

Letter to the Duke of Suffolk

Lady Jane Grey

Anglican · Reformation · Letter

STROMATA 14

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INTRODUCTION

Written from the Tower in February 1554, days before her execution at seventeen, this letter is addressed to the father whose conspiracy to place her on the English throne had sealed her fate. The voice is startling: a condemned daughter consoling the man responsible for her death, framing her own beheading as deliverance and her father's grief as the harder burden. Composed in the same captivity that produced her exchanges with the Catholic chaplain Feckenham, it stands among the earliest English-language testaments of Reformed Protestant martyrdom, a tradition Foxe would soon codify. Read it slowly — it is a farewell, a confession, and an act of pastoral care directed upward through the family line.

Father, although it hath pleased God to hasten my death by you, by whom my life should rather have been lengthened, yet I can so patiently take it, that I yield God more hearty thanks for shortening my woful days, than if all the world had been given into my possession, with life lengthened at my own will. And albeit I am very well assured of your impatient dolours, redoubled many ways, both in bewailing your own woe, and especially, as I am informed, my woful estate: yet my dear father, if I may, without offence, rejoice in my own mishaps, herein I may account myself blessed, that washing my hands with the innocence of my fact, my guiltless blood may cry before the Lord, Mercy to the innocent!

And yet though I must needs acknowledge, that being constrained, and as you know well enough continually assayed, yet in taking upon me, I seemed to consent, and therein grievously offended the queen and her laws, yet do I assuredly trust that this my offence towards God is so much the less, in that being in so royal estate as I was, my enforced honour never mingled with mine innocent heart. And thus, good father, I have opened unto you the state wherein I presently stand, my death at hand, although to you perhaps it may seem woful, yet to me there is nothing that can be more welcome than from this vale of misery to aspire to that heavenly throne of all joy and pleasure, with Christ my Saviour: in whose steadfast faith, (if it may be lawful for the daughter so to write to the father) the Lord that hath hitherto strengthened you, so continue to keep you, that at the last we may meet in heaven with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I am,

Your obedient daughter till death,

Jane Dudley.

Source: <https://archive.org/details/memoirsremainsof00grey/page/5/mode/2up>

These texts are drawn from *Memoirs and Remains of Lady Jane Grey*, a compilation of her letters, prayers, disputations, and scaffold writings. The Internet Archive copy used here is available at <https://archive.org/details/memoirsremainsof00grey>. The compilation was first published in the nineteenth century; the letters to Bullinger were originally in Latin and appear here in English translation (translator unattributed in this edition). The translations are themselves pre-1900 and are public domain. Original spelling has been lightly modernised in places by the nineteenth-century editors; the texts are otherwise presented as found. No independent transcription has been made against manuscript sources.

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