Supper in its entirety, i.e. blessing, breaking and distribution of bread, followed by a meal and concluded with the blessing and distribution of wine.

3. In the fourth century, it was the practice on Maundy Thursday (q.v.), in commemoration of the institution of the sacrament on that day, to combine the agape or love feast (q.v.) with the eucharist, and this, too, was known as the Lord's Supper.

4. The separation of eucharist and agape and the discontinuance of the latter led to the title Lord's Supper being applied to the sacrament alone. This use was widespread in the Middle Ages and the Catechism of Trent endorsed it. The Reformers favoured the title because of its scriptural basis and so, e.g. in the 1549 *BCP*, the service is headed: 'The Supper of the Lorde and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Masse'.

EDITOR

Love Feast

There is little doubt that a common meal with at least semi-liturgical features was regularly held by Christians shortly after the death of Jesus, or that it combined observances which were later separated to become on the one hand the agape or love feast, and on the other the eucharist or holy communion. Such meals were a common feature both of pagan and of Jewish circles, and regulations for that observed by the Qumran sect are found in their *Manual of Discipline*. Dom Gregory Dix, in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, makes a strong case for the Christian meal being a variant of a typical *chaburah* or formal fellowship meal of pious Jewish friends. The early Christians seem to have met for this purpose weekly on the evening of 'the Lord's Day'. The term 'Lord's Supper' may well have been applied both to the occasion as a whole and also to its major components, the meal itself and the liturgical commemoration of the Lord's living presence which accompanied it. Both agape and embryonic eucharist emphasized the fact that his followers constituted a community in spiritual fellowship both with each other and with their risen Lord. Associated with the meal was the distribution of food to the needy, especially widows. The technical term eventually reserved for the meal among the Greek-speaking Christians was *agape*, literally 'a love'. In other words it was an occasion for the display and growth of God-centred Christian love as opposed to merely human *eros* or *philia*. Among the Latin-speaking Christians this became *caritas*, 'charity', a word whose meaning degenerated (as did the love feast itself) from an expression of the purest of emotions to the social activities which normally demonstrated that emotion, but which could too easily be divorced from it and be regarded as self-sufficient.

Unambiguous evidence about the love feast in the NT is scanty. It is quite clear, however, that throughout his ministry Jesus stressed the importance both of meals in general, especially the evening meal, or supper, and the banquet with invited guests – a favourite symbol of his messiahship. He taught his disciples to pray for food. He was even chided for his emphasis upon eating and drinking (Matt. 11.18f.; *cf.* 9.10-15). Not only the apostles but two anonymous followers who met the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus were apparently familiar with some idiosyncrasy in his prayer and breaking of bread at such meals (Luke 24.30f.). At one of his last recorded appearances he presided over a meal with seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee, a meal climaxed by a threefold emphasis alike upon *agape* and upon the pastoral feeding of the Christian flock (John 21.1-17). The 'breaking of bread' was linked with the sharing of goods and temple worship as a distinctive feature of the earliest church (Acts 2.41-47).

In Paul's classic description of the eucharist in I Cor. 11.17-34, a common meal either precedes or is inseparably linked with a more liturgical celebration. Paul's words show, however, that already abuses were creeping in, the table-fellowship occasionally being marred by examples of gluttony and drunkenness. The same was true a generation or two later when Jude wrote – the only undoubted use of the term *agape* (in the plural) in the NT: 'These men are a blot on your love feasts, where they eat and drink without reverence' (v. 12, NEB). Without a familiar background of Jewish piety in the *chaburah* such meals could easily become assimilated to the less restrained pagan banquets, and joy in the fellowship of the risen Lord and his followers could deteriorate into unbridled joy in food and wine, with an emphasis upon variety and luxury such as encouraged gluttony, pride and selfishness. It is sadly clear that this indeed happened, even during the apostolic age, and apparently formed the chief reason

for separating the liturgical celebration of a commemorative token meal (the eucharist) from a genuine meal (the agape). Overlapping and some mutual influence continued, however. The need was constantly felt to urge moderation even in the separated agape, which gradually developed its own distinctive rituals, differing from area to area.

The *Didache* preserves the prayers associated with the Eastern agape early in the second century, probably in Syria. It contains groups of prayers to be used by the presiding minister before and after the meal, together with congregational responses, which rang the changes on the theme of 'To thee be glory for ever', the final petition being the Aramaic *Maranatha*, 'Our Lord, come!' Tertullian's *Apology* (*c.* AD 197) reveals the rite as it was practised in Carthage and probably in Rome – a genuine meal, to which the poor were invited, begun and ended with prayer. The meal was followed with scripture reading, spiritual discourse, the singing of hymns, and apparently an opportunity for individual testimonies of some kind. The *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus shows that in Rome by the third century the agape was celebrated in private homes, guests being invited by the host, though a minister was always present to 'say grace' and to offer a spiritual exhortation. The guests were urged to 'eat sufficiently, but so that there may remain something over that your host may send it to whomsoever he wills, as the superfluity of the saints, and he [to whom it is sent] may rejoice with what is left over' (Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 82). The guests were also urged to pray for their host. Strong evidence exists that the agape gradually came to be assimilated with pagan funeral banquets, which were thus transformed both into occasions for feeding the poor and into symbolic representations of the messianic banquet, a foretaste of the joys of heaven. Conciliar rulings show that from the fourth century onwards the possibility and actuality of abuse, combining with a more formal approach to church life, had steadily undermined the ancient fellowship meal, at least as an official element in Western worship. In the Eastern Church the agape lingered on for two or three centuries more.

