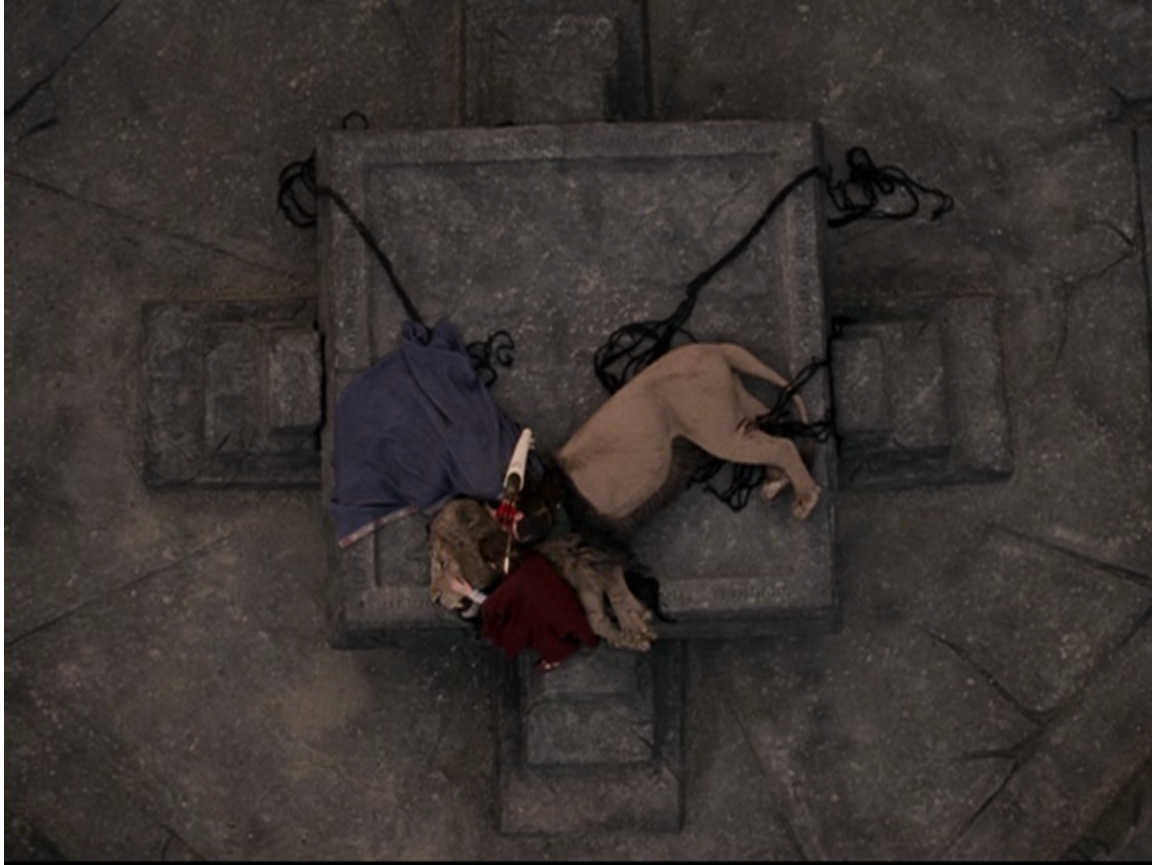


Devotion on the Altar as a Type of Christ – Thursday after the Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity Sunday - 8 November 2012 Anno Domini



The Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity

The Collect.

LORD we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

10. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (Heb 13:10-13)

It has ever been a policy of the Reformation Church of England to avoid making the Holy Communion Service a 'too common' an observance. This was Cranmer's policy as well as that of others who were willing to die for their faith in Christ. A testimony signed in the blood of the testator carries much weight with me and with our late founding Bishop, James Parker Dees. It is for this reason of fervency that the writings and opinions of the Reformers bear such

weight with the AOC. We consider ourselves to be in direct descent from that Reformation Church of England that was revived by the Fathers of the Reformation. We stand in stark contrast to those so-called Anglican bodies that pay tribute in their worship to the Romanizing and unbiblical declensions of the Oxford Movement and those of some notable of the Caroline Divines such as Archbishop William Laud who was so high church that the Pope was forced to look up to see him. Why do we have such a steadfast view of the Communion of our Lord? Because it is the greatest continuing Sacrament of the Church – in the sense that, unlike Baptism, it is a continual observance from season to season.

