33 Avarice (*Auaricia*)

Avarice[[1]](#endnote-1) is the immoderate love of acquiring or retaining money, which sometimes inclines the soul to itself, so that the soul soils itself, and this because of the excellence of its nature. Because of which it says in Psal. [118:36]: “Incline my heart into your testimonies and not to my covetousness.”

Wherefore, Boethius says,[[2]](#endnote-2) *De consolation,* book three, prose 3, that avarice is never satisfied. And Augustine, *Sermo* 76,[[3]](#endnote-3) avarice passes away as is the nature of riches. “And Samuel’s sons walked not in the father’s ways, but they turned aside after lucre; and took bribes, and perverted judgment,” 1 Kings 8[:3]. Therefore, they ruined the government of the people. Therefore, it is said in Ezech. 33[:31]: “Their heart goes after their covetousness.”

Wherefore, Augustine, *Super Johannem*, tract 10,[[4]](#endnote-4) hear, O man, at what do you work in loving? In loving avarice. With labor is that loved which you love. There is no labor in loving God. Avarice will command your tribulations; and you will do its bidding. But I ask, To what end? That you may fill your chest, but in this you lose your peace of mind. You felt yourself by chance more secure before you had it, than since you began to have it. See what avarice has ordered you. You have filled your house, and robbers are dreaded; you have gotten gold, lost your sleep. See what avarice has ordered you. Do! and you did. What does God order you? Love me, and you will be secure.

Wherefore, Boethius, *De consolation,* book three, prose 5,[[5]](#endnote-5) avarice makes men hated, but *liberality makes them popular.* Augustine*, De libero arbitrio* 3, c. 28,[[6]](#endnote-6) avarice is the root of all evil, that is, the desire for more than sufficiency. Which is what nature demands for itself in its own kind of grasping is always to be thirsty. Job [18:9]: “Thirst shall burn against him.”

¶ Again, Eph. 5[:5] and Col. 3[:5]: “The covetous person is a serving of idols.” Here as if put on a par are the two worst vices, avarice and idolatry, because just as idolatry tends to take away glory from God, thus the avaricious sought dominion over the things of the Jews so that one alone might usurp those things given to the use of others.

¶ Again, God is greater than heaven, and heaven is greater than earth.

¶ When therefore the soul is the place of God, the earth, which is the least, is the element of life which cannot capture the soul, Eccle. 5[:9]: “A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money.” And, however, “the path of every covetous man destroys the souls of the possessors,” Prov. [1:19], that is, the closer the path is to the end upon which man proceeds which is the broad way. Therefore, the avaricious one strictly ponders how he might acquire. Wherefore, Augustine, 7, *De civitate, c. 3,[[7]](#endnote-7)* in people avarice allures a far greater number than skill.

¶ The example to this [Job 18:10] where one puts a double-headed snare where he saw the path of the bird and thus he captures the bird. Thus, the devil where he sees the path of the mind, there he puts the feast. And here it is said, Jer. 6[:13]: “From the least of them even to the greatest, all are given to covetousness.” And, therefore, it is not if they may fall who lean on a thing prone to slide, as is evident concerning the elephant who,[[8]](#endnote-8) when he leans on a cut-tree, falls. This also is evident in that avaricious man,[[9]](#endnote-9) Luke. 12[:18-20], who thought to enlarge his barns and to gather his goods for many years to whom, however, it was said, “Thou fool, this night do they require your soul of you.” But on the other hand, “he that hates covetousness, shall prolong his days,” [Prov. 28.16]. Wherefore, Pope Leo, in some *Sermo de passione Christi*,[[10]](#endnote-10) see, most beloved, and prudently receive what sprouts and which fruits of avarice are born from the stalk, which rightly the Apostle defined to be the root of all evil, [1 Tim. 6:10]. Because no sin is committed without cupidity, and every illicit appetite, of this longing is a disease. The vile love of money is every frame of mind, and the soul desiring profit, even for the paltry, does not fear to perish.

¶ Again, the avaricious acquire riches just as the falcon his prey, they guard them just as the old man his eye, they judge them just as the washer her lye.

