

PSYCHOMACHIA OF PRUDENTIUS
TEXT, TRANSLATION, AND COMMENTARY

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by
Sister Cornelia Joseph Lynch
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O Christ, Thou Who art renowned because of Thy Father's glory and Thine own, not however, two separate and distinct glories, but one, as we worship but one God under each name, since Thou, O Christ, art God, born of the Father, Thou hast always had compassion on the weighty problems of men. Reveal to us, O King, how the soul as a soldier in armored array may drive sin from our innermost hearts as often as a conflict arises in our troubled senses and the temptations of evil desires torment the soul. Reveal what aids we have for maintaining our freedom and what powerful forces are at hand to defend and to aid us in resisting the vices struggling for mastery in our breasts. For indeed, O good Master, Thou hast not left Thy followers destitute of noble virtues and lacking in courage, a prey to destroying vices. Thou Thyself dost command forces bringing salvation to the soul beset by temptations; Thou dost furnish the spirit with laudable attributes, making it powerful to attack the sensual desires of the heart and thus to fight and to conquer for Thee. The path to victory lies open before us if we but study the very features of the virtues near at hand and of the vices which contend with them in deadly combat.

Onto the field of battle, to face the uncertain fortunes of war, ventures Faith, her rustic garb in

disorder, with uncovered shoulders and arms, and loose, streaming tresses; for in the sudden heat of action, eager for new conquests, remembering neither weapons nor shield, with body uncovered, trusting alone in her resolute heart, she faces the dangers of this tempestuous war. Paganism with gathered strength dares to strike first at Faith, her challenger. She, however, rising on high smites down that head, its temples adorned with fillets and its mouth too often sated with the blood of beasts, and trembles under foot the eyes forced out in death. This evil power, its throat choked and broken, gasps for breath and suffers an agonizing death. The victorious legion which Faith, their queen, had enlisted from one thousand martyrs and encouraged against the enemy, rejoices. For the newly gained victory, Faith crowns her courageous companions with garlands of flowers and bids them be clothed in bright purple.

Next on the grassy plains to join in the conflict comes virgin Chastity, resplendent in shining armor. Last, the Sodomite, girt with her native torches, attacks her, thrusting at her face the sulphurous pine, aiming at the modest eyes. But the maiden, unafraid, smites with a rock the right hand of the fiery Fury, averting thereby from her modest face the blazing weapons and torches of the fierce

she-wolf. With her sword she pierces the throat of the disarmed harlot, who vomits forth hot vapors clotted with black blood, and, as she expires, pollutes the surrounding atmosphere with her foul breath. "She is hit," exclaims the victorious queen. "This shall be thy end. Thou shalt ever lie prostrate, never again to dare to scatter thy deadly flames against the servants of God; the inner fiber of their pure souls is enkindled by the lamp of Christ alone. As though thou, O disturber of men, couldst ever revive thyself with energy anew after the breath of thy life has been extinguished; after the lifeless head of the mighty Holofernes bathed his Assyrian chamber with his lustful blood when Judith, resolute in purpose, spurning the bejeweled couch of the adulterous tyrant checked with a sword-thrust his unclean desire and, woman though she was, bore away with inflexible hand the famed trophy-- Judith, my heaven-sent brave defender! But perhaps the woman, though fighting under the shadow of God's law, was not powerful enough, though she prefigured our times in which true virtue has flowed into earthly bodies so that through weak instruments the dominion of Lust might be overcome.

Since the Virgin Immaculate gave birth to the Son, what power hast thou over man? Since the Virgin Immaculate

gave birth to the Son, His original conception disregarding the natural functioning of the human body, the Power Above begot new flesh and a pure Virgin conceived Christ the Lord, Who is man from His mortal mother, but God with His Father. From thence all flesh is divine which conceives Him, sharing the sonship of God by a covenant. For the Word made flesh did not cease to be what He was, The Word; nor did He, assuming human nature, diminish His God-head, but raised fallen humanity to heights divine. Christ remains what He was, though beginning to be what He was not; we are no longer what we were, being born into a better condition; in assuming our nature while still retaining His own, His divinity suffered no loss; but making us partakers of His Divine nature, He elevated us to heavenly heights. It is by His power that thou liest conquered, filthy Lust, and not since the time of Mary canst thou infringe upon my rights. Thou art the way to death, thou art the gate of destruction, polluting our bodies and plunging our souls into Tartarus. Hide thy head in the gloomy abyss, evil vice that thou art; die, O harlot, seek the infernal regions, remain forever enclosed in Avernus, thrust down into the dark depths of night! May the fiery waters below flow over thee, and the black rivers with their sulphurous whirlpool carry thee

along on their turbulent course. No longer may thou, O most violent of vices, tempt Christians whose purified bodies are reserved for their King."

Having spoken these words and rejoicing in the death of conquered Lust, Chastity dipped her crimson wet sword in the waters of the Jordan, for the blood which had flowed dripping red from the wound still clung to it, defiling its luster. So the wise victor purifies her conquering steel, washing it in the river, purging it of the stain made by the blood from the enemy's throat; but no longer content to sheathe the freshly cleansed blade lest rust with its harsh texture dull the bright surface, she dedicates it at the altar of the divine fountain in a Catholic temple to shine with eternal splendor.

