

Although Coligny tried to obtain a peaceful solution to the religious troubles between the Roman Catholic government and the French Protestants, civil war broke out. In 1569, Louis I was killed at the battle of Jarnac when the duke of Anjou's army defeated the Huguenots. Coligny then became head of the Protestant armies.

Shortly after a defeat at Moncontour, Coligny led his army across France and defeated the royal army at Arnay-le-Duc in June 1570. As a result of this victory, he was able to obtain a truce from the king, but he waited more than a year before risking an appearance at the king's court. Once there, however, he quickly gained favor with the 21-year-old King Charles IX, and often counseled Charles in matters of the kingdom.

As the friendship and confidence between Charles and Coligny grew, Catherine de' Medici, the queen mother, saw it as a threat to her ambitions. Since the death of Henry II, her husband and Charles' father, she had wielded great power over Charles and wanted to hold on to it. But Coligny's counsel was beginning to weaken that power.

The wedding of Margaret of Valois and King Henry of Navarre was publicly celebrated in Paris on August 18, 1572, with the cardinal of Bourbon officiating. After the ceremony, a great dinner was held. It was attended by the king and queen mother, the bishop of Paris, many Roman Catholic prelates, and every high-ranking official in France who could attend, both Catholic and Protestant.

Four days after the wedding, on August 22, 1572, as Admiral Coligny was coming from a meeting of the French Council, he was wounded in both arms by an assassin who was hired by Catherine and members of the Guise family. While being treated, he said to a minister who was with him, "O my brother, I know now that I am dearly loved by my God, since I am wounded for His most holy sake." Although the minister advised him to leave Paris at once, Coligny, who had been a soldier almost his entire life, chose to stay.

At first, Charles swore to avenge the attempt on Coligny's life and immediately ordered an investigation to learn who the assassin was and who had hired him to kill Coligny. Fearing that such an investigation would expose her role in the assassination plot, Catherine, with the help of intimate associates, worked

upon the fears and religious prejudices of her son and persuaded the young king that it was all part of a Protestant plot to start an uprising, and that he should immediately order the deaths of all the Huguenot leaders before they could act against him. Now fearful for himself, the king agreed with their suggestions, including the death of Coligny, his friend and counselor. Catherine and her associates quickly planned a general killing of all Huguenots. Most of the Huguenot leaders from throughout France were already in Paris for the wedding, and none were to be left alive. The first to die would be Coligny. Henry, the third duke of Guise, was to see to his death.

At midnight on August 24, 1572, the feast of St. Bartholomew, a signal was given and the slaughter of the Huguenots began. The wounded Coligny was attacked in his own home by a group led by the duke. A German named Besme, who was a servant in the Guise's house, plunged a sword through Coligny's chest and threw him, still alive, out of a window into the street. There, another of Guise's men chopped off Coligny's head as he lay at the duke's feet. Besme later said that he had never seen a man die more valiantly than the admiral.

Still raging against Coligny though he was dead, the savage Catholics cut off his arms and private members, dragged his armless body through the streets for three days, and then hung him upside down by his heels outside the city. Along with him they murdered every Protestant leader they could find, great and honorable men like the admiral's son-in-law, Count de Teligny; Count de la Rochefoucault; Antonius; Clarimontus; the marquis of Ravely; Lewis Bussius; Bandineus; Pluvialius; Burnei; and many others. But this did not satisfy their lust for blood, it only increased their ungodly appetite, and they began to slaughter the common Protestants, hunting them down like animals day and night. In the first three days, nearly ten-thousand bodies were counted in Paris alone.

They threw the bodies into the Seine River until the water was as red as blood. The butchery was so continuous that along the street gutters in Paris blood ran like water after a rain storm. So furious was the rage of the murderers that they killed even those Roman Catholics whom they believed were weak in their diabolical religion. Soon the massacre spread

throughout all of France and continued until October. It was as if an ungodly plague had gripped the Catholics until they were more animal than human in their zeal to kill every Protestant in France. No one tried to stop them, and there was no punishment no matter how many they killed.

In Orleans, just 70 miles from Paris on the Loire River, a thousand men, women, and children were slaughtered. At Lyon, about 250 miles southwest of Paris at the junction of the Rhone and Saone rivers, eight hundred were massacred. Children and parents clinging to each other in love and fear were killed without regard of sex or age. Three hundred who sought refuge in the bishop's house were murdered, and the impious monks would not allow their bodies to be buried. In Rouen, 70 miles northwest of Paris on the Seine River, and in Toulouse, 370 miles south of Paris, and in many other cities throughout France, when they heard of the massacre of the Huguenots in Paris and that it had been approved by the king, they shut the gates to the city or posted guards so that no Protestant could escape while they hunted them down, imprisoned them, and then barbarously murdered them. In Rouen alone, six thousand were killed.