¶ Concerning the first, predatory birds or beasts do not capture another of equal prize if strong, but a weaker. Because a lion does not capture a lion, nor does a falcon capture a falcon, so the rich do not prey upon the rich, but only on the poor.

¶ Concerning the second, the old man does not permit his eye to be touched, the rich man his goods to be known.

¶ Concerning the third, the washer expends more of her lye on one soiled pan which hardly is returned to the clean ones. Thus, the avaricious man expends more on one rascal, who is the hammer of the devil, than the poor can count. Wherefore, such ones, as commonly these three, lie under misfortune because they are called: “There is robbing; the king is catching; the poor man is cursing” (*ther iis robbing; king es catching; poore mann is cursing*).

Again, according to the Master, book 2, *Sententiae*, chapter 12,[[11]](#endnote-11) avarice is the immoderate cupidity for having, which is not only for money, but also for the height of dignity and for knowledge, when sublimity is sought beyond a standard of measure and knowledge. According to Gregory, in *Homilia*,[[12]](#endnote-12) it is the peculiar nature of the avaricious man. According to Innocent III, in the book *De miseria [conditionis] humane,[[13]](#endnote-13)* an avaricious person is naturally eager in grasping, slow in giving, and shameless in denying. He praises what is given, and puts down what he should give; he gives in order to gain, but does not gain in order to give. He is generous with what belongs to others, but niggardly with his own; he avoids gluttony, in order to fill his coffer, and he starves himself, in order to accumulate his wealth.

¶ Note also this concerning the troublesome aspects of the avaricious person, there is in him labor in acquiring, fear in possessing, and sorrow in losing.

¶ Concerning the first, an example from nature, the spider[[14]](#endnote-14) weaving its web eviscerates itself for the capture of a fly, and sometimes it dies and does not capture the fly, thus the avaricious man labors day and night on land and sea, Eccle. 5[9]: “A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money.” For according to Bernard,[[15]](#endnote-15) since all created things are terminated by their limits, only avarice does not have an end, for if he were to acquire the earth, then he would desire the seas, and thus in succession.

¶ Therefore avarice is well compared to fire which never says, “It is enough,” Prov. 30[:16]. “There is but one, and he has not a second, no child, no brother, and yet he ceases not to labor, neither are his eyes satisfied with riches, neither does he reflect,” in his heart, “saying: ‘For whom do I labor?’” [Eccle. 4:8]. Wherefore, this can be noted concerning the stone having an eye, nor being able to be compensated until the earth would be forgotten, because the king of the Brahmans sent to Alexander the Great saying that Alexander was similar to that stone.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Wherefore Bernard,[[17]](#endnote-17) it is accepted that the most rapacious bird is content with the air, the wolf with the forest, the pike with the water, but the miserly man is more rapacious than all these; he begs all elements for his uses. Indeed according to Gregory,[[18]](#endnote-18) up to this point he seeks heaven and if it would be granted, he would wish to be equal to God, and afterwards if he could have anything, he would seek to be over God, so that he may put God down. This can be inferred from the evil judge who received an open car on the one part, and three ferocious horses on the other part, and when the first one in litigating that the car did not run right, the judge responded, It is no marvel for three ferocious horses pull the car only if they want to.

Second, there is in gold the fear of possessing it. Wherefore Jerome,[[19]](#endnote-19) the avaricious man always fears those in ambush, for seeing a rich man, he thinks him a robber, seeing a poor man, he thinks him a thief. Wherefore it is read concerning a certain avaricious man who buried a jar to be refilled near his bed beneath his knees where he was accustomed to pray in his room, in this way, I ask you that you do not permit this jar to be taken from me nor permit me to die until the jar fills up. Finally that jar was filled, and he died. But the second husband who was wanton, praying in the same place clearly felt something at his knee wherefore the jar was found, over which that second husband prayed, I ask you, Lord, do not permit this jar to be taken away, nor me to die until I have consumed that in good company.