Meanwhile, modest Patience, standing motionless in the midst of the battle and tumultuous uproar, was watching with serious expression and attentive eyes the wounds and the bodies transfixed by the cruel weapons, remaining all the while tranquil. Off in the distance, Wrath, swelling with anger and foaming at the mouth, rolling her eyes suffused with blood and gall, hurls words and weapons at her for taking no part in the war. Impatient of delay she attacks her with pike and assails her with words, tossing the shaggy plumes on her helmeted head: "Come, O indolent

spectator of this conflict of ours, and let this deadly weapon pierce thy peaceful heart; yet do not moan, as it is shameful for thee to utter a cry."

With these abusive words she sends a whistling spear quivering through the gentle breezes; well-aimed, it strikes, hitting with a direct blow but repulsed by the impregnable resistance of the cuirass, it rebounded. Patience had providently thrown over her shoulders her armor of triple thickness, her breastplate with steely scales bound strongly together on all sides with cords twisted tight. Thus protected, Patience remains quiet, bravely withstanding every shower of weapons. Unperturbed by the javelin of the monster fuming with rage, she calmly waited for Wrath to consume herself from within. Soon the savage warrior had exhausted by anger her untamed strength and had rendered her right arm useless by the continual hurling of weapons; when her swift arrows had fallen in their winged flight and the spear-shafts, missing their mark, lay broken, her unrelenting right hand reached for the sword-hilt. Raising the flashing two-edged sword high over her head she struck the ridge of the helmet with a forceful blow. The clang of the sword on the bronze helmet, fashioned from forged metal, resounded when struck; the impenetrable helmet blunted the edge of the rebounding

sword, the resisting metal breaks the attacks of the blade and, unshattered, receives the futile assaults of the evil one, itself remaining unharmed.

Wrath, seeing the fragments of her broken sword lying in scattered pieces, bereft of mind, flung aside the swordless hilt which lay in her hand, that bladeless ivory, a perfidious token of her shameful passion. Having hurled afar the bitter reminder, madness now drives her to self-destruction. She picks one of the poorly aimed missiles from the dust of the battle ground for an evil use; fixing the smooth wood in the ground she stabs herself on the upturned point, piercing her lung with a painful wound.

Patience, standing above her, proclaims, "We have conquered the beastful Vice by our habitual self-restraint, without any danger to blood or to life; our plan of action makes use of this type of warfare to destroy by endurance the Vices with all their forces of evil and savage strength. Fiery Anger is her own unbridled enemy, destroying herself by her raging and dying by her own weapons."

Having uttered these words, she passed through the ranks, accompanied by an eminent man; for Job had remained at the side of his invincible mistress during the fierce struggle. Hitherto he was stern of brow and wearied by trials, but smiles now cover his harsh countenance as he

considers his healed sore, and by the number of scars, recounts his thousands of trials, his own rewards, and the enemy's disgrace.

Patience now bids him to rest from all conflict of arms and to replenish his lost riches from the captured spoils, carrying back treasures which are destined to endure. She herself breaks through the troops of the legions and the opposing forces, walking unhurt amid the shower of deadly weapons. Enduring Patience is the only companion who allies herself with all the virtues to lend her assistance. No Virtue undertakes a dangerous task without her, for she is truly poorly equipped who lacks the sustaining power of Patience.

It chanced that pompous Pride was riding about through the widespread forces on her spirited horse on which she had placed the skin of a lion, covering the strong shoulders with the shaggy hair. Supported thus by the wild beast's mane, she arrayed herself, looking down with haughty disdain upon the troops. She had dressed her head with a towering coiffure, arranging the coils of hair so that the upsweep of curls might heighten her locks and fashion a lofty crest over her arrogant brow. Flowing from her shoulders, the linen palla was gathered at her breast and held in a graceful knot on her bosom, while her

headband of thin veiling falling from the nape of her neck caught in its billowing folds the gentle breezes. Her steed, not less imperious in its restless fierceness, impatient of restraint, champed the foaming bit. Denied the freedom of flight, he resisted the tight pressure of the reins and swerved this way and that in his rage. So arrayed, the warrior-maiden presented herself, overlooking both armies, riding round on her steed covered with trappings; surveying the opposing army, she assails, with look and word, the paltry forces and inadequate weapons that Humility had gathered for the conflict. A queen she was, indeed, but, not relying solely on in her own preparations, she sought the aid of others. She had enlisted as her ally, Hope, whose exalted home is raised high above the earth in a precious kingdom. Therefore Pride, in her anger after looking at Humility with her meager weapons that offer no menace, spoke with these bitter words. "Are you not ashamed, O wretched ones, to challenge famous chiefs with such paltry forces and to wield your sword against a race distinguished by conquests, whose war-like valor has gained for itself time-honored wealth and dominion of lands fertile with crops? And now a destitute stranger ventures to drive out these ancient rulers--O presumptuous thought! Look at these who wish

that we surrender into their hands our sceptres as booty; and those who attempt to till our acres, to despoil with a foreign plow the fields captured by our hands, to drive out by warfare the sturdy husbandmen. Forsooth, ridiculous rabble, in the hour of birth we claim all of man even while his body is still warm from his mother; we infuse the strength of our power throughout the body of the babe newborn, dominating all in its tender frame. What room, then is left for you in our kingdom where our sway increased even as the physical strength developed? For born on the same day, the body and we, its masters, grew together with the passing of time, from that moment when the first man, going forth from the enclosed limits of Paradise, fled into the wide world, and venerable Adam clothed himself with skins; naked he would still be, had he not followed our counsel. Now who is this enemy, a stranger from foreign shores, who comes now, unskilled, sluggish, ignoble, mad, an exile up till now, to claim at this late date rights unto herself? Forsooth, foolish things will be believed of idle rumors which lure its wretched believers to prefer the hope of future blessings so that its consolations, though slow in materializing, may flatter their unmanly actions with idle dreams. What is it but a spiritless Hope that coaxes these onto the field of battle, these beginners whom

Bellona does not arouse with her trumpet blasts, and whose lukewarm courage reveals their unwarlike spirits? Or is the cold heart of Chastity useful in war, or is the delicate labor of Piety accomplished by arms?

