

Part One: People of the Reformation

Women of the Reformation

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*Birth years of Women of the Reformation**Year**Major Events of the Reformation*

Anna Reinhard Zwingli

1487

Argula von Grumbach

1492

Katherina Schutz Zell

1497

Katharina von Bora

1499

Elizabeth of Braunschweig

1510

Idelette Calvin

Renée de France

1517

95 Theses

- **Luther** attacked the sale of Indulgences

Catherine of Willoughby

1519

1521

Diet of Worms

- **Luther** Excommunicated

1523

Zwingli presented his 67 Theses
at the Zurich Disputation

1523

Tyndale published the New Testament
in the English language

1525

Peasant uprising

Jeanne D'Albret

1528

1531

Zwingli's death

1534

Luther's Translation of the Bible

Joan Waste

1534

1536

Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion

Lady Jane Grey

1537

1542

Roman Inquisition began

1545-63

Council of Trent

1555

Augsburg Settlement

1546

Luther's death

1564

Calvin's death

1572

St Bartholomew's Day massacre

- worst case of Protestant persecution

Anne Bradstreet

1612

INTRODUCTION

When we think of the Reformation, names like Luther and Calvin pop up in our minds. Countless books and articles about the Reformation are filled with the heroic struggles and endless sacrifices of men. But, what about the Christian women? Did not God use them too? Like Rahab, Esther and Ruth, many women during the Reformation were indeed used tremendously by our Eternal Father. In “Women of the Reformation”, we will look into the lives of just a few of these women of faith who had a part in the Reformation.

It was a crucial point in the timeline of church history. In the late 15th Century, Columbus sailed and discovered the new world. The printing press was later developed by Gutenberg and Martin Luther had made the powerful call for Reformation in 1517. At a time when the world was navigating through great change, God placed very different women in roles that impacted their families, countrymen, and the Christian world for the glory of God. It was also a time when women were thought to be weak, much less heard, but God chose to work out His plans through them.

“Women of the Reformation” puts the spotlight on godly and gifted women who, because of their absolute commitment to the advancement of Protestant

Christianity, paid for their convictions at great personal price. We will see how our Almighty King used these women mightily in diverse ways in different parts of the world.

These women included wives of Reformers as well as others. Although very different, they had one common denominator: their unstinting commitment to follow God’s Word. Another common thread that linked them was the presence of personal tragedies that beset their lives. Many lost their first husbands. Others faced life-threatening opposition. And despite their prayers, our Eternal Father allowed them to go through the darkest of nights.

They were also fallible, and in these accounts you will see that some of them initially capitulated, but “sprang back” to an undying devotion to the cause of Christ despite threats of death. Some were eventually martyred.

These women knew that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, to give is to receive, that the contrite heart is the rejoicing heart, to have nothing is to possess all and it is in dying that the true believer finds life in Christ. May we never forget the Church’s history and the women who have gone so courageously before us.

ANNA REINHARD ZWINGLI

Adapted from writings of Norma Tochijara



WHO WAS ANNA REINHARD ZWINGLI?

Born in 1487, Anna was the beloved wife of Ulrich Zwingli. Affectionately called “his dearest housewife”, Anna was also warmly regarded by the people as “the apostolic Dorcas”.

HER EARLY YEARS

Of her youth we know nothing, except that she was beautiful. Her first marriage was to John Meyer von Knonau who was of an aristocratic family. As she was not from the same social standing, her husband’s father objected to the marriage. Her husband was eventually disowned by his father. In 1511, John joined the Swiss army, and in a battle against France, was wounded, dying soon after. He was survived by Anna, one son and two daughters.

LIFE AS A WIDOW

As a widow, Anna was forced to look after her family on her own. It was a tough challenge but she remained faithful to God. Anna loved the Word of God dearly and was always eager to learn more of the Scriptures.

ULRICH ZWINGLI

Every time a preacher named Ulrich Zwingli came to preach in her town, she would listen in rapt attention as his preaching thundered from the pulpit. He would later become the pastor of her church.

HER SECOND MARRIAGE

Zwingli was burdened to be a role model to Anna’s son Gerold, a very bright boy. As part of his encouragement to Gerold to pursue higher education, Zwingli taught him Latin and Greek and in many ways became like a father to him. When Gerold

left for another city, Zwingli wrote him a book to encourage him in his walk with the Lord. Gerold walked close with the Lord and soon obtained much favor in his new city and secured a very influential position. Eventually in April 1524, Zwingli and Anna married.

