

# THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle

Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States

[www.dmas-acc.org](http://www.dmas-acc.org)

The Rev. Canon Peter Geromel, OHI, DMin - Rector

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## Rectory's Rambling (In & Out of Brambles)

## *A Reflection on Alfred the Great*



Our New Alfred the Great Icon

This day on which we commemorate King Alfred the Great, it is important to recognize a few things about the, in so many ways, degenerate generation in which we live. We live in an age of “cheap grace” Bonhoeffer put it. What does this mean? It means that we live in an era on which the Church tends to convey the Grace of God (being an instrument and channel of His Peace in the soul) easily and without asking much of the individual or family or nation seeking it. For those who are aware of the distinction between Law and Gospel, it might be said that the only way by which we can have cheap grace is if we have easy law. But what do we mean by tough laws? What do we mean by “biblical” law?

Here we need to distinguish carefully between biblical Law and unbiblical Law. Unbiblical Law is what demands of us a work by which we merit God's favor. For example, as Hans Wiersma puts it: “One common way in which law and gospel are confused is when we imagine that we can make ourselves eternally right with God by deciding to do what God wants us to do.”<sup>1</sup> Christian America, in a pseudo-Puritan and fundamentalist sense, wants us to reap certain Covenant Blessings by our willfully choosing to be Holy. While the Liberals fashion one Utopia along Socialist lines, Christian America attempts to fashion a Utopia along “biblical”

lines. But is this really biblical?

Law and Gospel do not work in contradiction to one another but in tandem. Consider 1 Timothy 1:

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

When preaching Law, Paul is also preaching Gospel. “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” The commandment brings us to charity out of a pure heart. “. . . we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully”. He then lists a bunch of wrong things that the lawless and disobedient do and then says all this is “according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” Law is not opposed to Gospel but works in tandem with it to bring sinners to a recollection of their sin and the need for the Gospel, and even this preliminary step in receiving the Gospel *is still the Gospel* – a prevenient or common grace, we might even say – a preparation for the Gospel, but still the Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> <https://lutherantheology.wordpress.com/2011/04/26/a-brief-introduction-to-law-gospel/>

So, there we are again, easy law leads to cheap grace. So often we think that the job of the minister and of the Christian is to be “nice” and to just do a little good and walk a little humbly. While we have to check ourselves to make sure that our way of preaching the Gospel is not works-based, haughty, hypocritical or self-righteous – do this and you will be happy and God will be happy – we have to preach the Gospel of Grace, in season and out of season, and that means Law too. Grace is Peace with God, not happiness. Grace brings us safely through this vale of tears not to an earthly kingdom of Christian America, or a worldly or temporal peace. Despite that, robust Law does lead, when the heart is broken and contrite, to strong or expensive Grace – not earned, but freely given to the broken and contrite heart by God’s unmerited favor. Despite that, a godly kingdom or nation can arise from ashes.

The minister of reconciliation, God’s ordained priest, is often thought to preach simply Gospel, which means only mercy and grace. But, as a minister especially, the Gospel is preached in the midst of the Law, not separated from it. There are times when, just short of being a “social justice warrior”, a minister, like a local judge or officer of the peace, must call the community on the carpet for unjust business practices, shoddy workmanship, horrible landlords slum-lording it over others, corporate corruption, as well as the idle workers and lazy poverty stricken, looking for “cheap grace” in easily received handouts. Even local judges should be rebuked by the minister. Hallgrímur Pétursson the Icelandic poetic pastor, in his *Passion Hymns*, reflects on Christ’s Judgment Seat and poeticizes.

Laws codified and righteous  
The Jews perverted here.  
Let us all recollect this  
And shun examples base.  
Judgment belongs to God.  
What though a spiteful plaintiff  
Bring charges, pure truth twisting?  
Let men of power beware!<sup>2</sup>

Pastor Pétursson was not above being in conflict from his Icelandic pulpit with his local magistrate. The minister of reconciliation is not a social worker, but has a little bit more time (or at least the flexible working hours) than the average Christian to make an extra phone call to speak to customer service when the business has not been all that it can be, to do the customer service surveys, to make sure that the manager is notified when a food industry worker or waiter has been rude or even offered poor service. The minister of reconciliation should tip well, as if offering alms to a beggar, when services are performed well. The minister of the Gospel of Grace, according to the Law of Moses, should not let the sun go down before giving wages to the hireling and should not delay to repay any debt, or should not be indebted at all! This is being a minister of Law as well as Grace. Should he fail, becoming cognizant of his failure, there is Grace for him too!