How shameful it is, O War, O conscious Power, to withstand such an army as this, to attack such triflers with the sword, and to fight with a band of maidens among whom is ever-needy Justice, impoverished Honesty, dry Sobriety, whitefaced Fasting, Modesty scarcely blushing as her blood is so thin, open Simplicity, exposing herself without protection to every attack, and Humility, not free in her own judgment, prostrate on the ground, revealing her own lowliness in her trepidation. I shall see that this feeble group is ground underfoot like stubble, not deeming them worthy to be conquered by our trusty sword, caring not to stain our weapons with their cowardly blood nor to disgrace our men with a shallow victory."

Uttering these words, she spurred on her swift-footed horse as it dashed wildly forward with loosened reins, aiming to unseat her humble foe by the impact of her horse and thus to trample on the defeated enemy. But she fell headlong into the pit which sly Deceit, by chance, had secretly dug, undermining the surface of the plane. Deceit, one of the most detestable of Vices, a crafty

inventor of fraud, possessing foreknowledge of the war, had broken the surface of the ground with treacherous ditches, concealing them from the enemy's side so that the onrushing soldiers would fall into the trench which would swallow up the troops as they plunged into it. Deceit had camouflaged the snare, hiding it with branches and leveling the surrounding area with a covering of turf lest the cautious army discover the dangerous pits.

Yet the meek Queen, ignorant of all this, remained on the further side and had not as yet come upon the cunning trick of Deceit, nor walked into the snare of the treacherous abyss. Pride, riding up at a swift pace, fell into the trap, revealing in an instant the hidden chasm. Thrown forward from the neck of the falling horse, she rolled between its legs and lay crushed by the weight of its body.

Humility, demure and self-composed, viewing the mangled pride of the dying monster, calmly walked towards her, a kindly look moderating the joy of her uplifted face. As she stood there hesitating, Hope, her faithful companion, ran, offering to her the sword of vengeance and rousing her desire for glory. Humility, dragging out her blood-stained enemy by the hair, turns her face upward in her left hand and, bending the neck, cuts off Pride's head

as she cries out for mercy. She lifts it aloft, holding it by the dripping locks while Hope with pious words rebukes the now dead Pride.

"Cease to speak boastfully; God humbles the haughty. The mighty ones fall, the vainglorious are crushed, the proud are humbled. Learn to renounce pride, those of ye who are arrogant and thus avoid the pitfall at thy feet. The well-known precept of Christ Our Lord, that the humble shall be exalted to the highest places and the proud shall be humbled, is held in the highest esteem. We have seen how Goliath, though powerful in body and strength, fell by a weak hand when a boy's right hand hurled the stone hissing from the bowstring which pierced his forehead with a deep wound. He, the threatening, inflexible, boastful, truculent, bitter one, swelling with pride unconquerable, raging violently, making a display of himself, terrifying the very heavens with his shield, experienced what a child's sport can do. He the turbulent man of war was overcome by a lad of tender years. At that time the boy followed me in the flowering of his valor and, as his soul developed in virtue, directed it to my kingdom; for at the feet of the Almighty is preserved a fixed abode for me and for those victors whom I summon to heights sublime after the stains of their sins have been washed away."

From the western bounds of the earth had come Luxury in hostile array. Careless of reputation long ago ruined, she approached, her hair highly perfumed, her eyes ever restless, and her voice wanting in strength. Dedicated to pleasure, with enjoyment her sole purpose in life, she softened her senses thus pampered, drank deeply of every alluring seduction, and destroyed her spirit already weakened. Even now she was belching up the feast of night-long duration, for while reclining at table, at dawn's early hour she had heard the deep-sounding blasts of the trumpet. Thereupon, leaving at once the warm cups, with drunken foot slipping because of the wine and the balsam spilt round, she advanced to this war, trampling flowers under her feet. Not on foot but borne in her elegant chariot, she won the smitten hearts of the marveling soldiery. What a strange kind of warfare was hers! No winged arrow flew on its course from her bow string, and no lance hissing from its twisted thongs shot forth, nor did her hand grip the threatening sword. Instead, she playfully threw violets and, fighting with rose leaves, tossed baskets of flowers through the enemy line.

Thereupon, having ensnared by flattery the Virtues, her seductive spirit breathed a subtle poison through their weakened bodies. This sweet, destructive odor,

overpowering their heads, hearts, and arms, softened their muscles once strong as iron, robbing them of their vigor. They lose heart as though conquered and in cowardly fashion lay aside their javelins. Dazed, alas, with powerless hands, they are amazed as they marvel at the chariot studded with radiant jewels, as they gape with fixed stares at the reins rustling with gold leaf, and at the axle of enormous weight wrought from pure gold, and at the spokes of white silver which the rim encircles with a wheel of pale amber. Turning their standards, the entire battle line of their own volition treacherously crosses over, desiring to surrender, choosing to serve Luxury, to be subject to the laws of this lax mistress, and to be governed by the loose rule of the low taverns.

Sobriety, most courageous Virtue though she was, shuddered at this dreadful deed as she saw her comrades withdrawing from the right wing, and that band of soldiers, once invincible, now perishing without blood-shed. With spearpoint fixed, she raised on high the banner of the cross, which, good leader that she was, she had borne in the vanguard of her troops, and with which she had aroused the spirit of her faint-hearted band, spurring them on, now, with reproach, now with mingled entreaty.