By the eighth century the agape seems to have been almost universally defunct apart from vestigial remains whose origins were forgotten and occasional survivals in out-of-the-way sects. Vestiges are probably to be seen in the offertory for the poor at holy communion, in the distributions to the poor on Maundy Thursday, and (in Eastern Churches only) in the distribution of pieces of unconsecrated bread after the eucharist. One example of what appears to be a genuine survival (albeit indirect) is to be found among the Christians of St Thomas in Southern India. Another was probably among the Paulicians of Armenia, who may in turn have sown some of the seed which eventually led to the revival of the love feast among the Moravians.

Along with the Protestant Reformation went a somewhat self-conscious attempt among several pietistic sects to reproduce the actual customs as well as the spirit of the primitive church. Although the details and the dimensions of this process are difficult to recover, it appears that this imitation of the early church combined with the vestigial remains of the agape to foster the modern love feast in some western European communities such as the Mennonites, the German Baptist Brethren (or 'Dunkers'), and the Moravians (q.v.), frequently allied with the kiss of peace (q.v.) and the ceremonial washing of feet. Encouraged by Pietism, the love feast flourished especially during the eighteenth century in Germany and the Netherlands, and was imported to America by the more zealous (and therefore the more persecuted) members of those bodies.

Although the ancient agape thus survived or was revived during modern times in various small sects, the mainstream denominations were hardly affected until John Wesley introduced it to his societies. In his own search for spiritual renewal by means of imitating primitive Christianity, Wesley was greatly impressed by the Moravian love feast as he experienced it both as a missionary in Georgia and as a pilgrim to Herrnhut in Germany. In 1738 he transplanted it to British soil. Convinced as he was of the stabilizing and stimulating power of Christian fellowship, he moulded the love feast into a climactic concentration of the more subdued fellowship of the band meeting and (later) the class meeting. The love feast became the occasion par excellence when after the symbolic sharing of a token family meal the assembled members of several classes and possibly of several societies would take turns in testifying to their Christian experience as they were so moved by the

Holy Spirit. New converts especially were encouraged to speak of the change wrought in them, and their testimonies frequently led to further conversions. Charles Wesley put his genius to work in composing special hymns for these occasions, though strangely enough there was never a distinct love feast collection. At first Methodist love feasts were held monthly, but after a time this gave place to a quarterly, and later still to an annual, celebration, which thus tended to become the more momentous. Enthusiastic Methodists assembling from a wide area rarely failed to experience a spiritual blessing, and the love feast became one of the more exciting events in the Methodist year, to which the general public sought entry, out of curiosity if not always from spiritual expectancy. The fact that these were private gatherings, to which admittance was secured by the possession of a current class ticket or a special note from the itinerant preacher, encouraged scurrilous rumours about immoral practices, though these were readily refuted as without foundation.

When Methodists emigrated they took with them (among other practices) their love feast, so that the Methodist variant became familiar in many parts of the British Commonwealth, as in America. The British offshoots of Wesley's Methodism also adapted the observance. During the nineteenth century, however, with the growing church-consciousness of the Methodist societies, and a consequent lessening of the emphasis upon the conversion experience, as also upon the class meeting and the prayer meeting, the spiritual testimonies at the love feasts lost much of their colourful spontaneity, while the more liturgical element was not by itself sufficient to retain popular adherence. Throughout World Methodism the love feast died out except for a few local survivals and an annual observance in some Methodist Conferences.

During the middle years of the twentieth century there has been a revival of interest in and practice of the love feast, both aspects linked closely with the ecumenical movement. The eucharist has proved the chief symbol both of Christian unity and of Christian disunity. Many Christians have therefore favoured experiments in interdenominational fellowship at a meal which like the eucharist had its origin in the Last Supper, yet which because of a different theological focus and comparative disuse had not become so hedged around with inhibitions and prohibitions.

In *Christian Worship* (1961), T. S. Garrett speaks of modern revivals of the love feast such as 'the parish breakfast following the parish communion', including a Cambridge college occasion when the breaking of pieces from a loaf was accompanied by the recital of a passage from the *Didache*. He also tells of Christian festivals in Tamil villages historically linked with non-Christian festivities yet in fact called 'love feasts' and having genuine spiritual links with the primitive agape (p. 43). There is a sense in which the 'faith tea' of British churches and the 'covered-dish supper' or 'home-coming' meal of American churches may similarly be regarded as modern forms of the love feast.