¶ Concerning matters of this kind, Augustine speaks,[[20]](#endnote-20) those who live in worldly surroundings little value heavenly matters, but in the end, they will lack both, Psal. [13:3]: “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” On account of these things Seneca speaks, *Epistula* 137,[[21]](#endnote-21) one must pay the penalty for all greedy acts. The possession of riches means even greater agony of spirit than the acquisition of riches.”

¶ Third, there is sorrow in the avaricious for losing. Wherefore Jerome,[[22]](#endnote-22) if the avaricious would lose his money, he blows up beyond measure. If the thief steals it or fire consumes it, sorrowing he says that he was raped or burned. He does not say that his possessions were burned or taken away, but himself, as if he had more care for his possessions than himself. Wherefore and meritoriously the avaricious man is compared to the hedgehog who when he has collected all the apples on his spines, but then he loses all of them.[[23]](#endnote-23)

¶ Again, avarice[[24]](#endnote-24) is compared to many things because like the sea, death, and the underworld, they are never satisfied nor run to making alms or restitution.

¶ Again, the avaricious man is compared to the mole[[25]](#endnote-25) because he is black through wickedness, blind through ignorance, and however many possessions he has, he has them in passages underground in which he buries himself through continual solicitude. And what he digs up he puts on top of himself as if making it his god, Prov. 12[:12]: “The desire of the wicked is the fortification of evil men.” And Prov. 17[:24]: “The eyes of fools are in the ends of the earth.” And Zach. 5[:6]: “This is their eye in all the earth.”

¶ Again, avarice is compared to a dung pit[[26]](#endnote-26) which heaped up it is corrupted and stinks, but spread about makes the fields fat, Ezech. 7[:19]: “Their gold shall become a dunghill.” Therefore being mindful of Luke 16[:9]: “Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity.” And the avaricious man himself is like a dog lying on top of a dung heap who rages at the trespasser, but he himself is not allowed thence.

¶ Again, it is a marvel concerning avarice that one can be decayed and not grow old. Wherefore Seneca,[[27]](#endnote-27) when the other vices grow old, in the old only avarice recovers its youth. Certainly fire burns easily in dry matter. Wherefore it is concerning the avaricious man, just like the ape which having two twins for sons whom she loves the one more, so that commonly she hold him in her arms, the remaining one she puts on her back, but when she is followed by the hunter she throws away the son whom she loves the more, [and then using her four limbs, the other one on her back is saved].[[28]](#endnote-28)

¶ Again, according to Ambrose, second book, *De [officiis],[[29]](#endnote-29)* avarice is in not communicating spiritual realities.

¶ “What use is it, he said, to have wisdom, if you deny counsel to the one needing it and seeking it. For wisdom whereby among several it is defined therefore remains more overflowing, Eccli. 20[:32]: “Wisdom that is hid, and treasure that is not seen, what profit is there in them both?” Therefore according to Luke 12[:15]: “Beware of all covetousness.” And thus it is evident from the foregoing that avarice is committed in three ways, namely, striving after illicit things or illicitly; acquiring illicit things or illicitly; retaining illicit things or illicitly. Wherefore also it is compared to fire, Job 15[:34]: “Fire shall devour their tabernacles, who love to take bribes.” And Prov. 30[:16]: “The fire is one who never” drinks and afterwards gives back.[[30]](#endnote-30)

¶ Therefore, according to Jerome,[[31]](#endnote-31) what other is an avaricious man than the purse of the rich, the collar of bandits, the quarrel of parents, the hissing of men.

¶ Again, he is compared to a horseleech [Prov. 30:15] stuffed full, if thrown upon a nettle he vomits everything, thus the accomplices when they are powerfully urged by lords admit everything that they have stolen from underlings.

¶ Again, the avaricious man, when he has many things, however, he always needs more. Wherefore, for the avaricious he is not so much lacking what he has, as what he does not have. Wherefore, Jerome in *Epistola ad Paulinum*,[[32]](#endnote-32) a miser lacks as much what he has as what he has not.