"What madness wraps in gloom thy foolish hearts?"

Whither are ye rushing? To whom do ye bow down? What are these chains, I pray? For shame! Is it thy desire to carry in thy hands, trained in arms, lilies shining out among yellow flowers and green wreaths gay with red blossoms tinged? Is it thy will now to subject thy hands skilled in war to such fetters, to have thy arms now so strong put in bonds while a golden mitre, confining thy manly locks, soaks up the nard poured over its saffron band? Art thou content with this after thy forehead has been anointed with oil in the sign of the cross, imprinting on thee a royal and everlasting baptism, while advancing slowly, ye sweep the ground with trailing garments and silken robes enfold thy languid body in place of the immortal tunic which protecting faith has woven with skillful finger, providing an impenetrable shield for the pure of heart to whom she herself has granted a rebirth? Thence on to nocturnal feasts where the huge drinking bowl spills forth onto the table far and wide the bacchanalian floods of Falernian wine from the dripping ladles, where the couches are bedewed from many a drop of unmixed wine, and their rich carvings are stained from the spilt wine of yesterday's banquets?

Has the thirst of the desert escaped thy memories and has there escaped them, too, that fountain given to our

fathers from out that rock, whose waters the mystic rod brought forth leaping from the riven stone? In former days did not that heavenly food fall down upon the tents of thy ancestors, of which, now at a later age, a happier people at the evening hour partake from the body of Christ? Ye, tasting this heavenly food, now base intoxication hurries away to the reeking den of foul Luxury; ye men, whom neither raging Anger nor pagan Gods have compelled to yield in battle, this dancing girl has bent to her will. Stand firm, I implore thee. Remember thy dignity, be mindful also of Christ; thou must remember thy lineage and thy glory, and who is thy God, and thy King, and who is thy Master. Ye have come from a long line of ancestors, from the noble race of Juda unto the mother of God, from whom God Himself became man. May David by his renown, schooled in the unremitting cares of war, stir thy noble spirits, and Samuel, too, who forbade them to lay hands on the plunder from rich enemies and permitted not the uncircumcised king, once conquered, to remain alive lest the spoils still remaining provoke the now peace-living victor to renew the fray. He deemed it criminal then to spare the captured ruler, whereas ye, on the contrary, will to be vanquished and to yield.

May ye, on the other hand, repent, if any reverence

for the most high God moves thee, that in base betrayal ye desire to follow this so enticing evil. A sin that is repented is not fatal. Jonathan repented that he had broken the strict fast by eating the sweet honeycomb, having tasted sinfully the sweetness of his honeyed staff, when the seductive joy of possession delighted the youth and relaxed the sacred oaths. Yet because he did repent neither was his lot deplorable nor did strict judgment defile a father's axes. Lo, I, Sobriety, if ye are ready to join forces, open the path for all virtues whereby seductive Luxury, attended by many a comrade, may suffer punishment, she with her cohorts, under the judgment of Christ."

Having thus spoken, standing in their path, she held out the cross of Christ before the foaming steeds, stretching out the venerable wood over the very bridles. This, with its outspread arms and glittering toymost beam, the spirited horses greatly feared and, rushing in blind terror, turned in their precipitous flight down over the cliff. The charioteer, vainly tightening the reins, is thrown out upon her back, and her perfumed hair becomes grimy with dust. The rolling wheels entangle its ejected driver: lying prone under the axle, she slows down the chariot with her mangled frame. As she lies thus,

Sobriety, hurling a large stone from a cliff, gives her the death blow. As chance had furnished this weapon to the standard bearer armed with no weapon save but her emblem of war, chance also sent the stone shattering the orifice of the mouth, crushing the lips into the arched palate; the teeth are loosened within, the mangled tongue fills the lacerated throat with gouts of blood. At this strange meal the throat revolts, as gulping down the melted bones, it belches forth the morsels once swallowed.

"Drink now thine own blood, after thy many cups," the maiden taunted. "Supplanting the too sumptuous feast of times now past, now let these be thy ill-seasoned courses. May this taste of bitter death and the savouring of this final draught aggravate the wanton allurements of thy former life."

Scattered at the death of their leader, the self-indulgent band flees in confusion and in fear. Jest and sauciness are the first to cast aside their cymbals; for with such weapons they played at war, thinking to wound with the resounding rattle. Love, himself pallid with fright, turning, fled, abandoned his poisoned darts, and the bow which slipped from his shoulders and the falling quiver. Pomp, that vaunter of meaningless splendor, is utterly divested of her flowing robe of shallow pretense;

the garlands of Beauty, ripped asunder, lie scattered; the golden ornaments of the neck and head are loosed, and dissonant Discord throws the gems into disorder. It does not irk Pleasure to go with worn feet through the bristling brambles since a greater force drives her on to suffer bitter flight; the fear of peril strengthens her tender feet for the tortuous way. Tempting things fall wherever the fleeing column betakes itself in confused retreat: hairpins, ribbons, fillets, a brooch, a small bridal veil, a chaplet, a diadem, or necklace. From these spoils, Sobriety and all her soldiery restrain themselves, trampling with chaste foot these enticing lures; nor do those in the van, closing their stern eyes, turn aside to the delight of the booty.