HER MINISTRY

1. A godly woman, Anna had a charitable heart and loved to help the poor and needy. With the little extra the family had, she gave to the underprivileged or in other ways to speed the work of the Lord.
2. Anna did not forget her ministry at home. She was concerned with her husband's well-being and would comfort and encourage her husband to take rests when he was working feverishly translating the Bible.
3. Anna was a great ambassador of God. She loved to introduce the bible to as many people as she could. For her, it was second nature as the bible was her favourite book and her desire was that every family owned a copy.
4. She thoroughly enjoyed discussions in matters of the faith and took every opportunity to learn more about the great truths of Scripture. Whether it was with her own husband or other Reformers, she loved to participate in theological discussions.

HER CHARACTER

Although soft and gentle in spirit, Anna was a woman of great faith and inner strength. Any woman married to a Reformer learned to live with the knowledge that her husband was a marked man. Zwingli's life was

constantly under threat. Although Anna understood the life-threatening nature of Reformation work, her desire to support Zwingli and serve the people of God was even greater. Even though their home was vandalized more than once, she was not cowed but continued to open her place and poured great hospitality to Protestant refugees fleeing religious persecution.

DEATH OF ZWINGLI

In early October 1531, Zwingli was ordered to go with the Swiss army as their chaplain. He knew it was the last time he would see his wife and children. Before he left, she said, "We shall see each other again if the Lord will. His will be done. And what will you bring back when you come?" Zwingli's reply to his beloved wife was, "Blessings after dark night." Anna held onto those words for the rest of her life. Upon being informed of her husband's death, she ran to her bed and cried out loud to the Lord. She prayed all alone: "Father, not my will, but Thine be done."

HER LAST FEW YEARS

Anna knew God was sovereign. She had the assurance in her soul that she would see her husband again, and carried on serving the Lord. In her last days, she became very sick and frail. Yet with quiet dignity and patience, she endured her suffering. On 6 December 1538, seven years after her husband was promoted to glory, Anna went home to be with the Lord. She never stopped clinging to her husband's last words, and her beloved's promise of "blessings after dark night" was finally realized.

ARGULA VON G BACH

Adapted from writings of Barbara Thayer



WHO WAS SHE?

Argula was born to a pious Catholic family in Bavaria in 1492. Her family was warned by their Franciscan advisors against giving Argula a Bible (because it would “only confuse her”), but her parents presented her with a Bible at age ten. Given her interest and superior intellect, she committed a large part of it to memory and became a “walking” Bible.

HER COURAGE

By 1522, many of the writings of Martin Luther had been published and Argula absorbed them avidly. She openly followed Luther’s teachings and supported dissidents of the Roman Catholic faith and up until then, her aristocratic status had protected her. But the authorities became worried over the growth of the Protestant movement. The Duke dismissed her husband from his position and turned

Argula over to himself to discipline as seemed fit. Even violence against her would not make her recant. Her husband, a Catholic, did little but scold her. Because Argula had dared to challenge the establishment, she was called many things: “a female devil”, “a female desperado” and “a wretched and pathetic daughter of Eve”. Nevertheless, she remained faithful to Christ.

HER LATER LIFE

While Argula’s husband never embraced the faith, he allowed the four children to be raised as Protestants. He died in 1530, the same year that Argula had an opportunity to meet Martin Luther in person. She later remarried, but her second husband died within two years. He left her a great estate and she used the money to help others in the faith.

KATHERINA SCHUTZ ZELL

Adapted from writings of Christina Langella



“Ever since I was ten years old I have been a student and sort of church mother, much given to attending sermons. I have loved and frequented the company of learned men, and I conversed much with them, not about dancing, masquerades, and worldly pleasures but about the kingdom of God.”

~ Katherina Schutz Zell

WHO WAS SHE?

Born in 1497, Katherina was regarded as one of the most outspoken women of the Reformation. While little is known of her early years, history confirms that she came from a prominent family and therefore received an excellent education. Although the young Katherina always had a strong interest in spiritual matters, it was after reading Luther’s tracts that her feet were put on the solid rock of God’s Word. Whereas she once despaired over her

salvation, the moment Reformation doctrine took hold of her heart, she was convinced of a secure place in heaven and became consumed with sharing the gospel of grace with others.

BACKGROUND

The city of Strasburg was what is known as a “free city” meaning there was no obligation to enforce the Edict of Worms against Luther and the Reformers. Because of this, Katharina was exposed to a great deal of Reformation influence. In 1518, Matthew Zell, a former Catholic priest turned Lutheran, was called to preach in the Cathedral in Strasburg. Katherina, among others, listened intently as the great Reformer preached the doctrines of Reformation Faith. He must have been an impressive preacher since the two were married five years later. Upon

learning of Zell's marriage, the Catholic bishop revoked all of Zell's privileges and excommunicated him.

