

*Caroline Lydia Rhodes - Apr 16. 1822  
from her affec<sup>t</sup>ed Friend M.G.*

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THE LIFE AND DEATH  
OF  
LADY JANE GREY.

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**S**T. PAUL assures us "That not many mighty, not many noble are called." Yet the Christian Church has in every age had members who were *great* as well as *good*; who not only treated religion with some degree of outward respect, but were truly pious; who worshipped God "in spirit and in truth," and respecting whom it might be said, as St. Paul said of the Corinthians, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Lady Jane Grey was a person of this description, as will be seen by the following account.

Lady Jane was born at the end of 1535, or the beginning of the following year, of a noble family; her father, Henry Grey, was Marquis of Dorset; her mother was grand daughter to King Henry the Seventh.

Lady Jane, very early in life, gave proofs of superior sense; her person was pleasing, but the beauties of her mind were still more so; she had great abilities, but greater virtues. Female accomplishments were probably the first part of her education; her skill appeared in the performances of her needle, and in the beautiful manner in which she wrote. Her father had two Chaplains, learned men, who were employed as tutors to his daughter. Under their instruction she made great improvement; she spoke and wrote her own language with great accuracy, and it is said, that the French, Italian, Latin, and especially the Greek tongues, were almost as natural to her as her own. She was remarkable for sedateness of temper, quickness of apprehension, and solidity of judgment, so that she thought, reasoned, and spoke upon subjects

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of great importance in a manner which surprised persons of the greatest abilities; and yet she was in no respect proud of these extraordinary talents, but was remarkably gentle, humble and modest.

Her alliance with the Crown, as well as the favor in which the Marquis of Dorset stood with Edward the Sixth, necessarily brought her sometimes to Court, where she received particular marks of the young King's esteem, who was nearly of the same age with herself, and took great pleasure in her conversation. But the most part of her time was spent at her father's seat, Broadgate, Leicestershire. There she was employing herself with her beloved books in the summer season of 1550, when the famous Roger Ascham paid her a visit, as we are informed by himself. He afterwards speaks of the visit. These are nearly his own words. "Before I went into Germany I went to Broadgate, to take my leave of the noble Lady Jane Grey. Her parents, the Duke and Duchess, with all the household, were hunting in the park; I found her in her chamber reading Greek. After some conversation, I asked her why she should lose such pastime in the park: smiling, she said, "Their sport in the park I reckon to be but a shadow to the pleasure I find in my study; alas, good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant." And how came you, madam, said I, to this deep knowledge of pleasure? "I will tell you," she replied, "and tell you a truth which perhaps you will marvel at; one of the greatest benefits God ever gave me has been sharp and severe parents and a gentle school-master. When I am in the pre-

*now in the possession of  
Geo. Harry Gray, Earl of  
Hampden & Warrington*

sence of either father or mother, whether I speak or keep silence, stand or go, be merry or sad, it must be by weight and measure, or else I am so sharply treated, so cruelly threatened, nay presently punished, that I think myself miserable till the time come that I must go to Mr. Aylmer, who teacheth me so gently and so pleasantly, that I think the time nothing while with him, and leave him with weeping, because whatsoever I do else, but learning, is full of grief, trouble, and fear." "I remember well this conversation, adds Mr. Ascham, "because it is worthy of memory, and the last I ever had with that noble lady."

It is not probable that Lady Jane continued long in the country after this visit; her two uncles, Henry and Charles Brandon, both dying at Bugden at the same time, her father was created Duke of Suffolk, in October, 1551.

The Dukes of Suffolk and Northumberland having now reached the height of power, upon the decline of the King's health, began to contrive how to prevent those evils which they foresaw must happen upon his death. To accomplish this end, no other method was judged effectual but getting the succession of the crown transferred into their own families; and the Lady Jane was to act the principal part in this intended revolution. Those excellent qualities which had rendered her dear to all who knew her, joined to her near relationship to the King, subjected her to become the chief tool of an ambition not her own. For this purpose she was married to the Lord Guildford Dudley, fourth son of the Duke of Northumberland, without any discovery being made to her of

the real design of the match. The magnificence attending this marriage was the last gleam of joy that shone in the palace of King Edward. He grew so weak within a few days, that the Duke of Northumberland thought it high time to carry his plan into execution; accordingly he communicated the matter to the young Monarch. After making all the objections he could against his Majesty's two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, next heirs to the Crown, he observed that the Lady Jane, who was of the royal line, was a person of great talents; that her zeal for the Reformation was unquestioned; that nothing could be more acceptable to the nation than the prospect of such a Princess; that for these reasons he was bound to set aside all partialities of blood and nearness of relationship as inferior considerations, when the public good was in question. To secure the success of this discourse, care was taken to place about the King those who should make it their business to touch frequently on this subject, enlarge on the excellencies of Lady Jane, and describe her with all imaginable advantages. In time he yielded to their reasons for overlooking his sisters, and setting aside his father's will; and a deed of settlement was drawn up, and signed by his Majesty and all the Lords of the Council.