Alfred the Great is that first English King that we really point to who called Anglo-Saxon England to righteousness by Church and State, by Grace and by Law – this according to his *Dom Boc* – His Law Book. There was no Cheap Grace in His Kingdom. Instead, one sees *Lex Talionis* at work, similar to the Law of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi, yet, arguably, with more Grace. After enumerating the Ten Commandments (while translating it in a way which could not be interpreted as iconoclastic, as contrary to the Seventh Ecumenical Council, i.e. as against images in the Church), Christian slavery is spoken of, but only for 7 years – then release. Female slavery is permitted, but a daughter cannot be sold further than among her own people, and if the master’s son sleeps with the female slave, she must be clothed with what “is worthy of her maidenhead, that is the dowry.” Murder requires capital punishment except “he who kills him out of necessity or unwillingly or accidentally . . . and he did not lie in wait for him, he will be worthy of life and lawful compensation” – here the *weregild*, man-gold, shall be paid. If it was premeditated murder, however, sanctuary will not be given, nor compensation be made; the murderer shall die. “If one deceives an unwed virgin and sleeps with her, let him compensate her and have her thereafter as wife. However, if the virgin’s father does not wish to give her, let him give the money according to the dowry.” Here, shotgun weddings are permitted, but the father may also protect his daughter and keep her at home and keep the dowry too!

And yet some things, witchcraft, bestiality, pagan sacrifice, are capital offences, while immigrants are protected. These are precisely according to the Law of Moses. He ends with words such as the following.

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<sup>2</sup> Hallgrímur Pétursson, “Passion Hymn 25: Jesus is Brought Out from the Praetorium.” *Rise up, My Soul: The Icelandic Way of The Cross*. Translated by Michael Fell (2014).

These are the laws which the almighty God himself was speaking to Moses and commanded him to hold. And after, the only begotten son of the Lord, our God, that is Healing Christ, came to earth and he said he did not come to break or suppress these commandments, but to increase them with all goodness, and he taught mild-heartedness and humbleness of spirit. Then after his suffering [passion], before his apostles traveled in different directions broadly all over the earth to teach, while they were still together, they turned many heathen peoples to God.

There is then a paraphrase concerning the Council of Jerusalem in the Book of Acts. “The apostles and the elder brothers wish you health and we make known to you that we have found out by asking that some of our companions came to you with our words and enjoined you to hold them in a heavier fashion than we enjoined.” The interpretation is that the Law of Moses is, as Alfred has done, to some extent to be held to but with grace and mercy.

After that it came to pass that many nations accepted the faith of Christ. Then many synods were assembled all over earth, even as far as among the English, who then accepted the faith of Christ. Then the holy bishops and other excellent counselors, decided, for the mild-heartedness Christ taught, that for the great misdeeds secular lords might, with their leave and without sin, accept monetary compensation for first offenses, which they then decreed, except in the case of betrayal of a lord, which they dared not resolve for any mild-heartedness, because almighty God did not judge any for them who despised Him, nor did Christ, God’s son, judge any for him who condemned Him to death, and he commanded to love the lord himself.<sup>3</sup>

It is then said, “I, King Alfred, gathered together and commanded to be written many of those which our forebears held, those which pleased me; and many of those which did not please me I, with the advice of my counselors, discarded and commanded to observed in a different way.” Here is the principle enacted among the Heathens and among the Nations, “For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Here in Alfred’s time we see there is grace, it is neither cheap nor lawless. It is both local (English) and universal (Catholic), Jewish but adapted for a different age and culture.

## LITURGY CHANGES

You may notice that the Rector is now reciting the consecration at mass in a slightly different way (when he remembers to). If you did notice, good on you! Instead of praying, “One sacrifice, once offered” just before the Words of Institution, I am saying, “Own sacrifice, once offered.” Why? Years ago, I heard a lecture in which Fr. Christopher Kelley, a very fine scholar with an honorary doctorate from the University of Turin, explained that the latter way was the correct pronunciation because English had not, at the time of the original 1549 Book of Common Prayer, attained standardized spelling. I found it interesting. Besides, isn’t “one sacrifice, once offered” a bit redundant?