THE ZELL HOME

Of her marriage to Matthew, Katherina would say she wanted only to be the helpmeet of her husband, and a "little piece of the rib of the sainted Matthew Zell."

Much in the spirit of the Luther, the Zell household became a parsonage for traveling Reformers, and Protestant refugees. Katherina, known for her warmth and hospitality, not only cooked and cleaned for her guests but gladly partook in their theological conversations — so much so, that many Reformers of her day "ranked her above many doctors." In fact, Katherina was known to maintain correspondence with Luther and Zwingli, and many other prominent Reformers.

Katherina had a special heart for the wives of displaced Protestant leaders. She penned many tracts and hymnals to encourage the women who suffered the pain and hardship of separation from their husbands.

BIG HEART

While she clearly had a heart for wives of the Reformers, the bowels of her mercy extended to all. Katherina was a nurturer by nature and tended to the needs of widows and orphans, the poor, the sick, and the needy. She also became a strong advocate

for those who suffered injustice silently.

While Katherina Zell is said by some to deserve the title of "Woman Reformer of the Reformed Church" and "Church Mother" this extraordinary woman carried a heart grief that most of her contemporaries would never know. Having suffered the deaths of two infants and no more to follow, Katherina was subject to dark periods of depression and deep sadness. Though she walked by faith, the thorn in her flesh was her childlessness. It is said that she was prone to think of her childlessness as God's punishment on her life. Though this gracious providence caused her great earthly sorrow, it is possible that it was the very thing that God used to keep this precious saint near the cross.

HER DEATH

In 1548 Matthew Zell died leaving a heart-sick Katherina behind. Immediately afterwards she spent some time in Basel with a young minister and his family but she longed to return home to Strasburg to resume her work. Upon doing so, she continued her mercy ministries but it wouldn't be long before her own health began to fail. Yet, she continued her labors of love until her strength utterly failed her. Unfortunately, the exact date and location of her death is not known. It is said that, like Moses, Katherina "died of the kiss of God and no man knows the place of her burial."

KATHARINA VON BORA

WHO WAS SHE?

Katharina von Bora was the wife of Martin Luther, German leader of the Protestant Reformation. Although not much is known about her, Katharina is often considered one of the most important participants of the Reformation because of her role in helping to define Protestant family life and setting the tone for clergy marriages.

Born in 1499, she was sent at 5 to a nunnery but after several years of religious life, Katharina became disillusioned with the Roman Catholic faith and instead was interested in the growing Reformation Movement. Conspiring with several other nuns to flee in secrecy, she contacted Luther and begged for his assistance. On the eve of Easter 1523, the nuns successfully escaped by hiding in a covered wagon among fish barrels in a premeditated move aided by Luther. Within two years, Luther was able to arrange homes, marriages, or employment for all of the escaped nuns—except for Katharina. Katharina had a number of suitors, but none of the proposed matches resulted in marriage. By God's providence, Luther eventually married Katharina in 1525.

HER RESPONSIBILITIES

Katharina immediately took on the task of administering and managing the vast holdings of the monastery, breeding and selling cattle, and providing for their family and the steady stream of students and visitors who boarded with them. In times of widespread illness, Katharina operated a hospital on site, ministering to the sick alongside other nurses.

In addition to her busy life tending to the lands and grounds of the monastery, Katharina bore six children and also raised four orphan children.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

When Martin Luther died in 1546, Katharina was left in difficult financial straits without Luther's salary as professor and pastor. She was asked to move into much more modest quarters with the children who remained at home. Wars and skirmishes broke out, and buildings and lands of the monastery had been torn apart and laid waste. Economically, they could not remain there. Katharina was able to support herself thanks to the generosity of friends. She died in December, 1552 at the age of fifty-three.

ELIZABETH OF BRAUNSCHWEIG

Adapted from writings of Barbara Thayer



WHO WAS SHE?

Elizabeth of Braunschweig was powerful as a political influence in the Reformation. Born in 1510 in Bavaria, she was married by the age of 15 to a man 40 years her senior, Eric of Braunschweig-Calenberg. Together they had four children: three daughters and a son. For ten years, there was no difference in religious beliefs between husband and wife. However, in 1538, Elizabeth's mother brought to her a young man who had come to believe in the evangelical faith. Subsequently, Elizabeth came to know more of Scriptures through a Lutheran pastor and she was so moved that she embraced the faith.

HER HUSBAND

Her husband, Duke Eric, did not try to interfere. He was content to remain a Catholic and had no trouble with her

embrace of these new ideas so long as she did not try to convert him. Interestingly enough, Duke Eric had been present when Luther gave his defense at Worms, and he was deeply moved. Nevertheless, he was not interested in changing his religion. What he did not realize was that this faith which Elizabeth had embraced would cause her to spread it far and wide throughout the kingdom. This would create problems for him as he could not remain neutral in this struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism. These ideas were inextricably linked with the political powers and struggle between the various German states.