Much more self-conscious revivals have taken place during recent years, however, with an avowedly ecumenical intention. After lengthy preparations the two denominations represented in the parish of Hilgay, Norfolk, England – Anglicans and Methodists – came together on Maundy Thursday, 1949, and again on Wednesday in Holy Week, 1951, to celebrate a love feast deliberately representing the church both Eastern and Western, both primitive and modern.

The issue was taken up by the Friends of Reunion and discussed in successive issues of their *Bulletin*, arousing correspondence from many parts of the world. The instigator, the Rev. Ian Thomson, claimed that this was 'a serious attempt to break a deadlock that has long existed between separated churches'. The Ecumenical Institute organized at the Château de Bossey in Switzerland by the World Council of Churches has for years treated the last meal of its course there as an agape, when the participants are urged 'to express, by a symbolical act, the reality of our unity'. In more recent years a revival of the agape in Holland has linked Catholics and Protestants in a joint search for unity. From the initial gathering attended by 800 people of all ages and denominations in The Hague on the Friday evening before Pentecost in 1961 the movement has spread to other places, and has been received with such enthusiasm as a 'pre-eucharistic' meal emphasizing the desire and need for fuller Christian unity around the Lord's table that in 1965 the bishops of Holland issued directives about such 'agape celebrations'.

Granted that an undue emphasis upon a revival of the ancient agape in order to bypass the problems presented by joint communions may be fraught with spiritual peril, any such revival should surely be encouraged if it falls within the terms of the Dutch bishops' directive: 'The conscious intention of the agape celebration is to act in the service of that unity of which the eucharist is the decisive sign and the highest sacramental expression.'

Frank Baker, *Methodism and the Love-Feast*, 1957; R. Lee Cole, *Love-Feasts*, 1916; Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, ²1945; J. F. Keating, *The Agape and the Eucharist in the Early Church*, 1911; G. I. F. Thomson, *An Experiment in Worship*, 1951; *One in Christ*, II, 1 (1966).

FRANK BAKER

Low Sunday

The English designation for the Sunday after Easter may denote its relationship to the great festival of the resurrection.

A. A. MCARTHUR

Lutheran Worship

The Augsburg Confession (1530) sets the tone for the Lutheran Reformation and clearly indicates that the protest is theological. Structures and tradition of the church are valued though they are attacked where authoritarianism has perverted them. The Augsburg Confession purports to be the authentic voice of Western Catholicism, repeatedly citing the church fathers to register its point. Lutheran reformers harboured no romantic notion of re-establishing the primitive church and were, therefore, conservative in liturgical reform.

> Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. Actually, the Mass is retained among us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence. Almost all the customary ceremonies are also retained . . . the Mass among us is supported by the example of the church as seen from the Scriptures and the Fathers . . . (*Augsburg Confession*, 24).

When the protest did not register and Rome severed ecclesial ties, liturgical reform became a necessity. Because of its prestige, Luther's own work was widely imitated. He purged the inherited rites ruthlessly where in his view they reflected an anti-biblical theology, but was remarkably conservative in matters of ceremony. Biblical preaching was restored to the mass and also included in mattins and vespers (qq.v.). The fundamental emphasis on preaching grew out of both polemical and didactic concerns: it would free the people from ecclesiastical bondage and teach them the basis of the faith. The same pastoral concerns led to vernacular services.

Lutheran churches share this common liturgical orientation, but have developed three families of rites: Germanic, Scandinavian, North American. (Lutherans in eastern Europe and South America are Germanic in orientation; Australian Lutheranism combines Germanic and North American influences; Lutheran churches of Africa and Asia combine all three influences.)

All the sixteenth-century German *Kirchenordnungen* show their affinity to 'justification by grace through faith', the synoptic theology of the Lutheran protest. The Roman canon and offertory (qq.v.) were cut out and, unfortunately, nothing replaced them. Thus the words of institution, stripped of their context of prayer, gained unprecedented prominence which was intended to enhance their proclamatory function. Instead, 'consecration piety' was reinforced and Lutheranism was kept tied to the medieval ethos of the awesome and dread presence. Disputes with the Swiss reformers made such piety even more tenacious.

In spite of heroic efforts to restore frequent communion among the people and thus balance sermon and sacrament, old habits prevailed. Awe of the presence and the need for solemn self-preparation, the individualism resulting from an almost exclusive emphasis on the forgiveness of sins as chief fruit of the sacrament and the strong stress on the importance of preaching all contributed to infrequent celebrations. This did not result, as it did in England, in the ascendency of mattins. Lutherans used ante-communion (*missa catechumenorum*) as their preaching service with the result that, in spite of the infrequency of the eucharist, their devotion remained oriented to the mass.

Dominance of proclamation produced glorious results in church music. Such giants as Heinrich Schütz and J. S. Bach used music in the exposition of the scriptures. Though their music is not liturgical in the usual sense,

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