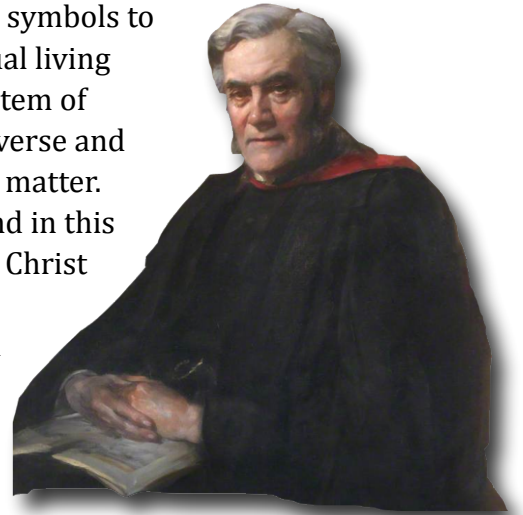


The Significance of Communion (Marcus Dods)

Again, the form of this memorial is fitted to recall the actual life and death of the Lord. It is His body and blood we are invited by the symbols to remember. By them we are brought into the presence of an actual living Person. Our religion is not a theory; it is not a speculation, a system of philosophy putting us in possession of a true scheme of the universe and guiding us to a sound code of morals; it is, above all, a personal matter. We are saved by being brought into right personal relations. And in this Sacrament we are reminded of this and are helped to recognize Christ as an actual living Person, who by His body and blood, by His actual humanity, saved us. The body and blood of Christ remind us that His humanity was as substantial as our own, and His life as real. He redeemed us by the actual human life He led and by the death He died, by His use of the body and soul we make other uses of. And we are saved by remembering Him and by assimilating the spirit of His life and death.



Marcus Dods (1834-1909)

But especially, when Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," did He mean that His people to all time should remember that He had given Himself wholly to them and for them. The symbols of His body and blood were intended to keep us in mind that all that gave Him a place among men He devoted to us. By giving His flesh and blood He means that He gives us His all, Himself wholly; and by inviting us to partake of His flesh and blood He means that we must receive Him into the most real connection possible, must admit His self-sacrificing love into our heart as our most cherished possession.

But these symbols were appointed to be for a remembrance of Christ in order that, remembering Him, we might renew our fellowship with Him. In the Sacrament there is not a mere representation of Christ or a bare commemoration of events in which we are interested; but there is also an actual, present communion between Christ and the soul. Encouraged and stimulated by the outward signs, we, in our own soul and for ourselves, accept Christ and the blessings He brings. There is in the bread and wine themselves nothing that can profit us, but we are by their means to "discern the Lord's body." When Christ is said to be present in the bread and the wine, nothing mysterious or magical is meant. It is meant that He is spiritually present to those who believe. He is present in the Sacrament as He is present to faith at any time in any place; only, these signs which God puts into our hands to make it easier for us to rest in Him.

Marcus Dods, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 270-272.