

Doctrine of Sola Fide

The Story of Lady Grey

1. Lady Jane Grey (c. 1536 – February 12, 1554), also known as Lady Jane Dudley, reigned for only nine days, and yet her reign was a remarkable event.
2. The Nine Day Queen, as she was called, reigned as the de facto monarch of England from July 10, 1553 until July 19, 1553.
3. Lady Grey was the granddaughter of Princess Mary Tudor, and so was of royal blood.
4. Her great-uncle, Henry VIII (June 28, 1491 – January 28, 1547), had her named as an heiress to the English throne provided his son Edward, and daughters Mary and Elizabeth, died childless.
5. The official document that set forth these conditions was the Third Act of Succession (1544), and Henry's Last Will and Testament (1547).
6. Edward (October 12, 1537 – July 6, 1553), the son of Jane Seymour and Henry VIII, did rule for six years (January 28, 1547 – July 6, 1553). He was crowned at the age of nine.
7. The reason for the birth of Edward, and his reign was because Henry divorced his wife, Catherine of Aragonne, after establishing the Church of England in 1534 in the Act of Supremacy.
8. As a very young king, Edward was subject to court intrigue, which took the form of counsel from an ambitious advisor, John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland (1504 – 1553).
9. Determine to remain in some form of political power, Dudley, the de facto ruler of England from 1550 – 1553, persuaded young Edward, a sickly child, to write in his own will that in case of death, the throne would go to his pious cousin, Jane Grey.
10. Jane was fifteen at the time, but was known for her Protestant piety and learning. Deeply pious himself, Edward was persuaded. He did not want to leave the throne to his Catholic sister, Mary.
11. John Dudley quickly married Jane to one of his sons, and, when Edward died in 1553 at the age of 15, Jane was crowned queen of England on July 10, 1553.
12. However, Mary Tudor, daughter of Catharine of Aragonne, Henry's first wife, claimed the throne for herself, and found great popular support. Jane was imprisoned in the Tower of London.
13. The reason for popular support of Mary Tudor, was that she was a direct heir of Henry VIII, and Lady Jane was not. The mother of Lady Jane was the daughter of Henry VIII's sister. In other words, Lady Jane was not in the direct bloodline of succession, as Mary was.

14. Her death for political reasons at the hands of “Bloody” Mary Tudor (February 18, 1516 – November 17, 1558) was inevitable.

Special Note.

Bloody Mary was a fierce opponent of Protestants. She had many of them imprisoned in the Tower of London. While today, the Tower is picturesque, it is the home to a history of unspeakable horror.

15. Despite her youth, Lady Jane Grey faced death with dignity and courage. She was martyred as a seventeen year old.
16. Mary Tudor did try to convince Lady Grey of the error of her ways. The Archbishop, John Feckenham, was sent to talk to Lady Grey.
17. The discussion turned to the sacraments. When asked how many sacraments there were, Lady Grey replied, “Two. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.”

Lady Grey spoke about baptism. “I think that at the supper I neither receive flesh nor blood, but bread and wine; which bread when it is broken, and the wine when it is drunken, put me in remembrance how that for my sins the body of Christ was broken, and his blood shed on the cross.”

The Archbishop countered that there were seven sacraments.

Lady Grey asked, “By what Scripture do you find that?”

18. The doctrine of justification was brought up.

John Feckenham. “You ground your faith upon such authors as say and unsay, both with a breathe, and not on the church to whom you ought to give credit.”

Lady Grey. “No, I ground my faith upon God’s Word, and not upon the church, for if the church be a good church, the faith of the church must be tried by God’s Word, not God’s Word by the church. And I say that it is an evil church, and not the spouse of Christ, but the spouse of the Devil, that alters the Lord’s Supper and both takes from it and adds to it. To that church, I say, God will add plagues. Your church? God forbid.”

19. The question of salvation and Christian behaviour was considered.

John Feckenham. “What then is required of a Christian?”