DEATH OF HUSBAND

At the time of her husband's passing, her son Eric was 12 and could not take the control of the state until he reached 17.

During these 5 years, Elizabeth reigned over the state. She also spent a good deal of time teaching Scriptures to her children, especially her son Eric, by bringing in her household the same Lutheran pastor - Corvinus - who first taught her the Word.

As the reigning duchess, she used her time to realise her greatest ambition: to institute the Reformation in her principality. The theologian Corvinus assisted in no small way. Her state would be threatened by a nephew of her husband, Heinz “the Wolf” who oversaw another state in Germany.

REMARRIAGE

While she reigned over her state, she married Duke Poppo of Henneberg who was also a Reformed believer. She saw to it that two of her daughters married men who believed the truths of the Reformation as well. However, when it came to her son, Eric, things were unfortunately different.

He took over the rule of the land upon his eighteenth year, and soon after Eric began his rule, he introduced the Counter-Reformation – to his mother’s great sorrow. Eric welcomed the Catholic faith back to his state and even threatened his wife if she did not recant. She refused and he cast her off. In addition, Pastor Corvinus was put in prison for his faith.

Elizabeth wrote a letter rebuking her son for his position, imploring him to release the prisoners he had taken for their faith. However, he responded that while he loved her, she must obey the Holy Roman Emperor or he would have to take action. There were a number of battles fought during this time which culminated in a battle in which Eric lost to Heinz “the Wolf” his cousin. In the peace treaty, Elizabeth was sent into exile with her daughter Katherine. She remained there for three years in utter poverty. During this time, she wrote hymns and found comfort in her Lord.

Her son Eric never returned to the faith, but went on to serve the Emperor. However, Elizabeth had triumphed in her cause. Eventually all of Braunschweig embraced the Reformation faith as a result of faithful pastors and the fervor of Elizabeth. One person can make a big difference.

Perhaps the greatest lesson we can learn from her life is that our children are not our own. She did her best to raise them to know the truth. A friend of mine reminded me one time that “God has no grandchildren, only children.” We cannot make our children believe. We can only lead them to the truth. The rest is in God’s hands.

IDELETTE CALVIN

WHO WAS SHE?

Idelette Storder de Bure Calvin was the wife of the French reformer John Calvin.

Idelette first married John Storder. At some stage they moved to Strasburg where they were recorded as being Anabaptists. Idelette and John Storder were blessed with children before Storder died after a brief illness, leaving Idelette a young widow. By then, Idelette had already, due to John Calvin's faithful exposition of Scripture, been converted to his Reformed views.

Calvin was so caught up in his labors that he did not seem to consider marriage until about age 31. He asked friends to help him find a woman who was "chaste, obliging, not fastidious, economical, patient, and careful for his health". His fellow laborer Bucer, who had a very happy married life and who always encouraged his fellow workers to marry, had known Idelette. Bucer recommended her to Calvin in confidence that she would fit the bill. After a short period, they married in August 1540 to much rejoicing.

PERSONAL TRAGEDY

Idelette bore Calvin three children, all of whom died in infancy. In response to the slander of Catholics who took this for a judgment upon them for being heretics, Calvin said he was content with his many sons in the faith. Idelette busied herself attending to Calvin in his many illnesses,

faithfully visiting the sick and afflicted, and making her home a refuge for those who fled for their lives and their faith.

Though she survived the plague when it ravaged Geneva, coughing spells dragged her down. She was still in her 30s when disease, probably tuberculosis, began wasting her. In August 1548 John wrote, "She is so overpowered with her sickness that she can scarcely support herself." And in 1549, when she had just turned 40, she lay dying. She had been married to John for only nine years. Idelette died after a lengthy illness in 1549.

Upon her deathbed she was patient, and her words, edifying: "O glorious resurrection! O God of Abraham, and of all our fathers, in thee have the faithful trusted during so many past ages, and none of them have trusted in vain. I also will hope".

John Calvin was only 40 when Idelette died, but he never remarried. Later he spoke about her uniqueness and pledged that he intended henceforth "to lead a solitary life."

Idelette de Bure Calvin's life was full of heartaches, but she never complained and brought joy and peace wherever she lived. John had known much about God the Father as Sovereign. Through her life and in her death, Idelette taught him a little about the Holy Spirit as Comforter.

RENÉE DE FRANCE

Adapted from writings of Barbara Ann Wyatt



WHO WAS SHE?

