

BREAD OF THE WORLD, **IN MERCY BROKEN**

Reginald Heber wrote this hymn specifically for use in the service before the Eucharist. Its simple lines focus first on Christ and then on the attitude of the singer. Christ has spoken words of life and has taken our sins to the cross with Him. We are sorry for our sins and take this "feast" of bread and wine as a "token" of the forgiveness that Christ offers.

For sixteen years Heber served as a parish priest in the village of Hodnet in western England. Three times he was asked to become the bishop of Calcutta, India, and twice he turned it down. Finally at the age of forty, he accepted the call and sailed for India with his wife and two daughters. Three years later, after preaching to a crowded church near Hindu shrines to Vishnu and Siva, he suffered a stroke and died.

While Heber's hymns initially met with official church resistance, many of them were eventually published shortly before his death and have been a blessing to believers for nearly two centuries.

BREAD OF THE WORLD, **IN MERCY BROKEN**

Bread of the world, in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed,
By whom the words of life were spoken,
And in whose death our sins are dead:
Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed;
And be Thy feast to us the token
That by Thy grace our souls are fed.

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)
Hymn #624