

REFORMATION 500 WEEK 39 BLOODY MARY

“Princess Mary, the only surviving child of Henry VIII and [his first wife] Catherine of Aragon, was dedicated in her allegiance to the Catholic Church and Catholic Spain, the birthplace of her mother” (DeMar, *Reformation*, 227). Mary remembered what happened to her and her mother back in 1533. When Archbishop Cranmer had declared her mother’s marriage to Henry unlawful so Henry could wed Anne Boleyn, Mary was declared illegitimate and removed from the line of succession to the throne. In 1544, Henry reinstated Mary to the line of succession behind her half-brother, Edward, born to Henry’s third wife Jane Seymour in 1537.

Before Edward VI died in 1553, knowing full well that after his death Mary would restore Catholicism in England, he devised a complicated scheme to prevent her from taking the throne. He named his Protestant cousin, Lady Jane Grey his successor. After Edward died, Jane was proclaimed queen of England on July 10, 1553. Jane’s father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, set out with forces to capture Mary, but before he could do so she raised her own army and rallied other supporters, prompting the royal government to switch its allegiance from Jane and declare Mary the legitimate queen. Jane, who had reigned for just nine days, was imprisoned with her husband in the Tower of London, and Northumberland was executed. Later, Jane and her husband were tried, found guilty, and executed as traitors.

Queen Mary worked to return England to Catholicism, undoing the reforms made by Edward. She brought the Church of England back under the authority of the pope, deposed Protestant bishops, and restored traditional Roman Catholic worship. In 1554, she married King Philip of Spain, “the most deadly foe of Protestantism in all Europe. Many English Protestants fled abroad: most found refuge in Germany and Switzerland [John Knox fled to Geneva]. Protestants who stayed behind in England were now arrested and tried for heresy” (Needham, *2000 Years*, 3:393).

“The most notable victims of Mary’s persecution were the two bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley. As the flames curled around their bodies Latimer spoke courage and comfort to his fellow martyr: ‘This day we shall light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.’” (Kuiper’s *History*, 226). Mary’s next victim was Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, who was promptly excommunicated. Even though Cranmer weakened and signed a denial of the Protestant faith, Mary decided to make an example of him and burn him anyway. But just before he was to die on March 21, 1556, he stunned everyone by renouncing his denial and reaffirming his Protestant faith. As the flames rose around him at the stake, the old archbishop in dramatic fashion held out the hand which had signed the denial, “so that it was the first part of his body to be burnt away” (Needham, 3:394).

Before she died in 1558, Mary had more than 270 Protestants burned at the stake, earning her the name “Bloody Mary,” given to her by John Foxe (1516-1587) in his famous ***Book of Martyrs***. Foxe hoped the church would never forget. At least the Anglican prayer book did not forget: “Keep us, O Lord, constant in faith and zealous in witness, after the examples of thy servants Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and Thomas Cranmer; that we may live in thy fear, die in thy favor, and rest in thy peace.”

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REFORMATION 500 WEEK 39: HEIDELBERG CATECHISM QA 104

Question 104: WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE IN THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT? **That I show all honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me, submit myself with due obedience to all their good instruction and correction, and also bear patiently with their infirmities [weaknesses], since it is God’s will to govern us by their hand.**

The Fifth Commandment, “honor your father and your mother,” is first in the second table of the law, because it is in the home where we begin to learn how to love our neighbor as our self and to submit to all authority in society. The purpose “of this commandment is the preservation of civil order,” and parental authority and government “was the first established among men” (Ursinus, 575). Behind this commandment is the truth that God governs us through various kinds of authority. “For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God” (Rom. 13:1-2). The only exception to our obedience to men is if they command us to disobey God, in which case, “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Parental authority is the foundation of all authority. Since God knows the depravity of our hearts, that we submit to authority grudgingly, He starts us off with that submission which is easiest to tolerate, in order to gradually accustom us to submit to all other lawful authority.

The fact that the Bible directs this commandment to children in the church teaches us that God redeems children through faith in Christ from the penalty and bondage of sin, including the sin of dishonoring parents; so that they learn to honor, love, and obey their parents out of thankfulness for salvation. “Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*, for this is right” (Eph. 6:1). The words, “in the Lord,” mean that this obedience “should be religious; arising out of the conviction that such obedience is the will of the Lord. This makes it a higher service than if rendered from fear or from mere natural affection” (Charles Hodge, on Eph. 6:1).

The basic meaning of the word *honor* is “weighty, of great value and worth.” To honor our parents is to treat them as carrying a lot of weight, as very valuable and worthy of respect, because it is God’s will to govern us by their hand. Therefore, we “should treat them with honor, obedience, and gratefulness. It follows from this that we are forbidden to detract from their dignity either by contempt, by stubbornness, or by ungratefulness [Matt. 15:4-6]” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.35). On the other hand, “when God requires parents to be honored, He at the same time demands that they so discharge the duties of parents as to be worthy of honor [Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4]” (Ursinus, 576).

Honoring parents also means to bear patiently with their weaknesses, even when they behave dishonorably (Gen. 9:18-23). This does **not** mean children have to put up with abuse. Parents who abuse their children are breaking the law, and abusing the authority God gave them. Therefore, “if our parents spur us to transgress the law, we have a right to regard them not as parents, but as strangers who are trying to lead us away from obedience to our true Father” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.38). Abused or abandoned children do not have the right to be bitter or to rage against society. Only the Lord can heal their broken heart and bitterness. “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me” (Psalm 27:10).

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