

Nemesius  
Primitius  
Iustinus  
Saturnus  
Eugenius  
Martyrs

The persecution  
in Lyons  
and  
Vienna  
in  
France  
in  
the  
year  
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A letter of the  
brethren of  
France to the  
brethren of Asia

Vetus Epagathus  
Martyr.

The stoutnes of  
a godly young  
man.

being fastened to his stakes, and so tacked up with a  
net, and at last were thrust through, Creicens in the  
backe, Iulianus in the brest, Nemesius in the hart, Primitius  
about the navel, Iustinus cut in every ioynt of his bodye,  
Saturnus run through with speares, Eugenius cut a soulder fro  
the brest to the lower partes, and then cast into a deepe  
pyr, haryng the name by the Idolatrous Priestes, inti-  
tuled Ad septem Biothanatos. After the martirdome of wh<sup>o</sup>  
also Symphorosa the mother did likewise suffer, as is before  
declared.

Under the sayd Antoninus Verus, and in the same per-  
secution, which raged not in Rome and Asia onely, but in  
other countreys also, suffered the gloriois & most constant  
Martyrs of Lyons and Vienna, two Cities in Fraunce,  
gyving to Christ a gloriois testimony, & to all Christian  
men a spectacle, or example of singular constancie, and for-  
titude in Christ our saviour. The history of whom, because  
it is written and set forth by their owne Churches, where  
they did suffer, mentioned in Euseb. Lib. 5. cap. 2. I thought  
here to expresse the same in the forme and effecte of their  
owne wordes, as there is to be seene. The title of which  
their Epistle written to the brethren of Asia and Phrygia  
thus beginnieth.

\* The seruantes of Christ inhabiting the Cities of  
Vienna and Lyons, to the brethren in Asia and  
Phrygia, having the same faith and hope of redemption  
with vs: peace, and grace, and glory, from God  
the father, and from Iesus Christ  
our Lorde.

The greatnes of this our tribulation, the furious rage  
of the Gentiles against vs, & the tormentes which the  
blessed martyrs suffered, neither can we in wordes, nor yet  
in writing exactly, as they deserue, set forth. For the aduer-  
sary with all his force gaue his endow, to the working of  
such preparatiues, as he him selfe listed, against his ryan-  
nous domming, & in every place practised he and instruc-  
ted his ministers, how in most spitefull maner to set them  
against the seruantes of God: so that not onely in our  
houses shoppes and markets we were restrained, but also  
were vniuersally commaunded, that none (so hardy) should  
be seene in any place. But God hath alwaies mercy in stroe  
and toke out of their hands such as were weake amongst  
them, and other some did he set vp as firme and innumera-  
ble pillars, which by sufferance were able to abide all vio-  
lent force, and valiantly to withstand the enemie, induring  
all their opprobrious punishment they could deuise: to con-  
clude, they sought this battell for that intent to come vnto  
Christ, esteeming their great troubles but as light: thereby  
showing that al that may be suffered in this present life, is  
not able to counterwaile the great glorye which shall be  
sweyed vnto vs after this life. And first they patiently suf-  
fered whatsoeuer the multitude of franticke people running  
vpon head did vnto them, as railings, scourgings, draw-  
ynges and haltings, syringing of stones, imprisoninges, &  
what other thing souer the rage of the multitude are wont  
to vse and practise against their professed enemies. Then  
afterwarde they being led into the marked place, and there  
iudged of the Captayne and rest of the Potentates of the  
Citic, after their confession made openly before the multi-  
tude were commaunded againe to praye, vntill the returne  
of their chiefe gouernour. After this they being brought be-  
fore him, and he vsing all extremity that possibly he might  
against them: One Vetus Epagathus, one of the brethren,  
replenished with feruent zeale, both towards god and his  
brethren (whose conuersion, although he were a young  
man was counted as perfect, as was the life of Zachary  
the Priest, for he walked diligently in al the commaunde-  
ments and iustificatiions of the Lord, and in all obedience  
towards his brethren blameles) he hauing within him the  
feruent zeale of loue, and spirit of god, could not suffer that  
wicked iudgement which was giuen vpon the Christians  
but being vehemently displeasid, desired that the Iudge  
would heare the crye which he was minded to make in  
the behalfe of the christians, in whom faith he is no impie-  
tie founde, But the people cryed againe to those that were  
assistentes w the chiefe Justice, that it might not be so (for  
indeede he was a noble man borne) neither did the Justice  
graunt him his lawfull request, but onely asked him whe-  
ther he himselfe were a Christian or not. And he immediatly  
with a loude and boule voice, answered and sayde, I  
am a Christian. And thus was he receiued into the fellow-  
ship of the martyrs, and called the aduocate of the Christi-  
ans. And he hauing the spirite of God more plentifully in  
tyme, then had Zachary, the abundaunce thereof he decla-  
red, in that he gaue his life in the defence of his brethren,

being a true disciple of Christ, following the Lamb where-  
soeuer he goeth.