Again, avarice has destroyed all laws. According to that of Petronius,[[33]](#endnote-33) Of what avail are laws where money rules alone, and the poor suitor can never succeed? Wherefore, a certain one had this avarice, the worst of wild beasts, Giezi, it made him from a disciple into a leper [4 Kings 5:21-27]; it destroyed Ananias and Saphira [Act. 5:1-11]; it made Judas into a traitor [Matt. 26:14-16]; it corrupted the princes of Judea [Isaiah 1:23].[[34]](#endnote-34) Wherefore, Bernard, *Super Cantica*, homily 27,[[35]](#endnote-35) calls avarice a mistress because more obey it than the gospel. For to the Romans 10[:16]: “All do not obey the gospel.” But in the proverbs [Eccle. 10:19] it is said, “all things obey money,” but “all” conveys more than everyone.

¶ Again, *Politics,* book 7, chapter 16,[[36]](#endnote-36) however much animate beings are closer to heaven, so much the less they heap up; Matt. 7[:26]: “they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns.” But animate beings on earth gather into groups such as mice, ants, but also among the birds, although one is accepted as rapacious, however he is content only with the air, the wolf with the earth, but man is more rapacious than all, he would not be confined by any of these, but he would seize heaven if he could.

¶ Again, Ambrose, *De officiis,* book three,[[37]](#endnote-37) the wild beasts do not exclude other wild beasts from the common sorrow which the earth administers. However, man excludes man. We do not allow dogs to stand before our table unfed, but we exclude men, Isai. 56[:11]: “All have turned aside into their own way, everyone after his own gain.”

¶ Again, the avaricious man neither gives thanks to God for the things conferred on him, nor does the servant of God bestow [on others], neither does he assist himself from his personal property, Hosea 13[:6-7]: “They were filled, and they lifted up their heart, and have forgotten me. And I will be to them as a lioness.” And Gen. 40[23]: “But the chief butler, when things prospered with him, forgot his interpreter,” that is, Christ. Wherefore, Augustine,[[38]](#endnote-38) to you, the avaricious man, Christ says to you, Give to me from that which I have given to you. Concerning my things, I ask, Give, and I give back. Have you had me as a gift-giver, I have you also as a usurer.

¶ Again, the avaricious man is foolish who values all who have less than himself. For he wishes that all his things be good for himself except the evil. To this Augustine agrees, *De verbis Domini*:[[39]](#endnote-39) I ask you, put yourself before your shoe, which you wish to have as good, having neglected yourself.

¶ Again, Augustine, *Super canonica Johannis,* homily 8,[[40]](#endnote-40) what can be more avaricious than that one to whom God cannot be sufficient? Understand that above you thus is God, below you are the cattle. Therefore to put yourself under these who are below you is to compare yourself to beasts. Again, Augustine, *De Trinitate*, book twelve, chapter 10:[[41]](#endnote-41) The honor of men is like unto God, the dishonor of men is like unto cattle. Therefore avarice is unnatural to a man. For detesting which nature hides precious metals in the earth. Wherefore, Seneca, *Opera*,[[42]](#endnote-42) nature has posed nothing in the open which would irritate our avarice, but under our feet she has placed it in the earth. Our face she has lifted toward heaven.

Again, Bernard, *Super Cantica*, homily 12:[[43]](#endnote-43) However much more men are lords of riches, so much less are they desirous, however much less are they lords so much more are they desirous. Therefore mistress avarice does not permit them to do what they approve in others. And Seneca, *Epistula* 122:[[44]](#endnote-44) Men have riches just as we say they have a fever, when however rather the fever has them.

¶ Again, *Epistula* the second,[[45]](#endnote-45) it is not the man who has too little, but he who craves too much is the poor man. However to him that fits with poverty is rich, Prov. 11[24]: “Some distribute their own goods, and grow richer: others take away what is not their own, and are always in want.” Wherefore, Gregory says, *Moralia* 18,[[46]](#endnote-46) we lose earthly things by serving them, by giving them away we serve God. Since we cannot preserve our things because either we lose them by dying or they desert us pursuing them.

