

**LOVE-FEASTS; A
HISTORY OF THE
CHRISTIAN AGAPE**

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Love-Feasts; A History of the Christian Agape by R. Lee Cole

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CHRISTIAN AGAPE**

LOVE-FEASTS

A History of the Christian Agape

By
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CALIFORNIA

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Dedicated
to
JOAN AND SYDNEY

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PREFACE

THE literature concerning the history of the Agape available for an ordinary reader is not very extensive. In England, apart from the work of two or three students of the subject, it has not received much attention. Excellent Bibliographies may be found in the articles contained in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* and (for the older literature) in M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia*. The following is a short list of the more important books and papers on the subject :

BATIFFOL : *Études d'histoire et de Théologie positive* (Paris, 1902). In which the author replies to the work of Dr. Keating.

BOX : *The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist* (*Journal of Theological Studies*, iii. 357).

DRESCHER : *De vet. Christ. Agapis* (Giess, 1824).

ERMONI : *L'Agape dans l'Église primitive* (Paris, 1906). A reply to the work of Batiffol.

FUNK : 'L'Agape' in the Louvain *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (January 15, 1903).

HARNACK : ' Brot und Wasser ' (*Texte und Unters.*, vii. 2) (Leipzig, 1891)

JÜLICHÈR : *Zur Geschichte des Abendmahls* (1892).

KEATING : *The Agape and the Eucharist* (London 1901). The most valuable study of the Love-feast in English.

LOCK : Article ' Love-feasts ' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

LECLERCQ : Article on ' Agape ' in Cabrol's *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*. A most interesting description of the Agape as regards its representation in early Christian art and inscriptions. Well illustrated.

MACLEAN : Article ' Agape ' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. An able summary in a few pages of the whole history.

KESTNER : *Die Agape* (Jena, 1819).

RAMSAY : *The Church in the Roman Empire*.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- C.I.G.* Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum.
C.I.L. Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.
D.B. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.
D.C.G. Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.
E.B. Encyclopaedia Britannica.
E.G.T. Expositor's Greek Testament.
E.R.E. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
I.C.C. International Critical Commentary.
L. and S. Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*.
Or. Orelli.

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH the Agape had an apostolic origin, it arose, not as the Eucharist did, out of a divine ordinance, but from the spirit of brotherly unity and friendly intercourse that marked the early Christian assemblies. Over all the Mediterranean world, in which Christianity had its origin, men and women were accustomed, long before the Christian Church began, to gather together on occasions for common meals. The nexus of these fellowships in the Roman Empire was generally trade interest, though bereavement and the memory of the dead also summoned them together. Such assemblies had often a religious character, according to the times and places. Specially was this true as regards the gatherings of Jews and Eastern cults. It was only natural, therefore, that the early Christians should meet as their neighbours everywhere did. They had even more reason to do so : their bond of union was