

CHWNE Module 4 Lesson 2

Henry II and His Persecution of the Protestants

Henry II (1519 -1559)

Ruled from 1547 -1559

Henry II





Under Henry II

persecution of the French Protestants

was taken up a few notches worse

than under his father, Francis I.



In all fairness to **Francis**, before **1534**, he was lenient and tolerant of Protestants, even protecting them.

His sister, **Marguerite of Navarre**, pleaded with him on their behalf and he listened, until... **the Placard Affair**, the subsequent newspapers distributed all over Paris, and the vandalism of some statues.



Then, in **1540**, he passed the **Edict of Fontainebleau**, calling Protestant belief ‘heresy’ and ‘treason’, worthy of torture, public humiliation, loss of property and death.



Under Francis I, 'heretics' were burnt at the stake. Books in their possession by Protestant Reformers were burnt, and snitches were rewarded for reporting on them.

Francis also restricted the printing of books without his permission.



When **Francis I** died and **Henry II** came to the throne, he was urged by the **Guise** family, to implement the German principle that *the **religion of the ruler should be the religion of the people.***

This principle came out of '**the Peace of Augsburg**' which we will examine later.



In June 1551, Henry issued **‘The Edict of Chateaubriant’**.

This was dispensed from the **Office of the Constable of France (Lieutenant General and 2nd in command to the King)** whose name was **Anne de Montmorency**.



Anne de Montmorency

Anne de Montmorency was the **Constable of France** when Marguerite of Navarre was alive and she had influence with her brother Francis I, on behalf of the Protestants.

She had appealed to him on behalf of **Louis de Berquin**.

Anne de Montmorency



By Jean Clouet - [1], Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=965758>



He was a decorated military leader who was favoured by Francis I and was made Constable of France in **1538**.

He had many successes in the battles, fighting at Francis's side during many of the Italian wars.



He was once held as a hostage in England, and also held in **Pavia** when Francis I was captured.

He was soon released at Francis' capture, becoming one of the negotiators for Francis' release and the exchange of his sons in **1526**.



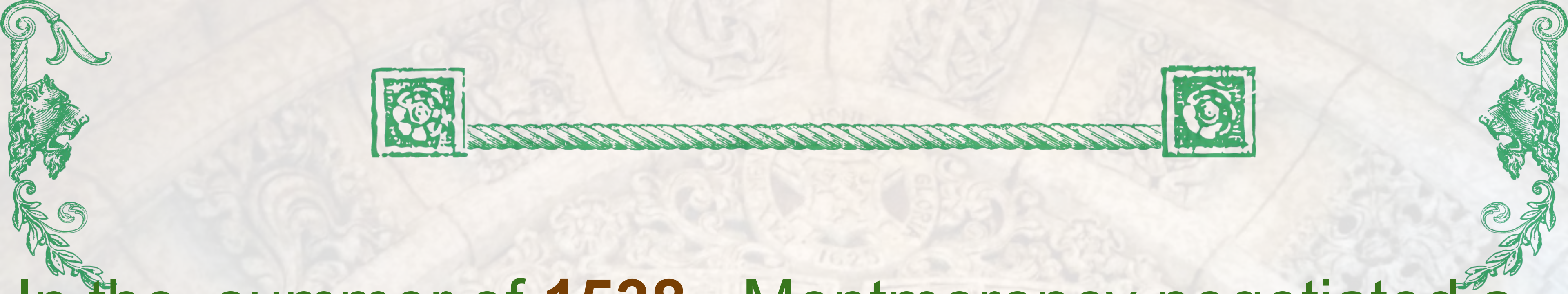
He attended Francis on his release, accompanied his sons to the exchange location and received them again on their release in **1530**.

He fought again alongside Francis in **1536 and 1537**.



In early **1538** Francis made him **Constable of France**.

That same year he supported making peace with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, against the majority sentiment of Francis' court.



In the summer of **1538**, Montmorency negotiated a peace treaty between Francis I and Charles V, but Charles did not keep the terms of the agreement.

This was a diplomatic failure for which Montmorency was stripped of his title and honours.



