

Francis I died in 1547. A vigorous king, his interest in national pride had kept him from advancing the spiritual conditions of France. He had opposed the evangelical cause in France so as to keep his country militarily strong enough to fight with Charles V. Had he thought that turning protestant would have made him the master of Europe, he would have instantly converted that way. His zeal as a Romanist is only apparent when it was to his political advantage. He was almost totally unbothered by morality or pure religious motifs. Harassing Charles did aid the protestant cause for the Emperor often had to give up his repressive work to deal with the French, but these acts were the political ambitions of Francis, not a fondness for protestants. He prevented any widespread growth of Calvinism in France and hampered the Huguenot movement as he was able. However his own sister seems to have been a believer and he tolerated evangelicals in court and the court system. Thus he did not seek to systematically eliminate the group. France, we must not think, was nearly so well united in a national image at this time and outside threats of force were the best methods of uniting the people. Francis used the spectre of the emperor in this way several times. During his reign, the evangelical cause although impeded and made difficult, grew considerably and the movement known as Huguenot became quite sizeable.

Henry II succeeded Francis in 1547. He was a loyal catholic who suffered with the same plotting and seditious nature that marked Francis. His wife was Caltherine d'Medici, a niece of Pope Leo X and a woman of great ability, most of it opposed to truth or moral virtue. Her personal power gave backbone to Henry and she was in herself and through him an unrelenting persecutor of the protestant cause in France. Nevertheless the Huguenot movement grew and in 1559 held a national convention that adopted a Calvinistic constitution. With many adherents they were still a minority group but had cities that were their own and these they fortified and, failing with an external threat, constituted a country within a country. Henry II died in 1559 and the royal family from Lorraine, Guise, found itself in a feud with the Bourbon family for continued leadership in the French state.

Francis II, Henry's son, ruled just 1 and 1/2 years, passing away at the end of 1560. Catherine, as Queen Mother, was the real power and with the Guise family tightly held the reins of government. It was not