Lady Grey. “To believe in God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The three person, one God.”

John Feckenham. “Is there nothing else to be required or to be looked into for a Christian, but to believe in God?”

Lady Grey. “Yes, we must also love Him with all our hearts, all our souls, and all our minds. We must love our neighbors as ourselves.”

John Feckenham. “Why then, faith only justifies not, or saves not?”

Lady Grey. “Yes. It is exactly as you say. Paul says, faith justifies.”

John Feckenham. “Why, St. Paul says, ‘If all I have is faith without love, it is nothing.’”

Lady Grey. “True it is for how can I love Him, whom I trust not, how can I trust Him, whom I love not? Faith and love go both together. And that love, is comprehended in faith.”

John Feckenham. “Well, how shall we love our neighbor?”

Lady Grey. “To love our neighbor is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to give drink to the thirsty and to do to him, as we would be done unto.”

John Feckenham. “Why then, it is necessary unto salvation to do good works, isn’t it? It is not sufficient to believe. You must do good works.”

Lady Grey. “I deny that, and I affirm that faith only saves. But, it is necessary for a Christian to do good works in token that He follows the steps of His Master, Christ. Yet, may we never say that these works profit our salvation, for when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. Faith only, in Christ’s blood, saves us.”

20. It was obvious that John Feckenham was not going to be able to match wits with Lady Grey and prevail. This remarkable young lady had, by the age of 14, taught herself Greek out of a desire to understand the Bible better.
21. Always wanting to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Lady Grey corresponded with Heinrich Bullinger (July 18, 1504 – September 17, 1575), who was also a Swiss Reformer, the successor of Zwingli as the head of the Zurich church, and pastor of Grossmunster. She wanted to know the best way to learn Hebrew.
22. Eventually, Lady Grey was executed. During her time in the Tower of London, she was allowed to have her Greek Bible and a Prayer Book, which she carried to the scaffold. Inside the Bible she wrote a final word to her sister, Katherine Grey.

“I have sent you, good sister Katherine, 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 laws of the lord: It is His Testament and Last Will, which He bequeathed unto us wretches, which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy, and if you, with a good mind read it, and with an earnest desire, follow it shall bring you to an immortal and everlasting life.

It will teach you to live and learn you to die...[the book] shall win you more than you should have gained by the possession of your woeful father's lands, for as if God prospered him, you shall inherit his lands...[the contents contain] such riches as neither the covetous shall withdraw from you, neither the thief shall steal, neither let the moth corrupt...And as touching my death, rejoice as I do and consider that I shall be delivered of this corruption and put on incorruption, for as I am assured that I shall for losing of a mortal life, find an immortal felicity. Pray God grant you and send you his grace to live in the love...

Farewell good sister, put only your trust in God, who only must uphold you,

Your loving sister, Jane Duddley.

23. Soon after writing her final thoughts, Lady Grey was executed on February 12, 1554.

The Execution of Lady Jane Grey Tudor History Online

“Although her husband had been executed on Tower Hill, Lady Jane Grey was executed inside the Tower of London, on Tower Green. Once the executioner had had time to make his way back from Tower Hill, Jane was led out to the scaffold. Although her ladies “wonderfully wept”, Jane, who was dressed all in black, managed to maintain her composure. She addressed the waiting crowd.

‘Good people, I am come hither to die, and by a law I am condemned to the same; the fact indeed against the Queen’s Highness was unlawful and the consenting thereunto by me: but touching the procurement and desire thereof by me or on my behalf, I do wash my hands thereof in innocency before the face of God and the face of you good Christian people this day.

I pray you all good Christian people to bear me witness that I die a true Christian woman and that I do look to be saved by no other mean, but only by the mercy of God, in the merits of the blood of his only son Jesus Christ. I confess when I did know the word of God I neglected the same and loved myself and the world, and therefore this plague or punishment is happily and worthily [deservedly] happened unto me for my sins. I thank God of his goodness that he has given me a time and respite to repent.