In the province of Anjou in the Loire River Valley, they slew a minister named Albiacus, and raped and murdered many women. Among them was two sisters whom they abused in front of their father after tying him to the wall so that he was forced to watch. When they finished, they killed the three of them.

In Bordeaux, even though it was the capital of the English-held province of Aquitaine on the Atlantic coast, a hell-bound monk, who often preached that the papists should kill all Protestants, so stirred up the Roman Catholics that 264 Protestants were cruelly murdered.

In Blois, 91 miles southwest of Paris, the duke of Guise allowed his soldiers to kill all the Protestants they could find and take their property. No one was spared regardless of sex or age, and every young woman was raped by the soldiers before she was butchered or drowned in the Loire River. They did the same thing in a city called Mere, where they also found a minister named Cassebonius and threw him into the Loire River where he drowned. In every city and village they came to, whether large or small,

well-known or virtually unknown, they acted with the same barbaric savagery.

In a place called Turin (not Turin, Italy), the Protestant mayor gave them a great deal of money for his life. After taking his money, they beat him with clubs, stripped him naked, and hung him upside down with his head and chest in the river so that he had to keep jerking himself upward out of the water to keep from drowning. When they tired of this spectacle, they cut open his stomach, pulled out his intestines, and threw them into the river. They then cut out his heart and carried it around the city on a spear.

At Penna, 300 were slaughtered after they had been promised safety. At Albia on the Lord's Day, 45 were killed. At Nonne the citizens fought for some time until they were guaranteed they would not be harmed, only their properties would be seized. But once the Catholics entered the town they slew everyone regardless of age with brutal savagery and set the houses on fire. A man and his wife were dragged from their hiding place and she was raped several times in front of him. Then they put a sword in her hands and held her hands around the hilt while they forced the blade into her husband's stomach. When that fiendish deed was finished, they killed her also.

In the village of Barre, these servants of Satan cut open the stomachs of small children and pulled out their intestines, which they then chewed upon in insane rage. At Matiscon they cut off the arms and legs of numerous victims; some they then killed and others they let bleed to death. For the savage entertainment of themselves and others like them, they often threw Huguenots, both men and women, from a high bridge into the Loire River while exclaiming, "Did you ever see a person jump so well?"

It is impossible to tell of all the forms of savagery inflicted upon the Protestants during the time of this horrible massacre. But one example will suffice for all.

The wife of Philip de Deux was pregnant and being attended by a midwife because she was about to give birth. The Catholics broke into their house and killed Philip in his bed, and then, ignoring the pleadings of the midwife, plunged a dagger into his wife's stomach. She staggered from the house to a barn and climbed up into the corn loft, hoping to hide from the butchers there and deliver her child before she died.

But soon they found her and stabbed her in the stomach again and cut it open. Then they threw her from the hayloft to the ground below. She landed on her back with great force, and the child burst out of her open womb. Immediately one of the Catholic ruffians caught up the child, stabbed it, and threw it in the river.

As a second witness of the truth of this massacre of the Huguenots, here is a letter written by a sensible and educated **Roman Catholic**:

The marriage of the young king of Navarre with the French king's sister was celebrated with great splendor. All the affections, the assurances of friendship, all the promises sacred among men, were abundantly given by Catherine, the queen mother, and the king. During the celebration, the guests thought of nothing but enjoying festivities, plays, and masquerades.

Then, at twelve o'clock at night, at the beginning of St. Bartholomew, the signal was given. Immediately all the houses of the Protestants were forced open at once. Admiral Coligny, alarmed by the uproar, jumped out of bed just as several assassins rushed into his bedroom. Leading them was Besme, a servant in the family of the Guises. This miserable person plunged his sword into the admiral's chest and also cut him in the face.

Henry, the young duke of Guise, who stayed at the bedroom door until the horrid butchery was done, called aloud, "Besme! Is it done?" Immediately after, the ruffians threw the admiral out of the window, and he was killed at Guise's feet by another ruffian who cut off his head.

Count de Teligny, who had married Coligny's daughter ten months before, was also killed. He was such a handsome man that the ruffians who first moved to kill him were struck with compassion, but others who were more barbarous pushed past them and murdered him.

In the meantime, all of Coligny's friends were assassinated throughout Paris. Men, women, and children were indiscriminately slaughtered and every street was strewn with dying Protestants. Priests ran through the streets holding a crucifix in one hand and a dagger in the other and warned the leaders of the murderers to spare neither relatives or friends.

Tavannes, the marshal of France, an ignorant and superstitious soldier, rode his horse through the streets of Paris, crying to his men, "Shed blood! Shed blood! Bleeding is as wholesome in August as in

May." In his son's written memories of his father, we are told that when Tavannes was dying and made a general confession to his priest, the priest said to him in surprise, "What! no mention of St. Bartholomew's massacre?" To which Tavannes replied, "I consider it an action worthy of reward and praise that will wash away all my sins." Only a false spirit of religion can inspire such horrid sentiments.