Renée, the second daughter of King Louis XII and Anne, Duchess of Brittany, became acquainted with heartache at the tender age of four upon the death of both her father and mother, just one year apart. Sent to live with her Royal Uncle and her education was put to the charge of a close attendant of her mother, Michelle de Saubonne, who very faithfully instructed the highly intelligent Renée in all areas of learning, including the Reformed faith that she herself practiced. It is said that Michelle's "religion was a more pure sort than was common at that time." Renée and her older sister, Claude, the future queen, were greatly blessed having Dame Saubonne in their lives, and they loved her dearly. The young princess was known for having a singleness of purpose with a most generous heart. Her charity flowed

forth to the needy, the desolate and the oppressed. She "loved the luxury of doing good."

HER ROAD TO REFORMED THEOLOGY

In 1528, princess Renée was married to Hercule d' Este, the inheritor of the duchy of Ferrara, Italy. She surrounded herself with a court brimming with intellectuals in Reformed Theology and her court was open to those fleeing the religious persecution in France and Italy. She kept company with some great minds such as John Calvin, under the secret name of Charles d' Espeville. During his stay with Renée, Calvin explained the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, and Renée's hearty appetite for learning and spiritual zeal kept her in correspondence with Calvin for the next thirty years of her life. A letter from

Calvin expressed his heart concerning her conversion, "I observe in you such fear of God, and such a real desire to obey Him, that I should consider myself a castaway if I neglected the opportunity of being useful to you." Under the pastoral care of John Calvin, her heart was opened to the Gospel and she stopped attending Mass with the royals.

HER WEAKNESSES

Hercule d' Este, Renée's husband, being heavily influenced by political interests, made clear to his wife and court that Protestants and all sympathizers were no longer welcome. The princess entreated her husband to no avail. It was a crime punishable by death to teach Reformed doctrine in Italy, and Rome did not take kindly to Renée's continued actions and ordered sanctions to be taken against her. Her French guests were ordered to leave the court by her husband. Charges of heresy were brought against her by her husband and she confessed, her children were then taken away and her daughters were placed

into a convent. Once again, the heavy hand of providence brought Renée to her knees.

Distraught, she sent for a priest and signed a form of recantation. She had failed miserably and her life became a sad shell of what it had been. She made a public pretense of being a devout Catholic, while secretly adhering to Reformed doctrine.

LATER LIFE

It is the later part of her life that her works and faith shone. After the death of her husband, Renée took on a renewed vigor for the Christian fight and moved to Montargis where she opened her manor house to French Huguenot families that were fleeing the massacres. She gave medical aid to the wounded and refreshment and refuge to Protestants. Montargis was known as "The Lord's Hotel," because of Renée's work. She died on June 15, 1575. There is a simple monument in Montargis that reads, "May many daughters of France yet rise to emulate the example of her faith, patience, and charity."

CATHERINE OF WILLOUGHBY

Adapted from writings of Trisha Poff

WHO WAS SHE?

Born in 1520 into a wealthy and influential Catholic home, it's unclear when Catherine converted to the Reformed faith. We do know however that she was passionate about sharing the gospel with those in her county and was frustrated with Queen Elizabeth's slow reforms in the Church, a Church she considered to be just "a shadow of the Roman church."

HER CHARACTER

Noted for her wit, sharp tongue, and devotion to learning, Catherine was also an outspoken advocate of the English Reformation. After the death of her first husband, Catherine married Richard Bertie, a devout Puritan. It was with him that she fled to the Netherlands and later Poland to avoid execution under Queen Mary or "Bloody Mary".

Though their four years in exile was certainly difficult and full of hardships, God's mercies were abundant. He blessed them with a leadership position in Poland, a country which was mostly Protestant at the time.

In John Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials, Catherine is described as "very active in

seconding the efforts of government to abolish superfluous Holy Days, to remove images and relics from churches, to destroy shrines and other monuments of idolatry and superstition, to put an end to pilgrimages, to reform the clergy, to see that every church had provided, in some convenient place, a copy of the large Bible, to stir up the Bishops, vicars and curates to diligence in preaching against the usurped authority of the Pope; in inculcating upon all the reading of the Scriptures...."

HER WEAKNESSES

While Catherine was a feisty woman for the Lord, she was, like all of us, not perfect. She was in vexation over a disagreeable daughter-in-law. She was also accused of trying to win titles for her husband and son-in-law. It has been said that we cannot determine a person's character by one act. Surely those of us who have fully tasted God's grace recognize what distorted pieces of clay we are, in desperate need of God's refining fire and His endless mercies. And we can empathize with Catherine's weaknesses.

Any failing of hers or ours encourage us to remember that the bigger sacrifice often comes, not in doing "big things" for God, but in the daily dying to self for Christ.