Now good people, I pray you to assist me with your prayers. Now good people, while I am alive, I pray you to assist me with your prayers.’

Eric Ives writes of how, in her speech, Jane was showing that “she was dying confident in salvation by faith alone” and that she believed that “praying for the dead was a Catholic superstition”. Jane was being true to her reformist faith.

After her speech, Jane knelt and said Psalm 51, the *Misere*, in English, “Have mercy upon me O God, after great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences”.

She then embraced John Feckenham, Mary I's chaplain and confessor, the man who had been sent to Jane to prepare her for her death, and said to him, "Go and may God satisfy every wish of yours".

Jane then gave her handkerchief and gloves to Elizabeth Tilney, and her prayer book to Thomas Brydges, the deputy lieutenant of the Tower, who had been charged with passing it on to her father. She then removed her gown, headdress and collar, refusing the help of the executioner. After forgiving the executioner and begging him "despatch me quickly", Jane knelt at the block, tossing her hair forward and out of the way, and putting on the blindfold. It was then that she lost her composure and panicked, "What shall I do? Where is it?" A bystander took pity on the floundering girl and guided her to the block where she lay her neck, praying "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The executioner took her head off with one blow.

24. The principle of Sola Fide, faith alone, in Solus Christus, in Christ alone, guided Lady Grey in life, and it comforted her in death. She had learned well from Martin Luther about the alien righteousness of another, Jesus Christ.

25. An alien righteousness is a righteousness which is outside of us. "When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants." In justification, there is no room for boasting. When Christ has done all, "It is finished!" The great work of redemption is accomplished.

- *Romans 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

26. John Calvin continued to expand on the doctrine of justification, and observed a fourfold cause.

- Efficient cause. The efficient cause of justification is the mercy, the free mercy and love of God the Father. That is where we start.
- Material cause. The material cause of justification, that which makes justification actually happen, is the reconciling work of Christ on the cross. God the Father is in God the Son reconciling the world to Himself.
- Formal cause. The formal cause, the instrumental cause, that which takes the work of reconciliation and applies it to the soul, is faith. Faith is produced in us by the work of God the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

- Final cause. The final cause of regeneration is God's glory.
27. Salvation is a work of monergism, the work of one, even the Triune God. Salvation is opposed to synergism, or the work of more than one. The Reformers believed in monergism. Rome believed in synergism, God, plus the good works of man.
28. As Luther used the word "alien" to describe justification, he also used the term "immediate." Justification is an immediate act of God in time which lasts for eternity. This word, as used by Luther, meant, "without a mediator." Luther had in mind the dogma of the Church which put itself as a mediator, with its sacraments and priests, between God and man. Luther said, "No. There is only one Mediator."
- *1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*
29. Rome believed in the doctrine of supererogation, the idea being that the saints had more works than they needed, more grace than they needed, and so they were willing to share their grace with others in order to assist them in getting to heaven. The Reformers rejected that doctrine, and insisted that good works do not save, only Christ can save.
- *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Special Note.

The doctrine of justification by faith is not reserved for the Reformers. Before Luther, Augustine contended with Pelagius who believed that since man was accountable, he must be able to do something to help himself.

In the era of the Reformation, Erasmus contended with Luther over the bondage of the will. Erasmus said man must co-operate with God in order to effect salvation. A system of works was established in order to do something to merit being justified.

And today, semi-Pelagianism has reappeared in Arminians to debate over Reformed theology illustrated with the controversy over decisional regeneration. Again it is being taught that man must do something in order to be saved. He has the ability to choose God and He is waiting to see what we will do. God has cast His vote, the Devil has cast his vote, the decision is up to you.

The doctrine of justification says that salvation is of the Lord.

How the Reformation Came

- The Reformation came to Germany by a monk with a mallet.
- The Reformation came to Switzerland after a sausage supper.
- The Reformation came to England through a king and an annulment.