'Tis said that Avarice, girt in capacious folds, snatched up with grasping hand whatever precious trinkets gluttonous Luxury had left behind, gaping with mouth opened wide after playthings, and scooping up the fragments of elusive gold amidst the heaps of sand. Not content with filling her robe's ample folds, she gleefully crams with base plunder her moneybags, distending the purse heavy with stolen goods. This she hides with her concealing hand and veils under the covering of her left side; her right hand snatches the loot, and she busies her brazen

claws with spoils.

Care, Hunger, Fear, Anxiety, Perjury, Pallor, Corruption, Trickery, Falsehood, Sleeplessness, Sordidness with various Furies follow on in the monster's train. Nonetheless, meantime, nurtured by the black milk of their mother Avarice, these rioting vices, like unto ravaging wolves, range through all the plain. Should a blood brother see his brother's helmet shine with tawney jewels, he fears not to draw his sword and strike off the head of his comrade-in-arms with intent to remove from his kinsman's helmet the precious gems. If perchance a son note his father's body fallen by the lot of war, he joyfully snatches his felt studded with stones and his armour, though stained with blood. Civil strife makes even kindred, prey; over-weening greed for possession spares not its own, and gluttonous desire destroys its own off-spring. Such was the destruction that Avarice, the world's tyrant, was effecting among nations, laying low men by the thousands with devious wounds. This one, with sight torn away and eyes gouged out, she allows to wander blind in the darkness of night and to go through many pitfalls, avoiding not the lurking dangers with a staff. Another, she next ruins by his sense of sight, tricking him as he gazes avidly on her tempting allurements. He, unaware, while reaching out is

caught by her weapon and, wounded, breathes forth the sword driven deep in his heart.

Casting down many, she hurls them into uncovered fires, nor does the greedy embezzler, destined to burn in like manner, suffer them to avoid the flames in which the gold she seeks is purified. She assaults the whole race of men, she lays hold on all things mortal and hurries them on to destruction. There is no vice in all the world more terrible, which enfolds in such disasters the whole human race and condemns them to Gehenna. Indeed, she even dares to assail with her own hand, dare we believe it, the priests of the Lord, who, by chance, were waging war in the front ranks for Virtue's glory and were swelling the war-trumpets with a great blast. Fate might have dyed her sword in innocent blood if Reason, powerful in arms, that one and ever-faithful companion of Levi's race, had not raised her shield, protecting her famed foster children from the dark enemy's onslaught. Safely they stand by Reason's aid, they stand uninjured from every attack, and brave of heart.

The spear of Avarice, barely grazing a few on the skin's surface, inflicts a slight wound. Shameless Evil that she is, watching, she is amazed that her weapons are thrust far back from the chaste throats of the heroes.

She groans and, raging, bursts forth in passionate words:

"Alas, we are conquered, sluggards that we are, nor does our strength put forth its usual forces; our once savage power to harm has now grown feeble, that power which was wont to crush, with its unconquerable might, the hearts of men everywhere; for the nature of man has never been so steeled as to spurn our money or to be impervious to our gold. We have pushed to destruction all manner of men; the gentle, the rough and the harsh, the learned as well as the unlearned, the dull and the wise, the chaste and the unchaste--all souls have lain subject to our power.

We alone have snatched up what the Stygian waters now hide in their covetous pools. To us most opulent Tartarus is beholden for the people it houses. What the ages bring together, what the universe piles up in confusion--all these mad strivings are the works of our hands. How comes it, then, that our power and glory is losing its prevailing force, and that fortune mocks our fruitless efforts? To the Christians the golden image of the glittering coin is despicable: vessels inlaid with silver are held worthless, and in their eyes each treasure cheapens and becomes of ill repute. What means this loathing, newly acquired? Did we not triumph over the Iscariot, that apostle and companion of the Lord, who as he betrayed Him, by no means

unaware, at the covenant of the Last Supper, dipped his hand in the dish and, consumed by his own base desire, fell victim to our snare? Having purchased with the blood of his Divine Friend the infamous field, was he not later destined to pay for his acres with throttled neck? In her own destruction Jericho had realized how powerful was our hand when the victorious Achan succumbed to our rule. He, famed for the slaughter and distinguished for the destruction of a city's walls, yielded to the temptation of gold taken from a conquered foe, and while gathering to himself the accursed spoils from the forbidden ashes, with insatiate greed took the fateful plunder of the ruined city. Neither did his noble lineage, nor Judah, father of his ancestral tribe, that patriarch ennobled by his kinsman, Christ, and blessed in his royal descendant, at all avail. May those who take delight in his mode of action also enjoy his form of retribution. Let there be the same penalty for all men of his ilk. Why do we, unequally matched for the war, hesitate to beguile by some deception either the descendants of Judah or the descendants of his priestly successor--for Aaron is reputedly their high priest? Whether by force or by fraud, it matters not how victory is won!"

She had spoken, and, divesting herself of her grim

visage and dreadful weapons of war, she assumes an honorable guise; in form, in face, and in austere vestments she becomes the virtue that men call Frugality, whose desire it is to live sparingly and to safeguard her own, that she may, as it were, seize nothing greedily. Zealous as she is, she has won praise for her skill in deception. To such a guise this lying Bellona adapts herself that she may be deemed thrifty virtue, not the greedy vice that she is, and under the soft pretence of piety she conceals her snaky tresses so that the fair, white robe of innocence may veil the frenzy lurking underneath, cloaking her dreadful obsession, namely to rob, to steal, and to store away greedily what has been acquired. She displays her concern for her children under the sweet name of virtue. Playing at such pretence, she deceives men over-credulous in heart, and they follow the deadly monster, believing her a paragon of virtue. The impious Fury takes them as easy victims and binds them close with gripping manacles. Its leaders bewildered and its ranks confused, the front line of virtue now was wavering through the guile of the two-faced monstrosity, knowing not what to deem friendly and what to mark as hostile. The ever-changing and double-dealing Evil, under this deceptive image clouded their dim vision.