Francis then turned to Montmorency's rivals for counsel.

Montmorency continued to keep in touch with Henry II, who, on ascension to the throne in **1547**, made him Constable of France again.



He was entrusted with the responsibility for implementing a series of harsh measures in the **Edict of Chateaubriant**, and in the **Edict of Compiegne**.

The **Edict of Compiegne** acknowledged that previous edicts were ineffective against stamping out heretics, blaming its ineffectiveness on the 'lenience' of judges.



Each edict increased in severity against the Protestants.

These measures were implemented with the rationale that ***‘previous measures against ‘heresy’ in the kingdom had proved ineffectual’.***



The '**crimes**' that 'heretics' committed included:

- Meeting in 'conventicles'
- Infecting schools
- Invading judicial benches
- Forcing toleration on judges



By **1547**, a new judicial chamber was created.

Their members comprised representatives chosen from provincial 'parlements' and their sole responsibility was to judge cases of heresy.

Protestants referred to them as the '**Chambre Ardente**' or the **Burning Chamber**.



At the basic level, the policies they implemented came with the following severe restrictions on Protestants:

- that both the civil and ecclesiastical courts should *'detect and punish heretics'*.
- that informers received $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the property of the Protestants and were granted immunity (just like Children's Aid informers)



- that the properties (both moveable and immoveable), of those fleeing to Geneva were confiscated.
- that Protestants remaining in France were forbidden to correspond with or send financial aid to those who fled to Geneva.



The Edict set forth many articles of censorship. These included censorship with respect to:

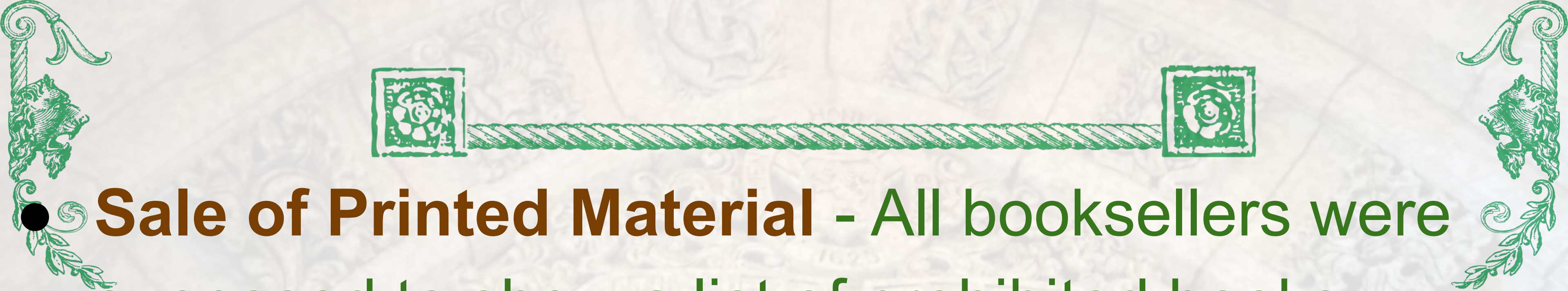
- **Freedom of the Press**
- **Sale of Printed Material**
- **Policing of Printed Materials**
- **Policing Imports of Books**
- **Thought Control**

In spite of these measures, the reformation fires burnt and the number of French Protestants grew



The Edict set forth many articles of censorship. This included:

- **Freedom of the Press** - The Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris must approve the sale, importation or printing of any books, then and in the future.