What is the central furniture of the Holy Communion? The centerpiece of the Communion is the Lord's Table (not an ALTAR). The Reformers deemed an altar an offense to that once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ who is, Himself, the Eternal Altar. His sacrifice was made once for all Eternity – past and present. It is a bit humorous to hear our Baptist brethren make reference to the Table below the pulpit of their churches as an "altar" when they take such a symbolic view only of the Lord's Supper and His Presence.

Christ is our Everlasting Altar. His single sacrifice is a continuing propitiation for our sins if we are saved and repent. The shed blood of Christ has entered into the Sanctuary of God on High, and His body was sacrificed for us without the gates of Jerusalem. Since He suffered without the gate of the Tabernacle, so must we bear His reproach outside the gate of that Old Testament Tabernacle – its use has run its course with the Holy Sacrifice of Christ. Perhaps we seldom consider that we must bear that same reproach of Christ outside the gates, but we MUST! The world has hated our Master, and it will hold little affection His servants.

We often arewhelmed by radio/TV ministers of how God has acted so differently with His people in time past, and changed His plan and approach in our day. To the rabid dispensationalist, God keeps changing His plan and approach through history. But God has not changed from the beginning. The same Christ of the Old Testament Church of Israel is the same Christ of the New Testament Church of Israel. The salvation of all men from the beginning until now has necessarily been accomplished in Christ, our Altar.

In teaching us of His coming Son, God required sacrifices of burnt offerings to be made on that altar. Incense was to be offered on a different altar, designated for the purpose – the altar of incense. Thus, all of our service and obligations must be performed in the name of our Altar of Christ. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (Col 3:17) And all of our meditations and prayers (which are represented in old time by the incense) are to be likewise offered on that same Altar of Christ and in His Name. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. (Rev 8:4)

The altar of burnt offerings was in a fixed place and for a fixed time. There was no sacrifice acceptable to God outside that place and time. So with Christ, His sacrifice was at a 'particular' place and at the perfect time in Eternity. Nor yet

that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb 9:25-26) Were our Holy Communion to become common and akin to the Mass of Rome, the sacrifice of Christ would be diminished in the minds of His worshippers. He died ONCE for us. That was enough so that we do not need a CONTINUAL sacrifice.

All that was placed upon the altar became sanctified to God. Likewise, all of our love; all of our alms; all of our good works, all of our prayers – being placed upon our Altar (Christ) are sanctified, though they be less than pure.

The altar was a place of refuge for those in danger. Running to the altar, they would flee to the horns of the altar and be granted favor of salvation from that danger. How very like Christ as our Altar. He is the sinner's only source of salvation. Casting our souls on that Altar, we are sanctified and receive the favor and kindness of God.

The horns of the altar were to be sprinkled with blood once a year. (Exodus 29:12) Christ, our Altar, was sprinkled with His own blood, and the whole blood cast down beside the Altar-Cross. It is by this means whereby we are made whole – that is, the suffering of Christ is our healing.

Interestingly, the altar had four horns on the four corners thereof. These signified the salvation made available through Christ's sacrifice to His people from the four quarters of the world.

There were two altars in the Tabernacle, but Christ is our One and all-sufficient Altar. He is both the Sacrifice and the Sacrificer.

The altars of old were of corruptible materials, but our Altar of Christ stands incorruptible. Those animals sacrificed in past times are no more, but Christ liveth and reigneth to intercede for His people moment by moment. He is an Imperishable Altar! Reader, has your soul and being been placed on the Altar of Christ?