¶ Holy men have considered these things who have lived according to the counsels of Holy Scripture, Isai. 33[:15], Blessed is the man “that casts away avarice by oppression, and shakes his hands from all bribes.” And Prov. 15[:27]: “He that hates bribes shall live.” And Luke 12[:15]: “Take heed, and beware of all covetousness.” Nor because just as a man does not see well a thing unless it is proportionally apart from him, therefore the avaricious man judges badly about thing because he puts them too close to his eye. And just as through interposition of the operation of the body between the eye and the sun is to be heeded during an eclipse of the sun, so it is with the avaricious man, Psal. [57:0]: “Fire has fallen on them,” that is, the burning of avarice, “and they shall not see the sun,” namely, of justice. Nor is it a wonder because the bear[[47]](#endnote-47) is blinded by a shining basin, thus the desirous by the love of earthly things. Wherefore he is forced to go around in a circle and grind just as is read of Sampson, Judg. 16[:21]. Note there the narrative, it is therefore no marvel if he does not see because he has a beam in his eye, [Matt. 7:3]. A spider[[48]](#endnote-48) hangs down by the web that she extracts from her inner organs, which she composes for capturing flies, but not the envious, Psal. [89:9]: “Our years shall be considered as a spider.”

1. Bonaventure, *Diaetae Salutis* 1.6 (Peltier 1866, 8:255): Avaritia est immoderatus amor pecuniae acquirendae vel retinendae. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* liber 3, prosa 3 (PL 63.734): quod avaritiae nihil satis est. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *Sermo* 58.4.5 (PL 38.395): Pereat avaritia, et dives est natura. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 10.5.4 (PL 35.2056): Audi quid sequatur. Homo, quid laboras amando? Amando avaritiam. Cum labore amatur quod amas: sine labore amatur Deus. Avaritia jussura est labores, pericula, trituras, tribulationes; et obtemperaturus es. Quo fine? Ut habeas unde impleas arcam, perdas securitatem. Securior forte eras antequam haberes, quam cum habere coepisti. Ecce quid tibi jussit avaritia: implesti domum, timentur latrones; acquisisti aurum, perdidisti somnum. Ecce quid tibi jussit avaritia, Fac, et fecisti. Quid tibi jubet Deus? Dilige me. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* libro 2, prosa 5 (PL 63.690): siquidem avaritia semper odiosos, claros largitas facit. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 3.17.48 (PL 32.1294): radicem omnium malorum esse avaritiam (I Tim. VI, 10), hoc est, plus velle quam sat est. Tantum autem sat est, quantum sibi exigit naturae in suo genere conservandae modus. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 7.3.2 (PL 41.197): cum in genere humano plures alliciat avaritia quam peritia. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Julius Caesar (Commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars, Book 6.27): [Elephants] have legs without joints and ligatures; nor do they lie down for the purpose of rest, nor, if they have been thrown down by any accident, can they raise or lift themselves up. Trees serve as beds to them; they lean themselves against them, and thus reclining only slightly, they take their rest; when the huntsmen have discovered from the footsteps of these animals whither they are accustomed to betake themselves, they either undermine all the trees at the roots, or cut into them so far that the upper part of the trees may appear to be left standing. When they have leant upon them, according to their habit, they knock down by their weight the unsupported trees, and fall down themselves along with them. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Bonaventure, *Diaetae Salutis* 1.6 (Peltier 1866, 8:256b): Ideo dicitur avaro in Luca: *Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetent a te*, scilicet daemones. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Leo I, *Sermo* 60.4 (PL 54.345): Videte, dilectissimi, et prudenter inspicite quae germina et quales fructus de avaritiae stirpe nascantur, quam merito Apostolus radicem omnium malorum esse definivit (I Tim. VI, 10); quia nullum peccatum sine cupiditate committitur, et omnis illicitus appetitus, istius aviditatis est morbus. Amori pecuniae vilis est omnis affectio, et anima lucri cupida etiam pro exiguo perire non metuit [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* lib. 2 dist. 21 § 4 (PL 192.696): avaritia, immoderata habendi cupiditas, quae non est tantum pecuniae, sed etiam altitudinis et scientiae, cum supra modum sublimitas ambitur. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Gregory, *Homiliae* 16.2 (PL 76.1136): Avaritia enim non solum pecuniae est, sed etiam altitudinis. Recte enim avaritia dicitur cum supra modum sublimitas ambitur. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Innocent III, *De miseria conditionis humanae,* 2.13 (PL 217.721-722): Avarus ad petendum promptus, ad dandum tardus, ad negandum frontosus. Si quid expendit, totum amittit, tristis, querulus et morosus, sollicitus suspirat et anxiatur, dubius habet et invitus expendit. Magnificat datum, sed vilificat dandum: dat ut lucretur, sed non lucratur ut det: largus in alieno, sed parcus in proprio. Gulam evacuat, ut arcam impleat: corpus extenuat, ut lucrum extendat. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale* Lib. 20, cap. 112 De Areanea (Venice: Apud Dominicum Nicolinum, 1591), 1:260b: Aranea seipsam eviscerat vt contexendis cassibus non desit materia. … Pro muscis pendens vixere texit opus. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Bernard, cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 48 (PL 40:1330): Numquid terra suis limitibus terminatur, aqua suis finibus limitatur, aer suo fine concluditur, coelum suis terminis arctatur, sola avaritia terminum nescit? O avare, si terra tibi cuncta datur, mare quaeris. Sed si terra et mare, aerem petis. Sed si terram, mare et aerem possederis, adhuc coelum ambis, et ipsum penetrare affectas. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. *The Legends of Alexander the Great* “Journey to Paradise,” ed. Richard Stoneman (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1994 [2012]), (pp. 72-74).