By this mans example the rest of the Martyrs were  
the more animated to martirdome, and made more iouious  
with al courage of mind to accomplish the same. Some o-  
ther there were vncere and not so well prepared, and as  
yet weak, nor well able to beare the vehemency of so great  
conflict: of whom x. there were in number, that fainted,  
ministring to vs much heavines & lamentation. Who by  
their example caused the rest which were not yet appre-  
hended, to be lesse willing therunto. Then were we all for  
the variableness of confession not a litle astonied: not y we  
feared the punishment intended against vs, but rather as  
hauing respect to the ende, and fearing least any shoulde  
fall. Every day there were apprehended such as were wor-  
thy to fulfill the number of them which were fallen. In so  
much that of two churches, such as were chiefe, & which  
were the principall gouernours of our Churches were ap-  
prehended, with these also certeine of the Ethnicks, being  
our men seruantes, were apprehended (for so the gouer-  
nour commaunded, that all of vs ingenerall without any  
respect, should be taken) which seruants being ouertome  
by Satan, and fearing the tormentes which they saw the  
Santes doe suffer, being also compelled therunto by the  
meanes of the souldiers, fained against vs that we kept  
the feastings of Theseus, and incest of Oedipus, and many  
such other crimes, which are neither to be remembred, nor  
named of vs, nor yet to bee thought that euer any man  
would commit the like.

These things being now bynt abroad, euery man  
began to shewe crueltie against vs, in so much that those  
which before for familiarities sake were more gentle to-  
ward vs, now vehemently disdaind vs, and waxed mad  
against vs. And thus was now fulfilled that, which was  
spoken by Christ, saying, the time will come that whoso-  
euer killeth you, shall thinke that he doth God great good  
seruice. The sufferd the Martyrs of God such vtter per-  
secution as is passing to be tolde: Satan still shooting at  
this marke, to make them to vtter some blasphemy by all  
meanes possible. Marcellus therfore was the rage both  
of the people & Prince, specially against one Sanctus, which  
was Deacon of the congregation of Vienna, and against  
Maturus, being but a litle before baptised, but yet a worthy  
souldiour of Christ, and also against Attalus, being borne  
in Pergama, which was the foundation and pillar of that  
congregation, and also against Blandina, by whome Christ  
sheweth, that those things which the world esteemed vyle  
and abiect, to be gloriois in Gods sight, for the very loue  
which in hart and deede they beare vnto him, not in out-  
ward face onely. For when all we were afraid, & specially  
her mistres in selfe, who also was her selfe one of the number  
of the foresayd martyrs, least happily for the weakenes of  
body she would not stande strongly to her confession; the  
foresaid Blandina was so replenished with strength & bold-  
nes, that they which had the tormenting of her by counse  
from morning to night, for very weeries gaue ouer & fell  
downe, & were themselues ouertome; confessing that they  
could do no more against her, & marvelled that yet she li-  
ued hauing her body so tozned and rent. And testified that  
any one of those tormentes alone without any mee had ben  
enough to haue plucked the life from her body. But that  
blessed woman, fighting this worthy battell, became strö-  
ger & stronger, & as often as she spake these wordes) I am a  
Christian, neither haue we committed any euill) it was to her a  
maruelous comfort and boiding to abide the tormentes.

Sanctus also another of the Martyrs, who in the mid-  
dest of his tormentes, induring more paines, then the na-  
ture of a man might away with, also at what time y wic-  
ked suppoled, to haue heard him vtter some blasphemous  
wordes, for the greatnes & intolcrableness of his tormentes  
& paines, that he was in, abode notwithstanding in such  
constancy of mind, that neither he told them his name, nor  
what countryman he was, nor in what Citie brought vp,  
neither whether he was a free man or a seruant, but vnto  
every question y was asked him, he answered in the La-  
tine toung, I am a Christian, and this was al that he con-  
fessed both of his name, citie, kinred, and all other thinges  
in the place of execution, neither yet could the Gentils, get  
any more of him: wherevpon both the Bouernour & tor-  
mentours, were the more vehemently bent against him.  
And when they had nothing to vexe him with all, they  
clapped plates of Masse red hote, to y most tenderst parts  
of his body, wherewith his body indeede being scorched,  
yet he neuer shronke for the matter, but was bold and con-  
stant, in his confession, being strengthened and moyssened  
with the fountaine of liuely water, flowing out of Christs  
side. Truly his body was a sufficient witness, what tor-  
mentes

The faint-  
ing of cer-  
taine weak  
Christians.

False flau-  
ders of the  
Christians.

The rage of  
the Hea-  
then aginst  
the Chris-  
tians.

The cruell  
handling  
and great  
patience of  
Blandina.

Sanctus  
a Martyr.

The nota-  
ble constan-  
cy of  
Sanctus.

The cruell  
tormentours  
of Sanctus.