This difficult affair being finished, the next step was to fix upon the most proper method for carrying the settlement into execution; and till this was done, to keep it as secret as possible. To this end the Duke of Northumberland formed a plan of deceit; he directed letters to the Lady Mary in her brother's name, requiring her attendance at Greenwich,

where the Court then was; and she had got within half a day's journey of the place, when King Edward died (July 6, 1553;) but having timely notice of his decease, she escaped the snare so artfully laid for her by the Duke.

The two Dukes, Suffolk and Northumberland, found it necessary to conceal the King's death from the public, that they might get the consent of Lady Jane; who was so far from having any concern in the business, that, as yet, she was unacquainted with the steps that had been taken to procure her the Crown. The Duke of Suffolk, for this purpose, went to his daughter, and told her what the late King had done; that he had left her the Crown by letters patent; that the privy council and magistrates acknowledged her right; and in conclusion, himself and Northumberland fell on their knees, and paid homage to her as Queen of England. The poor Lady astonished, but not satisfied, answered to this effect: "The laws of the Kingdom and natural right standing for the King's sisters, she would beware of burdening her weak conscience with a yoke which did belong to them; and that it were to mock God and to deride justice to steal a *shilling*; still more to usurp a *Crown*!"

"Besides," said she, "I am not so young and inexperienced, as not to prefer my liberty to the chain you now offer me, with whatsoever gold and precious stones it may be adorned. I will not exchange my peace for magnificent and gaudy feathers, and if you love me sincerely, you would rather wish me a lot quiet and secure than an exalted situation, exposed to the danger of a disgraceful fall." Notwithstanding this speech she was prevailed upon by the

entreaties of her father and mother, the artful persuasion of the Duke of Northumberland, and the earnest wishes of her husband, to give her consent; and with a heavy heart she suffered herself to be conveyed to the Tower, which she then entered with all the state of a Queen, assumed the royal title, and was proclaimed, with all due solemnities, in the city. Her royalty, however, was like a sun-beam, soon extinguished in clouds and darkness. On the 19th of the same month, the Princess Mary was proclaimed Queen in London; and this poor Lady's palace was turned into a prison. She was soon after tried and convicted of high treason, and with her husband condemned to suffer death. The Christian character often shines brightest in affliction. In one point of duty Lady Jane had failed. She had yielded to the entreaties of man rather than resolutely obey her God. But now we shall see her faith tried, and proved to be genuine, and her penitence to be sincere.

Lady Jane was early instructed in the principles of the Protestant religion, for which she was extremely zealous. This endeared her to the late King Edward, but procured her the dislike of the Princess Mary, whose persecuting principles are fully known.

After Lady Jane's condemnation, Feckenham, a Popish priest, was sent to her by the Queen to use his endeavours to reconcile her to the Church of Rome. The conversation between them was nearly as follows:—

F. Madam, I lament your heavy case; yet doubt not you bear this sorrow of your's with a constant and patient mind.

L. J. You are welcome, Sir, if your coming

be to give me Christian exhortation. As for my heavy case, I thank God, I rather account it a manifest declaration of God's favor towards me.

F. I am come from the Queen and her Council to instruct you in the true doctrine and right faith.

L. J. I heartily thank the Queen's Highness who is not unmindful of her humble subject.

F. What is then required of a Christian man?

L. J. That he should believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God.

F. What, is there nothing else required in a Christian but to believe in him?

L. J. Yes, we must love him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves.

F. Why then faith justifieth not.

L. J. Yes, verily faith (as St. Paul saith,) only justifieth.

F. Why St. Paul saith, "If I have faith without love it is nothing."

L. J. True it is, for how can I love him whom I trust not? or how can I trust him whom I love not? faith and love go together and yet love is comprehended in faith.

F. How shall we love our neighbour?

L. J. To love our neighbour is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to give drink to the thirsty, and so to do to him as we would do to ourselves.

F. Why then it is necessary to salvation to do good works also, and it is not sufficient to believe?

L. J. I deny that, and I affirm that faith only saveth, but it is meet for a Christian, in



token that he followeth his master, Christ, to do good works, yet may we not say that they profit to our salvation; when we have done all we are unprofitable servants, and faith only in Christ's blood saveth us.