Suddenly, onto the field leaps forth Good Works, raging in anger, with aid for her allies and enters the fray eagerly. Though last in the ranks of soldiery, yet she alone is destined to lend her hand to the contest lest some disaster come to pass. After unburdening her shoulders, she walks, divested of her robes, having lightened herself of many a care. Once restrained by riches and oppressive wealth, now free through taking pity on the poor whom she had cared for with liberal generosity, she poured forth her patrimony with excessive prodigality. Enriched by faith, she gazed upon her empty coffers, reckoning the total with the interest destined to accrue in eternity. Avarice shuddered at the thunderbolt of the unconquered virtue; bereft of courage, with senses benumbed, she stayed her steps, resolved to die. For what way of deception remains to one, who once contemning the world, now overcome by worldly allurements, should grow weak and again become entangled with the gold she once despised? Virtue, most redoubtable, assails her trembling foe with a firm arm-grip and squeezing her neck, strangles and crushes the throat dry, drained of its blood. The tight clasp of the arms under the chin twists life from the imprisoned jaws, which, suffering no mortal blow, yet throbs, and with the breath stifled within, Avarice suffers

death, confined within the prison of her body.

Good Works standing over the struggling vice, digs her with knee and foot, and, panting, breaks her ribs and flank. From the lifeless body she then snatches the spoils, filthy pieces of unwrought gold, not yet refined in the furnace, moneybags eaten by many a worm, and coins, green and coated with rust; this hoard of years past, the Virtue triumphant dispenses, giving to the needy, assisting the poor with the captured wealth. Then with an exulting look, she eyes the crowd gathered round, and in the midst of thousands eagerly exclaims: "Put away thy readiness for battle, ye just, lay down thy weapons; the cause of such great evil lies dead. With Avarice destroyed, the righteous may rest. The greatest peace is to desire nothing more that right usage demands: that there be plain food and that a single garment may cover and modestly protect our weak limbs and not trail beyond the natural limit. When about to set forth on a journey neither take a wallet nor provide thyself with two tunics for the way, nor let tomorrow's need concern thee, lest thy body lack for food. Food for each day comes with the sun. Dost thou not see how no one of the birds takes thought for tomorrow, but, untroubled, trusts it will be fed because of the all-provident God? The bird, of little value, feels sure that

food will not be wanting; and the sparrows, sold for a small farthing, have undoubted trust that the Almighty God watches over them lest they perish. Thou, child of God, thou the image of Christ, how canst thou be inclined to doubt that thy Creator may ever forsake thee? Be not troubled, O man! God is the giver of life and the giver of food. Seek in heavenly teaching the spiritual food, which with every increase nourishes the hope of an immortal life not concerned with the body: for God Who created it is mindful to supply and provide it with food for its temporal needs."

With these words the Cares were disbanded: Fear, Toil, Violence and Crime, together with Fraud, the denier of acceptable Faith, driven back to flee into exile. With the flight of enemies, fostering Peace banishes war, putting aside every apprehension of battle; her girdle unloosed, she frees her limbs. Her graceful garment, descending, flows down to her feet while her usual calm now checks her too rapid step. The curved horns of the trumpeters lie silent; the sword now at rest fills the sheath; the day bright and clear returns as the dust of the field settles down. One may see the rosy light of the heavens on that clear, cloudless day, shining through. Above their unspotted ranks they felt the face of the Lord,

and the jubilant throng laughed now that the contest was o'er. Christ from His throne above rejoiced in His victors, opening His Father's heavenly home to his servants.

Concord happily signals the victorious legions to return to their camps and to gather in their tents. Never was there for any soldiery a triumph or military glory equal to this, as in long, orderly columns she leads her rouble-ranked troops: with throngs of her footsoldiers singing psalms, while in another direction the hymns of the cavalry resound. So chanted the victorious Moses as he looked back at the yawning tide of the sea that rose threatening behind him. When advancing dry shod, he passed over to the farther banks, the towering waters crashed resoundingly at his heels, and engulfed the dark-skinned dwellers on the Nile deep in the abyss of her eddying whirlpool. With reflux wave the surging waters covered the bare sands and soon revived in the fish the power of swimming. The children of God struck with rescouing beat the melodious tambours, extolling the marvellous work of the Lord, famed through the ages: how the waves divided and storms subsiding, a channel between the clear waters had been formed to appear while the watery masses were held in abeyance. With the tribe of the vices thus subdued, the mystic songs of the Virtues re-echoed in jubilant psalms.

They had marched up to the entrance of the camp, where a swinging double-doored gate formed the narrow passage of the threshold. Here with deplorable cunning an unexpected storm of evil arises: a hateful invader of gentle Peace who was to mar with sudden misfortune so great a triumph. While Concord, perchance, amidst her close-pressed company, well attended, now takes her way to the safe walls, she receives on her left side a hidden blow from the thrust of an unseen Vice. However, her rough mantle, beneath its chained covering of iron, encircled her body repelled with its hooked coat of mail the prick of the blow, nor did the tenacious fibers with their unyielding knots allow the impact of the weapon to pierce the flesh beneath. Yet an open seam permitted the steel to inflict a slight wound just where the last metal scale attaches itself to the polished tunic and links to itself the seams of the waist.