JEANNE D'ALBRET

Uncommonly Favoured, Uncommonly Fettered, and Uncommonly Faithful

Adapted from writings of DeeJay O'Flaherty



WHO WAS SHE?

She was a Princess, and a future queen. Given a fine education, a rarity for girls in those times, she was born uncommonly favoured. However her status also came with a price that left her uncommonly fettered for she was betrothed against her will at the tender age of 12 to the Duke of Cleves in Germany as a political pawn. The legacy of Jeanne d'Albret is that she is a figure in which we can see she lived to trust God under all circumstances and conditions. Instead of valuing worldly things above the glory of God or heavenly things, she was willing to pick up her cross and follow Him, even if she stands to lose everything by doing so. For that, this lady was uncommonly faithful.

TWIST OF POLITICS

After the marriage she was not to live with her husband as his wife till she was 15 years old and she went back to live with her

parents. Her mother at this point took over her education and brought in the best of Reformed teachers to bring her up in the Reformed faith. Both William Farrel and John Calvin were visitors at the royal home. However, 18 months after her marriage, the Duke of Cleves (her future husband) made an unholy alliance with Charles V, the Emperor of the [un]holy roman empire, and he renounced his alliance with France, turned his back on the Protestant faith and sought to get Catholicism restored.

Queen Marguerite, Jeanne's mother, and her brother the King of France were outraged at this turn of events and wanted Jeanne's marriage annulled. The Duke of Cleves also no longer desired Jeanne as a wife. The marriage had never been consummated and they used her earlier protest which she had written in staunch defiance as an appeal to the pope as legitimate reason for annulment, so Jeanne was set free.

The next three years, were probably what would be the most free of the rest of her life. She had many suitors including the King of Portugal and the infamous Duke of Guise. However she made her own choice in matrimony in that of the person of Antoine de Bourbon who was ten years her senior. Jeanne loved him, and for a while they were happily married. He was a courageous and remarkable soldier, dashing in appearance.

FAMILY LIFE AND DEATH

Jeanne's mother, Margueritte, worn out by the battle of the day of defending the cause of true religion died only a year after Jeanne was married. Jeanne's first child was born around two years after their marriage, a son, but he died at around one year old due to the neglect of his nurses. The second child died also. Eventually she gave birth to Henry, who would later become Henry IV of France. Two years after Henry was born, Jeanne's father died and she became Queen of Navarre at around 27 years old.

Two months after her father died, inspired by her cousin Renee of Ferrara (of France) she made a public profession of the Reformed faith. The Jezebel of the day, Catherine De Medici was plotting to destroy Jeanne and hatched a plot to separate Jeanne from her husband; her aim was to try to lure him back to the Roman Catholicism and take away all of their estate and lands in Navarre. Jeanne knew what was happening and raised an army to protect the Kingdom of Navarre. The more she was threatened and persecuted for her adhering to the Reformed faith, the bolder she was in defending it and speaking out in favour of it and her God. Her husband, however, though strong and courageous on the battlefield, proved weak in this battle and soon went over to the side of the Guises and went back to Roman Catholicism renouncing the Reformed faith.

Antoine became a notorious infidel and was unfaithful again and again to his wife. On the death of her husband she sought to advance the Reformed faith in her Kingdom of Navarre. Theodore Beza at her request sent a dozen ministers to preach the gospel in Navarre.

She continued to advance the cause of Christ in her kingdom and when she heard of the plot for a massacre of the Huguenots she gathered mountain troops in Navarre. The St. Bartholomew's massacre by the strength and fortitude of this "little Princess" was thwarted for about eight years. She declared: "The cause of God is dearer to me than my son."

She had the New Testament translated into the language of her people. She personally bore the financial cost of also having the Geneva Catechism translated and distributed among her subjects. In a peace treaty she helped form that lasted for two years she set about restoring her ravished kingdom.

Her favourite Psalm was Psalm 31 and ironically it almost is a mirror of her life. Written by a persecuted and oppressed King David, verses 13 to 15 capture the essence of Jeanne's ordeals,

"For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me."

Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, born uncommonly favoured, had a life uncommonly fettered, and remained uncommonly faithful.

JOAN WASTE

Adapted from writings of Diana Lovegrove

WHO WAS SHE?

Joan Waste was born blind and died at the tender age of 22. Was it a wasted life? In a time of great upheaval in English history, Joan Waste was born, with her twin brother Roger, during the reign of Henry VIII into a poor family. Her father William was a barber and rope-maker. Joan was blind from birth, yet even so, between the ages of 12 and 14 she had learnt not only to knit but also the art of rope-making herself. When her parents died, she and her brother took care of one another.

REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

When Joan was 13 years old, King Henry VIII died and was succeeded by his son, Edward VI. The Reformation that was making progress on the continent through the teachings of Luther and Calvin had only made partial progress in England during Henry's reign. The advent of the Protestant boy king, Edward VI to the throne in 1547 brought royal approval to the Reformation, and the Church of England became increasingly Protestant. For the first time, church services were conducted in English, the language of the people.

It was during the reign of Edward VI, when God in His divine providence enabled the Word of God to be made more freely available to the people of England through both the spread of English language Bibles and the use of English in the services. Joan Waste began attending daily services with

her twin brother, Roger. As she heard the Word of God preached, faith was born in her heart through the power of the Holy Spirit, and she soon desired her very own copy of the New Testament. Hunger for God leads to a hunger for His Word. Despite her poverty, she was able to save enough money from her rope-making to purchase a copy.

HUNGER FOR GOD'S WORD

Her desire for the Word of God overcame the fact of her blindness, and she made haste to the local prison where she befriended the 70-year old John Hurt. Lonely and with little to keep him occupied during the day, when Joan approached him and asked him to read a chapter from the New Testament to her each day, he gladly obliged. When he was unavailable or unwell, this did not deter her. Joan would find another person to read to her, even paying them whatever she could spare if they were unwilling to do so freely.

Through listening to the Scriptures, Joan was soon able to recite whole chapters herself from memory. The Word of God was so ingrained on her heart that it shaped her character, and she was also able to identify false teaching.

In 1553, when Joan was 19 years of age, King Edward died. A royal battle followed as to who would succeed Edward. The Protestant King wished to prevent the

country returning to Catholicism through the succession of the rightful heir, his half-sister Mary. A plan was hatched to put his cousin, Lady Jane Grey on the throne – however, her reign lasted a mere 9 days before Mary deposed her and returned England to Catholicism. The revival of the Heresies Act in December 1554 led to the infamous Marian Persecutions, where refusal to accept the doctrine of transubstantiation would lead to death. Here is the point at which the truly faithful are seen. This was a time when unwavering faith in the living God is what will carry the people through times such as this.

Joan was one such brave soul who would not compromise on her precious faith, and refused to participate in Catholic acts of worship. It wasn't long before she attracted the attention of the authorities. Refusing to recant her belief that the bread and wine was not the real body and blood of Christ but only a remembrance of Him, she was sentenced to be burned at the stake.

History records that on 1st August 1556, Joan Waste became one of the nearly 300 souls burnt for heresy during the Marian Persecutions during the reign of Queen Mary I. Her life and death is so much more than a statistic in the Kingdom of God, however, for she was a willing vessel in the hands of her God, allowing herself to be shaped and used by Him for His Glory's sake.

This unknown woman of the Reformation, neither of noble birth nor of learned education, epitomises the hope we must have in our Lord and God. The goodness of God to Joan Waste was such that He redeemed her life – He took her blindness of flesh and gave her spiritual eyes to see Him and seek His face. Her testimony rings out across the centuries of the glory that our Great God is able to bring forth from our lives for the sake of His Name if we too are willing to take up our cross and follow after Him.

LADY JANE GREY

Adapted from writings of Becky Pliego



WHO WAS SHE?

How does a real princess on earth acknowledge a heavenly King? Lady Jane Grey was of royal lineage (granddaughter of Mary Tudor, the sister of King Henry VIII) and had a rigorous education. Under the authority of strict parents, the girl was given a first-class education, probably preparation for the crown.

She grew in England during a time of political and religious instability and despite what may have seen as ingredients for a charmed life, it was not to be. And for her spiritual good. Through difficulties in her life, Jane understood that God was sovereign over all circumstances. This understanding helped her to learn contentment while seeing God's hand over her circumstances no matter how difficult they might be.

HER LIFE

When King Edward VI died, Mary (known later as Bloody Mary) was the rightful heir to the throne. She was Catholic and her ascent to the throne was not what the Reformers wanted, as they knew that she would try to end the rising of the Reformation in England. The only option some of them saw as a possible solution was to raise Lady Jane Grey to the throne. Lady Jane Grey, however, “wept, swooned, and protested that if anyone should scruple to steal a shilling how much more to usurp a crown”. However, her parents did not listen to her arguments and wanting her to wear the crown, forced her to do so. Lady Jane Grey was only sixteen years old.