The newly wed Henry of Navarre and his wife were asleep in the king's palace; all of his servants were Protestants. Many of them were killed in bed; others ran through the palace hallways and rooms trying to escape, some even into the king's antechamber. The young wife of Henry, fearful for her husband and herself, jumped from her bed to run to the king's bedroom to throw herself at her brother's feet and ask for protection. But when she opened her bedroom door, several of her Protestant servants rushed into the room for refuge. Soldiers came into the room past her and killed one who was hiding under the bed. Two others were wounded with halberds and fell at her feet, covering them with their blood.

Count de la Rochefoucault, a young nobleman who was greatly in the king's favor, and who had a certain happiness in his conversation and could speak with a great deal of humor, had spent a pleasant evening with the king and his court attendants until eleven o'clock. The king felt some remorse about Rochefoucault because he was a Protestant, and urged him two or three times not to go home but to spend the night in the Louvre, where he knew he would not be found. But the count said he must go home to his wife, and so the king urged him no more and said privately to his attendants, "Let him go. I see God has decreed his death." Two hours later the count and his wife were murdered.

Many of the poor victims fled to the banks of the Seine for refuge, and some swam over the river to the suburbs of St. Germaine. From his bedroom window in the royal palace, the king could look down upon the river and see the swimmers trying to escape. One of his servants had prepared a rifle for him and he killed several of those in the river. The queen mother was undisturbed by all the slaughter, and often looked down from her balcony and shouted encouragements to the murderers and laughed at the dying groans of the victims.

Some days after this horror in Paris took place, the French parliament tried to make the massacre seem

less serious and justify it by putting the blame on Admiral Coligny and accusing him of a conspiracy against the king, which no one believed. They then sought to defile his memory by hanging his body by chains in public view. The king himself went to see this shocking spectacle. When one of his court attendants advised him to withdraw, complaining of the corpse's stench, he replied, "A dead enemy has a good smell." The massacres on St. Bartholomew Day are painted in the royal exhibition hall of the Vatican in Rome, with the inscription: *Pontifex, Coligny necem probat*, which means, "The Pope approves of Coligny's death."

This horrible butchery did not occur only in Paris. Orders were issued from the king's court to all provincial governors to kill all Huguenots within their provinces. As a result, about **one-hundred-thousand** Protestants were massacred all over France. Only a few governors refused to obey the order. Montmorin, the governor of Auvergne in central France, wrote to King Charles and said, "Sire: I have received an order under your majesty's seal to put to death all the Protestants in my province. I have too much respect for your majesty not to believe that the letter is a forgery. But if, God forbid, the order is genuine, I have too much respect for your majesty to obey it."


In Rome, the joy over the St. Bartholomew Day massacre was so great that they declared a day of festivity and jubilee. Those who celebrated the day and expressed gladness in every way they could were given many indulgences. The man who first carried the news of the massacre to Rome was given 1000 crowns by the cardinal of Lorraine for his ungodly message. In Paris, the king also commanded that the day be kept with every demonstration of joy, for he believed that the whole race of Huguenots had been exterminated, and with them all Protestants in France. But the true gospel of Christ cannot be exterminated from any country – only God can remove it.

After the massacre was over, young King Charles was greatly disturbed by it and fell into a great melancholy and remained that way until he died two years later of a fever.□

—Taken from **THE NEW FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS**

ROMAN CATHOLIC HERITAGE

THE SAINT BARTHOLOMEW DAY MASSACRE 1572

UGUST 24, 1572, is the day that the Roman Catholics began a sweeping slaughter of the French Calvinist Protestants known as the Huguenots. This mass murder had its beginning in Paris and spread throughout France for two months until almost **one-hundred-thousand** Protestants were killed and the Huguenots were nearly extinguished from the face of the earth. It all started at a wedding celebration.

Charles IX, king of France from 1560 to 1574, proposed a marriage between his 19-year-old sister, Margaret of Valois, and 19-year-old King Henry of Navarre. Henry, who in 1589 would become King Henry IV of France, was raised by his father as a Calvinist and was leader of the Huguenots. Charles thought that by this marriage he could settle the antagonism between the Roman Catholic majority in France and the Protestants, whose armies under the leadership of Admiral Gaspard de Coligny had several times defeated the French royal army and won a shaky truce.

Admiral Coligny was born in Chatillon-sur-Loing, France, in 1519. He had a brilliant military career, and in 1552 was appointed admiral of France. His brother, Francis d'Andelot, was a Calvinist, and through his influence Coligny converted to Calvinism after his capture in the battle of St. Quentin in 1557.

When King Henry II was killed accidentally in a jousting tournament in 1559, Coligny joined himself with the prince of Conde, Louis I, to lead the French Huguenots, and demanded religious tolerance from the new king, Charles IX, who was a Roman Catholic.