowful and distressed He became when the storm-clouds of anticipation broke over His soul. How He recoiled from the coming day, how He fell on the ground and pleaded with loud cries and tears that the Father would take away the cup of suffering from Him. 'Gethsemane can I forget, or there Thy conflict see, Thy agony and blood-like sweat, And not remember Thee?'.<sup>10</sup>
- **We can remember His trials** – before Annas, Caiaphas, the Jewish Council and Pilate - the cruelty, the mockery, the spitting, the clenched fists smashed into His face, the crown of thorns, the lacerated back.
- **We can remember His cross** - the pierced hands and feet, the burning sun followed by the thick and eerie darkness, the dreadful thirst, the sword of divine justice, the cry of desolation, the bleeding side. 'When to the cross I turn my eyes, And rest on Calvary, O Lamb of God, my sacrifice! I must remember Thee',<sup>11</sup>.

Great love bore great agonies. Could love ever go deeper? Could love ever stoop lower? Could love ever give more? And shall we come, Lord's day by Lord's day, taken the bread and cup – and not remember Jesus?

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<sup>1</sup> Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Gill from Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Acts 4.2; 13.5, 38; 15.36; 17.3, 13

<sup>4</sup> E.g. 1 Cor. 2.1; 9.14; Phil. 1.18; Col. 1.28

<sup>5</sup> Gill from Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora prec. aff. 41

<sup>6</sup> Gill from P. 5, 6. Ed. Rittangel. & Seder. Tephillot. Ed. Basil. fol. 243. 1

<sup>7</sup> Hymns of Light and Love – no. 119, verse 1

<sup>8</sup> Hymns of Light and Love – no. 119, verse 4

<sup>9</sup> Gill from Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 4

<sup>10</sup> Hymns of Light and Love – no. 122, verse 3

<sup>11</sup> Hymns of Light and Love – no. 122, verse 4.