A cunning warrior maiden of the conquered foe had inflicted this wound, lying in wait for the unwary victors; for Discord, once the ranks of the Vices were scattered, assumed a friendly guise and entered our ranks. There lay far behind in the midst of the carnage of battle her tattered garment and her whip, piled up like a many-coiled serpent. She herself joyfully is present with the festive

chorus, displaying her hair wreathed with the leafy olive. But under her garment she hides a dagger, seeking by wicked deceit, thee, O greatest Virtue, thee alone from out the vast throng. Yet she is not destined to wound mortally thy sacred body, as the outer skin, grazed merely on the surface, revealed the slight cut by blood.

Virtue, aroused, suddenly exclaims: "What is this? What enemy hand lies hidden here? Who assails our victory, brandishing the sword in the midst of such rejoicing? Of what use is it to have subdued in battle the unrestrained passions and to have rescued all the good from destroying vices if in time of Peace virtue should fall?"

The army, alarmed, turned sorrowing eyes upon her; blood, mark of the wound, seeped through the coat of mail. Fear soon betrayed the enemy standing close by; conscious of her daring deed, her pallor reveals proof of her guilt, as her weak hand and paling face tremble at being detected.

The entire legion of Virtues surround her with their quickly drawn swords, and with rising alarm question her race and name, her country and sect, what god she worships, and at whose command she has come. Ashen in color and trembling with fear, she replies, "I am called Discord; Heresy my surname; my god is legion: now lesser, now greater, now complex, now simple, just as it pleases me:

an apparition, a phantom, or the spirit within: as often as I wish to play the divinity, Belial is my preceptor; my home and my kingdom, the world."

Faith, the queen of the virtues, tolerated no longer the blasphemies of this captured monster, but silenced her words, stopping her breath with her javelin, piercing with its rigid point the vile tongue. The wild fury is rent by innumerable hands, each tearing her body to scatter to the wind, or to throw to the dogs or to offer to the ravenous ravens or to toss into the gutter, filthy with its foul mud, or to feed to the sea monsters. Her entire corpse is torn assunder by these horrible creatures, and with her form dismembered, frightful Heresy perishes.

With the successful reestablishment of order and of customs directed toward the general welfare of all the righteous and with all the Virtues, down to the last, enclosed within the safe walls of the rampart, a tribunal is set up in the midst of the camp on an elevated spot, a hill whose peaked summit affords a watch tower whence the eye, unhampered by obstacles, beholds on the clear horizon all things stretching beneath far and wide. This eminence, sincere Faith and also, Concord, avowed sisters by a holy covenant in the love of Christ, ascend. Soon this holy pair, dear each to the other, stand with equal

rights on the lofty tribunal. Stationed thus, from the top of the mound, conspicuous for all to see, they bid the populace to gather in large numbers. All eagerly hasten from out of the camp. There was no one, who, sluggish in mind, could through ignoble weakness conceal himself by any twist of the body, hiding out of sight. All tents, with curtains drawn back, stand exposed with the flaps folded open lest any dweller lazily repose, snoring, in the dark and secret place. The assembly awaits with attentive ears to hear what Concord, its leader, may say to the victors, now that the battle is over, and what added precept Faith may have for the Virtues.

Concord first breaks into speech with such words as these: "Heightened glory has indeed touched thee, ye most faithful children of the Father and of Christ the Lord. With many a struggle there has been blotted out the cruel barbarity that had hedged around the dwellers in the holy city, attacking them with fire and sword. But public harmony depends upon mutual good will in city and country. Internal schism disturbs unity and that which is at variance at home, wavers abroad. Therefore, beware, O men, lest a discordant note be found in our beliefs, lest any foreign sect, kindled by smoldering fires of hate, rise up amongst us. For a divided will exposes our sacred rites

to two-fold interpretation with uncertain meanings. In that we are wise, let love unite us; in that we live, let one desire direct us. Nothing that destroys unity remains steadfast. As Jesus mediates between man and God, He Who unites humanity to Divinity so that the one God be both flesh and spirit, in like manner may one spirit weave together in a unified whole whatever we do by an act of the mind and of the body. Peace is the finished work of Virtue. Peace is the summation of her labors. Peace is recompense for war's completion and for dangers past endured; in peace the stars are at their height; in peace things terrestrial remain undisturbed. Without peace nothing is pleasing to God. When thou desirest to leave a gift at the altar, He approves it not if thy unquiet soul hates thy brother from the depths of thy restless heart. Now if as a martyr for the love of Christ, thou shouldst leap into the flaming fires, yet harboring some uncharitable desire from jealous pride will it profit thee to have given up thy precious life for Jesus, since peace is the ultimate goal of virtue? Peace is not puffed up with pride, doth not jealously envy her brother, suffereth in patience all things and believeth all. Though wronged, she doth not murmur, she forgives all injuries. She eagerly seeks reconciliation before sunset, anxious lest

this day's sun leave enduring wrath behind. Whosoever wishes to offer a sacrifice acceptable to God, let him first offer peace. No sacrifice is sweeter to Christ. He, turning His face to the holy altar, takes delight in this gift alone with its pure fragrance. Nevertheless, God Himself endows the snowy white doves with power to distinguish with intuitive skill the feathered serpent in its soft clothing of down as it mingles with the innocent birds; likewise to discern the wolf with his mouth stained with blood, lying concealed under the soft fleece, counterfeiting a milk-white sheep, his jaws spreading untimely death among the lambs. With such artifice did Photinus and Arius, those wolves frightful in savagery, conceal themselves. Our perils and fresh shedding of blood, though from a surface wound only, reveal what a treacherous hand can accomplish."