Earlier this year, visiting St. George’s Pro-Cathedral (APCK) in Raleigh, NC, I noticed that the Dean said, “Own Sacrifice”. So, I inquired again with Fr. Kelley about this. He pointed me to the Non-Jurors, those high church Anglicans who had left the established Church of England in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially the Scottish Episcopal Church. I was quite familiar with the Scottish prayer books to which he was referring, but I had never noticed before that both the 1764 communion service (which was the one Bishop Samuel Seabury promised to promote in the United States among the newly forming Episcopal Church) and Bishop Torrey’s Prayer Book of 1849 (which is praised very highly by English Anglo-Catholic J.M. Neale) had printed (in black and white), “own” and not “one”. Bishop Jolly, one of the greatest Patristic scholars in the Scottish Church, makes specific reference to this in his work on the Eucharistic Sacrifice published in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The learning of these men is so eminent that that is good enough for me! The fact that our American communion service is explicitly based on the Scottish one of 1764, which says “own” not “one”, should also be good enough reason to pronounce it per the 1764 Prayer Book.

Sure enough, looking through the 1549 Prayer Book, you will find that the spelling is not standardized at all. From one collect to another, you might see “throughe Jesus Christ oure Lorde”. Or Some combination of this with the conventional spelling scattered everywhere. But one cannot help noticing the very meaningful juxtaposition of the recitation of “**Own Sacrifice**, once offered” with “We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.heroicage.org/issues/18/gates.php>

trusting in our **own righteousness**". Indeed, in the 1549, that prayer of humble access says, "**owne** righteousness" - not very different at all from "**one** sacrifice" which should, I now believe, be recited "own sacrifice".

Neither pronunciation, it should be made very, very clear, effect the validity of the Sacrament at all, which validity is based primarily on the Words of Institution, rather than the words under investigation, which are found in the "Post-Sanctus" and "Institution Narrative" portion of the Consecration, which section can and has been allowed to have much flexibility and variation among many traditions of the Apostolic and Catholic Church.

### **News and Information**

All Saints Day, Nov. 1 - Masses 12 Noon & 7 PM

All Souls Day, Nov. 2 - Masses 12 Noon & 7 PM

DMAS Pre-Advent Retreat, Nov. 4-5 - Centreville, VA

Vestry meeting - Nov. 16th, 7:30 PM, Holy Mass preceding at 7 PM.

Rev. Mr. Gregory Seeley's Ordination to the Priesthood in Alexandria, VA, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>

Thanksgiving Day, November 24<sup>th</sup> - Mass 10 AM

St. Andrew's Day, November 30<sup>th</sup> - Mass (bring your Tartan/Kilts) 7 PM

NOVEMBER, 2022						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		[1]  12 noon HC  7:00 p.m. HC ALL SAINTS	[2]  12 noon HC  7:00 p.m. HC ALL SOULS	[3]  12 noon HC	[4]	[4]   5:00 p.m. HC
[6] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  TRINITY XXI	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]  12 noon HC	[11]	[12]   5:00 p.m. HC
[13] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  TRINITY XXII	[14]	[15]	[16]  7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry	[17]  12 noon HC	[18]	[19]   5:00 p.m. HC
[20] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT	[21]	[22]	[23]	[24] 10:00 a.m. HC  THANKSGIVING	[25]	[26]   5:00 p.m. HC
[27] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  ADVENT I	[28]	[29]	[30]  7:00 p.m. HC ST. ANDREW	<b>LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&amp;HU – Prayers and Holy Unction</b>		

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, PLEASE SECURE A REPLACEMENT.

	<b>November 6</b>	<b>November 13</b>	<b>November 20</b>	<b>November 27</b>	<b>December 4</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	V. Williams	M. Slayton	J. Butterfield	V. Williams	M. Slayton
	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	G. Terrell	S. Darby	C. Pappas	V. Williams	E. Paisley
<b>Sat. Epistoler 5 p.m.</b>	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield
<b>Epistoler 8 a.m.</b>	D. Drysdale	G. Mauney	D. Drysdale	G. Mauney	C. Von Claparede
<b>Epistoler 10 a.m.</b>	T. Paisley	P. Williams	G. Terrell	P. Williams	T. Paisley

**Altar servers and ushers will be assigned as available before each service.**

2022 Vestry (term end): Dan Drysdale ('23), Lisa Olver ('24), Ted Paisley ('24), Marnie Slayton ('22), Clemens  
Von Claparede ('22), Phil Williams ('23)