Feckenham had much more conversation with her on different points, but she answered him with such calmness of mind and clearness of reason, that it astonished him to hear so young a person of her sex and quality look on death so near with so little disorder, and talk so sensibly both of faith and holiness, of the sacraments, and the scriptures. He left her, seeing he could not shake her faith; but when about to take his leave, said that he was sorry for her, for I am sure, saith he, we two shall never meet. True it is, said Lady Jane, that we shall never meet, except God turn your heart, for I am assured, unless you repent and turn to God, you are in an evil case; and I pray God in the bowels of His mercy to send you His Holy Spirit, for He has given you His great gift of utterance, if it please Him also to open the eyes of your heart."

Her Piety will further appear by adding the concluding part of a letter written to her father, for the purpose of moderating his grief.

"Thus, good Father, I have opened to you my heart. Though to you my state may seem woeful, yet to me there can be nothing more welcome than from this vale of misery to aspire to the heavenly throne of all joy and pleasure with Christ our Saviour, in whose stedfast faith may the Lord continue you, that at last we may meet in heaven, with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Before we attend this excellent Lady to her closing scene, we shall give a further view of her penitence and faith, by adding extracts from a prayer written during her imprisonment, and also

part of an address to her Sister written the night before she was beheaded.

### PRAAYER.

O Lord, thou God and Father of my life, hear me a poor desolate woman who flieth to thee in all her troubles and miseries. Thou, O Lord, art the only defender and deliverer of those that put their trust in thee, and therefore I who am defiled by sin, encircled with afflictions, disquieted with troubles, and grievously tormented with long imprisonment, do come to thee, O merciful Saviour, craving thy mercy and help. O merciful God, consider my misery, best known to thee; be to me a strong tower of defence. Shall I despair of thy mercy, O Lord? far be it from me; I am thy workmanship created in Christ Jesus; give me grace therefore to tarry thy leisure, assuredly knowing that, as thou canst, so thou wilt deliver me, whenever it shall please thee; for thou knowest better what is good for me than I do, therefore do with me what thou wilt; only in the mean time arm me, I beseech thee, with thy armour; that I may stand fast, my loins being girt about with truth, having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and being shod with the shoes prepared by the gospel of peace; above all taking to me the shield of faith, wherewith I may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and taking the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is thy most holy word, praying always with all manner of supplication, that I may refer myself wholly to thy will, abiding thy pleasure, comforting myself in such troubles as it shall please thee to send me, seeing such troubles be profitable to me. Hear, O merciful Father, for His sake, whom thou wouldest should be a

sacrifice for my sins, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory. *Amen.*

*Address to her Sister, written on the leaf of a Greek Testament.*

“ I have sent you, good sister Catherine, a book, which although it be not outwardly trimmed with gold, yet inwardly it is more worth than precious stones. It is the book, dear Sister, of the law of the Lord. It is His testament and last will bequeathed to us wretches. If you do with a good mind read it, and with an earnest mind do purpose to follow it, it shall bring you to immortal and everlasting life. It shall teach you how to live, and learn you to die, and make you inheritor of such riches as neither thieves shall steal nor moths corrupt. Pray with David, good Sister, to understand the law of the Lord. Trust not that the tenderness of your age shall lengthen your life, for soon, if God calls, goeth the young as well as the old. Defy the world, deny the devil, despise the flesh, and delight yourself only in the Lord. Be penitent for your sins and yet despair not; be strong in faith, and yet presume not; and desire with St. Paul to be with Christ, with whom even in death there is life. As touching my death, rejoice (as I do, good Sister) that I shall be delivered of this corruption and put on incorruption. I pray God to send you His grace to live in His fear and die in the true Christian faith; from which in God's name I exhort you not to swerve, neither for hope of life nor fear of death. If you deny His truth to lengthen life, God will deny you; if you cleave to Him your lengthened days will be for your comfort and His glory. Fare you well, good Sister, put your trust in God who only can help you.”

The fatal morning being come (12th of February 1554) when the Lady Jane and her husband Lord Dudley were to be executed, she resisted the wish he had of taking his leave of her; she shewed great tenderness when she saw him led to execution, but soon overcame it, considering how soon she was to follow; and gave him a farewell as he passed the window. The sad spectacle of his dead body, laid in a car, she beheld with a settled countenance, as indeed might have been expected, since we are told that such was the holy calm of spirit she possessed, that upon the above-mentioned request to see her before they suffered, she answered "That such a meeting would rather add to his affliction than increase that quiet wherewith they had possessed their souls for the stroke of death that he demanded a lenitive that would put fire into the wound, and that it was to be feared her presence would rather weaken than strengthen him; that if his soul was not firm and settled she could not settle it by her eyes, nor confirm it by her words; that he would do well to put off this meeting to the other world, that there indeed friendships were happy and unions indissoluble, and that their's would be eternal if they carried nothing with them of terrestrial which might hinder them from rejoicing." To prevent any disturbance it was determined Lady Jane's execution should take place within the Tower. She was attended to the scaffold by Feckenham, but was observed not to attend to his discourse, keeping her eyes fixed steadily on a book of prayers she held in her hand. After a short time spent in meditation she saluted those who were present with a countenance perfectly composed, then taking leave of the Priest, she said "God abundantly requite you, good Sir, for your humanity to me, though your discourse gave me more

uneasiness than all the terrors of my approaching death." She next addressed herself to the spectators nearly in these words.

