

19 MAY 1981

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DAILY BREAD

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D.B. KNOX

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"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

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We all know the Lord's Prayer and I expect we say it often. It is made up of seven short prayers, just a few words each. The first three are concerned with God, that His name might be hallowed, His kingdom come, His will done. The last four deal with our life and interests and the first of these is the prayer "give us our daily bread". This is basic for we all need food. If we haven't got that, nothing else matters as far as this life is concerned and the Bible teaches us to bring our needs to God in prayer because He is a God who provides for us. His loving care is over all His creation and how much more over us who pray to Him. He invites us to bring our needs to Him in prayer. "Cast all your cares upon Him", the apostle Peter tells us, "because He cares for you". And so we can pray in confidence that God will provide us with our daily bread. It is a great mistake to think that we are independent of God and so we look to Him for His continued kindness and we should be thankful for all the things he has given us.

But the prayer has a deeper meaning as well. We are not only made up of a body, but we ourselves are persons and our persons, our souls, we ourselves, need personal strength and sustenance in order that we might live a full personal life. God Himself is the food of our soul. Jesus said "I am the bread of life" and so when he taught us to pray "give us this day our daily bread" He would have had in mind this more important bread, which our personal life needs, friendship, security, meaning. What we need is His own presence through His spirit. We should lift our thoughts to Him as we pray this prayer and feed on his friendship. Jesus said "I am the bread of life, he who comes to me, he who believes on me will never hunger". 'Come to me and I will give you rest'. By putting our faith in Him, by opening our lives up to Him, believing in Him, we obtain this heavenly bread and we not only have friendship and fellowship with Jesus, but we have fellowship with our fellow Christians, for we are all united together, for we all eat

of this same heavenly bread, Jesus our Lord.

Jesus said that the bread that He gives is His own life. He gave His life on the cross for our lives and so, as we put our faith in Him as our saviour who died for our sins and who rose again victorious, trampling those sins under foot, then we are fed with the true bread of heaven.

We are more than bodies though we are bodies. Our bodies need bread and all the other things on which our life is supported. God will give us these things. He knows we need them. We should ask Him for them. But we are more than bodies, we are persons created for friendship with God, and for friendship with one another and we need friendship. Jesus fulfils this need. Jesus is the bread of our souls. We should pray to Him to give us Himself and above all to give us the forgiveness which He obtained for us on the cross. These are the prayers which we should be saying when we say "give us today our daily bread".

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