REVENGE OF “BLOODY MARY”

Mary's forces easily took Lady Jane Grey and all those who supported her and placed

them in the Tower of London. This was the beginning of Mary's Reign of Terror. Lady Jane Grey wrote a letter to Queen Mary in which she, in her weakened state, almost capitulated. Mary was moved by it, and was even willing to show mercy to Jane Grey only if she accepted to take the Catholic Mass. Mary even sent her archbishop to try to convince Lady Jane Grey to accept the sacraments of the Catholic faith. Thank God Lady Jane Grey stood firmly on the principle of Sola Scriptura and justification by faith alone, thus rejecting any other means of salvation saying:

"I deny that (good works as a mean to obtain salvation), and I affirm that only faith saves; but it is meet for a Christian to do good works, in token that he follows the steps of His Master, Christ, yet may we not say that we profit to our salvation; for when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, and faith only in Christ's blood saves us."

WHAT MAY WE LEARN?

Though young, Lady Jane Grey was strong in her faith and convictions; and even though she had been promised life and not death by a human, she would rather die and have the Life that God promises to those who stand firm to the end.

Jane Grey wrote then a letter to her father in which she said,

"Father, although it has pleased God to hasten my death by you, by whom my life should rather have been lengthened, yet I can so patiently take it, as I yield God more hearty thanks for shortening my woeful days, than if all the world had been given unto my possession... to me there is nothing than can be more welcome, than from this vale of misery to aspire to that heavenly throne of all joy and pleasure with Christ our Saviour..."

HER DEATH

Two days after her meeting with Mary's archbishop, on February 12, 1554, Lady Jane Grey was martyred for her beliefs as well as for political reasons. But before mounting on the scaffold, she asked the chaplain if she could recite Psalm fifty-one, and then pronounced her last words:

"I here die a true Christian woman and I trust to be saved by the blood of Christ, and by no other means."

This young woman stood firm, facing death, not with a bitter heart against her earthly father, or against the Queen, but with her eyes fixed on eternity, on Jesus Christ. Her heart had not been set on earthly treasures but on the things that are not from this world; and her hope did not rest in her actions, but on the saving work of Jesus Christ.

ANNE BRADSTREET

Adapted from writings of Elizabeth DeBarros



WHO WAS ANNE BRADSTREET?

Born in England in 1612, Anne Dudley was born into a godly Puritan family of means. As a child, she excelled in theology, literature, and history, with a penchant for language and literature. Suffering a couple of serious bouts of ill health, Anne was grounded in faith despite trying times for a young girl.

HER HUSBAND

Simon Bradstreet was a good-natured assistant to Anne's father in the management of his estate, and his friendship with Anne blossomed into love. Amid rising opposition to Puritan religious freedom, the young couple, Anne's parents and 300 other Puritans set sail for the then New World, America.

EARLY DAYS IN AMERICA

Enduring an arduous 66-day journey, they arrived upon the rocky shores of New England, landing in Salem, Mass., in June, 1630. Despite initial hardships, through stalwart courage and perseverance their circumstances improved. Simon's business skills gained him favorable status, and he eventually rose to become governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Over the years, they moved to several different locations in America, finally settling in North Andover.

LIFE IN AMERICA

Marriage to a man of such prominence meant for Anne long days and nights alone at home. Though she suffered great bouts of loneliness, she did not allow it to cage her. Resourceful, she found occupation for her talents in the midst of

rearing eight children. Her only need - a pen.

HER WORKS

Anne was intelligent, a writer and a Puritan. At a time when women were thought to be weak, much less heard, Anne penned poems and at the age of 38, her first book of poems, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*, was published in London. She was the first woman to do so, and received favorable reception in both the Old World and the New.

Anne's education gave her advantages that allowed her to write with authority about politics, history, medicine, and theology. Her personal library of books was said to have numbered over 800, although many were destroyed when her house was burned down. This event itself inspired a poem entitled "Upon the Burning of Our House July 10th, 1666". She rejected the anger and grief that this worldly tragedy has caused

Other Works

Before the Birth of One of Her Children

A Dialogue between Old England and New

A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment

Another

Another (II)

By Night when Others Soundly Slept

Contemplations

In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen ELIZABETH

In Reference to her Children, 23 June 1659

Prologue

The Author to her Book

The Flesh and the Spirit

The Four Ages of Man

To Her Father with Some Verses

Upon a Fit of Sickness, Anno 1632 Aetatis Suae, 19

Upon Some Distemper of Body

her and instead looked towards God and the assurance of heaven as consolation, saying:

*"And when I could no longer look,
I blest His grace that gave and took,
That laid my goods now in the dust.
Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just.
It was His own; it was not mine.
Far be it that I should repine."*

HER LAST DAYS

She continued to write despite suffering paralysis in her joints before succumbing to tuberculosis in 1672. One of her most famous poems, *To My Dear and Loving Husband*, speaks of the loving relationship between the couple:

*If ever two were one, then surely we,
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women if you can.*