- **Sale of Printed Material** - All booksellers were supposed to show a list of prohibited books alongside a list of allowable books in their store.
- **Policing of Printed Materials** - faculty Delegates were to visit booksellers twice a year to ensure compliance



- **Policing Imports of Books** - From 1542 all shipments of books could only be opened in the presence of delegates from the Faculty of Theology. This was more strictly enforced. (thought policing? Control of the intellectual development of the nation)



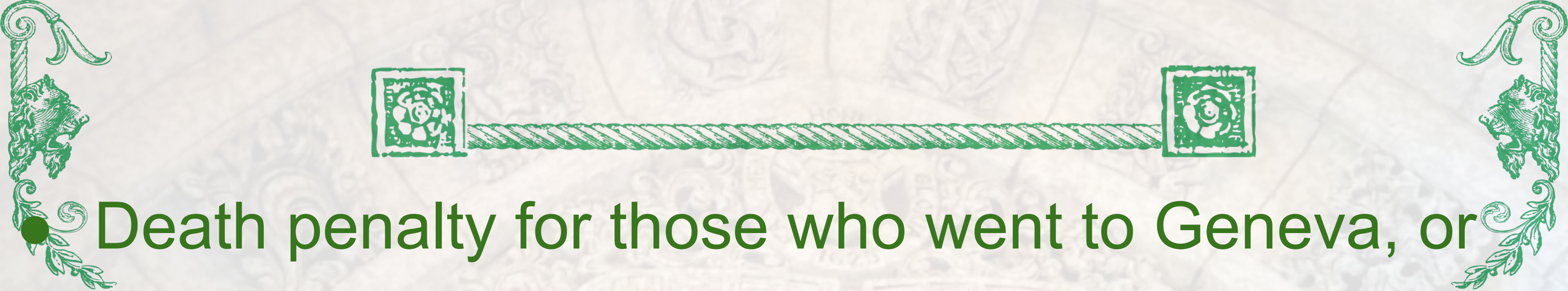
- **Thought Control** - discussion of religious topics at work, in the fields or over meals was strictly prohibited.

In spite of these measures, the reformation fires burnt and the number of French Protestants grew (reminds me of Egypt and the Isrealites).