The whole sovereign body of the virtues, distressed by the sad misfortune, gave forth a groan. Then noble Faith added these words: "Let groaning cease, with affairs so favorable. Concord has been wounded but Faith has defended her. Yea, rather Concord has been saved and, accompanying her sister Faith, makes light of her wounds. She is my sole salvation; with her restored, naught is mournful for me. One task remains for our earnest effort,

now that the war is over, O ye leaders of men; a work that at length Solomon, the peace-bringing heir of a belligerent kingdom, undertook, the unarmed successor to an armed court, whereas the right hand of his expiring father reeked with the warm blood of kings. When the blood-shed is over, a temple is built and an altar with gilded walls, the lofty sanctuary of Christ, arises. At that time Jerusalem, the all holy, famed for her temple, received her peace-loving God after the wandering Ark came to rest, made fast on the altar of marble. So let a sacred temple arise in our camp, whose Holy of Holies the Almighty may visit again. For what does it avail to have repulsed with the sword the earth-born ranks of the vices if the Son of Man, descending from heaven seeking a shining temple, enters the city of a body cleansed yet unadorned? Thus far the task has been laboriously performed by interchange of weapons hand to hand; now may the gleaming white toga of quiet peace perform its task and may our soldiers, their arms set aside, quickly prepare an abode for that which is holy."

When she had spoken these words, the queen with majestic step descends and with Concord, her partner in so great a task, is about to lay out the new temple on the foundation already set. Her golden measuring rod runs over the ground, marking the distance so that the four

walls fit neatly together, lest dissimilar angles with uneven sides mar with their irregular measurements the harmonious plan. Toward the east a bright, shining region stretches open, lighted by three doors. Three gates open to the south; three doors present three entrances to the west; while the lofty edifice is thrown open to the north by a like number of doors. No building stone is there, but a hallowed gem whose solid mass has been cut through with hewing encircles the threshold with gleaming arch, and a single stone forms the inner vestibule. The names of the twelve apostles inscribed in gold gleam from the doorposts. Man's spirit ponders the mysteries hidden away in these inscriptions, eliciting fitting sentiments within his soul. And whatever be the age of man, which a fourfold force quickens in the whole body, he approaches the altar within by three paths and worships at the shrine with pure votive offerings; whether as a child guided by the sun's early rays or as a youth aroused by passionate ardour, or as a man of maturity led by the clear light of years, or as a decrepit old man called forth by the cold blast of the north to pious devotions. At each of the four sides of the temple are found three names which the King has placed in honor of His twelve disciples.

In addition, the varied beauties of a like number of

gems sparkled from the covered walls, as the light from above brought out warm vibrant colors from their transparent depths: on this side a large chrysolite inlaid with native gold was set with a sapphire; on the other a beryl; the gemmed surface between scintillated with varying hues; here a dull chalcedony was steeped in the glow of a nearby jacinth, for, as it happened, the stone caught in its depths the sea-blue so close and reflected the translucent purple. The hue of the amethyst stained the sardonyx; the jasper and colorful topaz dyed the adjacent sardius. The emeralds as verdant as green fields in spring were among the jewels, their green lights flashing out varying hues. The structure locates thee, O glowing chrysope, in a select place so that thy brilliance is added to the glittering stones. The crane, as it tossed the large gems to the lofty heights, was creaking with its weighted chains.

But the interior of the temple was constructed upon seven columns of clear crystal cut from transparent rock, whose lofty tops a white stone covers in conical shape with the under part tapered off like a shell, which pearl of great price undaunted Faith, her possessions and holdings put up for sale, purchased for one thousand talents. Here mighty Wisdom sits on her throne and from

her high court ponders the rules for her kingdom, meditating in her heart laws for the welfare of men. In the hands of the queen rests the sceptre, not fashioned by art; it was a flowering rod of green wood, which, cut from a tree, though nourished by no moisture from the earthy soil, with root severed, yet remains green with its foliage unharmed, as gleaming white lilies mingle, interwoven with the blood-red roses, send forth flowers on the sturdy stem. The form of this sceptre was like to the flower-bearing rod of Aaron, which budding forth from its dry bark unfolded with flourishing hope its tender beauty as the dry twig suddenly swelled into new blossoms.

We render to Thee, O Christ, the most indulgent of Teachers, eternal thanks and with prayerful lips offer Thee Thy merited praise--for assuredly our heart is soiled with the stain of sin. Thou hast wished that we know the dangers that lurk unseen in the body and the trials of a soul wrestling with temptation. We know that in our darkened heart conflicting desires vie for mastery in varying contests, and in the shifting fortunes of war, at first we grow strong in our better nature, but when the virtues are weakened we are dragged down to a lower level of living and are addicted to shameful deeds which bring harm to our eternal salvation. How often, after the deadly

temptations of sin have been overcome, have we felt our souls inflamed with love of God; how often after these unalloyed delights have we sensed our spiritual life grow cold, yielding to evil desires.

Wars rage, horrible wars; even in our bones the complex nature of man sounds with armed discord; for the flesh fashioned from clay rebels against the spirit, and the spirit that issued forth from the breath of God rebels within the dark prison of the heart and rejects the filth with the close-fitting chains. Light and darkness contend with their opposing forces, and our complex nature stirs up rebellious feelings until Christ the Lord appears with His aid and arranges all the jewels of the Virtues in a blessed setting. Where sin has once held sway, He, establishing the golden courts of His temple, fashions for the soul from the threads of these trials ornaments in which rich Wisdom may delight as she rules forever from her beauteous throne.