"My Lords, and you good Christian people who come to see me die, I am under a law, and by that law am condemned to death; not for any thing I offended the Queen's majesty, but only that I consented to that I was forced unto. Notwithstanding, I have offended Almighty God in following the pleasures of this world, neither have I lived according to the knowledge God had given me, for which cause God hath appointed me this kind of death, and that most worthily according to my deserts. Wherefore, my Lords and good Christian people, I earnestly desire you all to pray with me and for me, while I am alive, that God of His infinite mercy would forgive me my sins, how numberless and grievous soever against Him, and I beseech you all to bear witness that I die in the Christian faith, trusting to be saved by the blood, passion, and merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour only, and by no other means, casting far behind me all the merits of my own actions as things so short of my true duty, that I quake to think how much they may stand against me. She then kneeled down and repeated the whole of the 51st Psalm in a devout manner, after which standing up she gave her gloves, handkerchief and prayer-book to those about her. On her untying her gown, the executioner offered to assist her, but she desired him to let her alone, and turning herself to her women they helped her off with it and gave her a handkerchief to bind about her eyes. The executioner kneeling down requested her forgiveness, which she *most willingly* gave him. Upon this he desired her to stand upon the straw, which bringing her within sight of the block she said, "I pray dispatch me quickly."

Then, kneeling down, she asked, "will you take it off before I lay me down?" To which he replied, "no, madam." She then tied her handkerchief about her eyes, and feeling for the block, said, "what shall I do?" "where is it?" upon which one of the standers by guided her to it; she laid her head upon the block, and said, "Lord into thy hands I commit my spirit," and immediately the executioner, with one stroke, severed her head from her body.

Such, Reader, was the life, such the death, of this pious young person. Her faults have not been concealed; but you easily see that she was a sincere penitent, and in the latter part of her life, an eminent saint. She was not much above eighteen years of age when she died. From the whole of the account some very useful remarks may be made.

I. How lovely does true piety appear in young persons! Reader! if you are young, begin in the morning of life to run the race that is set before you. Like this pious Lady mourn for your sins and forsake them. Trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus for pardon, and humbly address your prayers to him saying, O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me! O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, grant me thy peace! Remember, that you are not your own, but bought with a price; you should therefore glorify God with your body and your spirit, which are God's. Serve Him in righteousness and holiness all the days of your life, that when you die, (for you must soon die—all flesh is as grass) you may sleep in Jesus, and enter into the rest that remaineth to the people of God. If you neglect the salvation of your soul, a salvation procured by your Redeemer's agony and bloody sweat, by His

cross and passion, by His glorious resurrection and ascension; if you do despite to the Spirit of grace, instead of seeking and cherishing the influence of the Holy Ghost; and if you live and die in the love and practice of sin, you will doubtless perish. Whilst God's saints will be engaged in praising Him for ever in a temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, you will be doomed, alas! to weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth in that prison where the wicked are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. And how awful will this be after having been baptised in the name of the blessed Trinity, and confirmed by a Christian Bishop; after having attended public worship, heard the word of God, and perhaps received the memorials of the Saviour's dying love at the Communion Table.

Seeing then how dreadful the consequences of sin are, learn in the second place to avoid every temptation to evil. Flee from it as from the face of a serpent, lest it pour a deadly poison into the heart, and bring on the pains of the *second* death. Temptations you will find besetting you on every side, perhaps even Friends and Parents may persuade you to do what is sinful. But though children should obey their parents in all things lawful, (for to honour Father and Mother is the first commandment with promise) still, if those persons who ought to teach them the way to heaven wish them to neglect the duties of religion, and walk in the ways of the ungodly, their advice ought not to be followed. By following the wicked counsels of her Friends, Lady Jane, as you have just seen, lost her life. When a flattering temptation arises, never do evil that good may come, but do that which is good, whatever evil may come, for the Lord will then grant the influence of His Holy Spirit as a

comforter, and make up for every distressing trial by an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. May all who read this tract, feel their own weakness, and pray from the heart, as their Saviour has taught them, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The Lord Jehovah will then be found a refuge, since He is, and ever will be, a present help in time of trouble.



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W. Major, Printer, St. John's Steps, Bristol;  
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