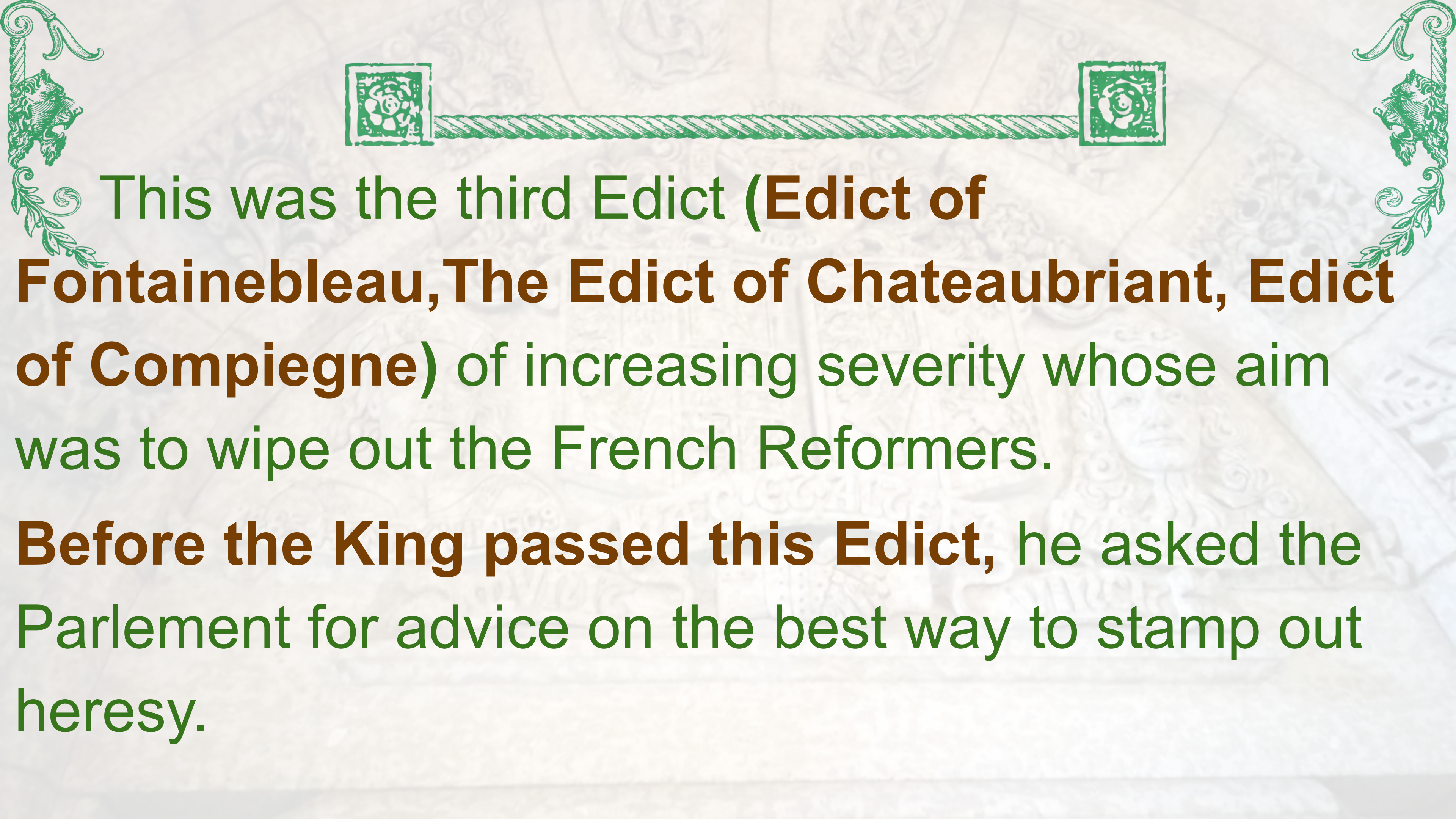


In **July of 1557**, even stricter measures were adopted by the **Edict of Compiegne**:

- Death penalty for all convictions of heresy.
- Death penalty for all convictions of *‘relapsed and obstinate “sacramentarians”’*.



- Death penalty for those who went to Geneva, or published books there.
- Death penalty for *'iconoclast blasphemers against images'*.
- Death penalty for *'illegal preaching or participation in religious gatherings, private or public'*.



This was the third Edict (**Edict of Fontainebleau, The Edict of Chateaubriant, Edict of Compiegne**) of increasing severity whose aim was to wipe out the French Reformers.

Before the King passed this Edict, he asked the Parlement for advice on the best way to stamp out heresy.



The voice of moderation advised against the Edict.

They thought that it was an unnecessary measure and that institution of a Spanish type of inquisition would give the appearance of dispensing with the king's justice vested in his parlement.



The edict was written and proclaimed in **July of 1557 but** it was only registered for deliberations in **January 1558.**

The voices of moderation in the Parlement were reluctant to proceed on it.



Not debating the Edict in **July 1557**, did not prevent an angry mob, in **September of 1557**, from breaking into a Calvinist meeting, in a private home, where there were noblemen, royal officials, respected craftsmen, women and children in attendance.



About 132 people were arrested and jailed.

Also in September, three people including a noble widow, were burnt at the stake in a place called

Maubert.

Such was the effect of ***the proclamation of the edict.***

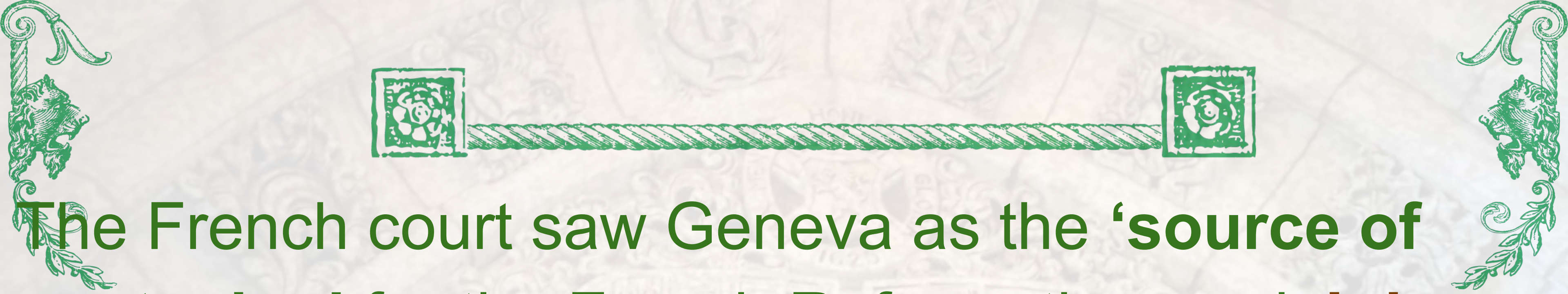


With such high stakes, the edict had the effect of precipitating the **French Wars of Religion** and armed civil wars.

Protestant noblemen raised armies to protect their religious freedoms.

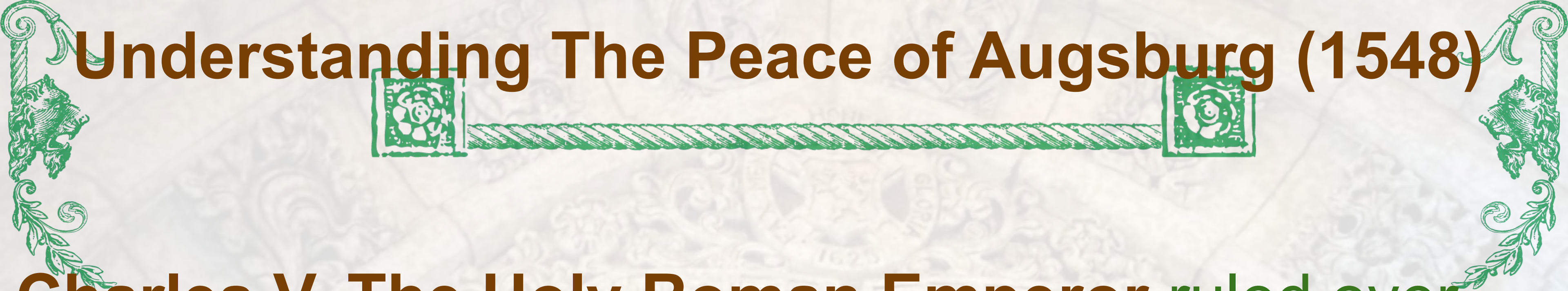


These wars were not diffused until **Henry IV** came to the throne and passed the **Edict of Toleration** (**The Edict of Nantes**) in **1598**.



The French court saw Geneva as the ‘**source of contagion**’ for the French Reformation, and **John Calvin** gained ‘**undisputed religious supremacy**’ in 1555.

That was the same year that the **French Reformers** were organized as a synod in Paris, not far from the royal palace at the Louvre.



Understanding The Peace of Augsburg (1548)

Charles V, The Holy Roman Emperor ruled over
the **House of Habsburg**.

The House of Habsburg included the Habsburg
Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Italy and Germany.



These were mostly ruled by the family members of the House of Habsburg, all contributing to the war expenses of the Empire.

Charles V often used German troops in his military campaigns.



However, the growth of Lutheranism and his opposition to it, turned the German Princes against him.

They began by forming Leagues to fight against him (**The Schmalkaldic League**). They eventually rebelled against him, which ended in the **Peace of Augsburg**.



They believed that since their subjects were Lutherans as they were, the religion of the German prince was the religion of the people.

In other words, Charles could not impose Catholicism on their subjects.



The **Peace of Augsburg** allowed rulers to choose either Lutheranism or Catholicism as the official religion over the state they controlled, and citizens who did not agree with the ruler's religion, could emigrate to another region where they could practice their religion.



When we get to **Louis XIV**, we will see how he removed this option from his subjects, so that his eradication of the Protestants could become absolute and final.



The **Peace of Augsburg** also allowed for the clergy to resign if his religious affiliations changed. The rest of the inhabitants did not have to do the same. It was called **Ecclesiastical Reservation**.



The phrase that came out of the Peace of Augsburg, **"Whose region, his religion"**, has been used to justify autocracy and tyranny by various French leaders, beginning with **Henry II**, and followed by both **Louis XIII** and **Louis XIV**.



The Guise faction, would eventually borrow the formation of ‘**Leagues**’ from the Lutherans, to fight against the Protestants.