Cf. Roger Bacon, *Metaphysica* in *Opera hactenus inedita,* Robert Steele (London: Alexander Moring, Ltd., nd), pp.2-3: Et ideo rex magnificus Alexander Macedo, Aristotilis discipulus, in disputacione philosophica quam habuit cum Dindimo, rege Bragmanarum, ipsum excitans ad communicacionem sapiencie, sic ait : Libera res est communitas et nesciens pati dispendium, cum in alterum participata transfunditur, sicut si ex una face si lumina plura succenderis, nullum dampnum principali materie generabitur, que quidem accipit facultatem plus lucendi, quociens causas invenit plus prestandi. Si enim avaricia rerum exteriorum omnium sapiencium auctoritate dampnata est, multo forcius sapiencie avara clausio longe magis habet reprobari, quia hujus est major dignitas quam rei corporalis. Et preter ea nisi publicetur a possessore, elabitur, ut experimur satis in nobis et in aliis. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo* 3.3 (PL 183.290): Vult ergo eum non esse Deum, quae, quantum in ipsa est, vult eum aut impotentem, aut injustum esse, aut insipientem. Crudelis plane et omnino exsecranda malitia, quae Dei potentiam, justitiam, sapientiam perire desiderat. Haec est crudelis bestia, fera pessima, rapacissima lupa, et leaena saevissima. Haec est immundissima lepra animi, propter quam in Jordane mergi oporteat, et imitari eum qui non venit facere voluntatem suam: unde et in passione: Non mea, inquit, voluntas, sed tua fiat (Luc. XXII, 42). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia* 17.15.21 (PL76:21): Humana quippe justitia, auctori comparata, injustitia est, quia etsi in ipsa sui conditione homo persisteret, creatori non posset aequari creatura **(Job. IX, 2)**. Cui tamen ad graviora defectus pondera, accessit et culpa, quam serpens insidians intulit, et mulier infirmata **[Col.0021C]** persuasit **(Genes. III, 6).** Unde nunc quia homo per mulierem culpae subditam nascitur, reatus primi infirmitas in prole propagatur. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Jerome, cf. Gregory, *Registrum* 9.122 (PL 77:1054): Neque enim latrunculi in via capere viatores vacuos expetunt, sed eos qui auri vascula vel argenti ferunt. Via quippe est vita praesens. Et tanto quisque necesse est ut insidiantes spiritus caveat, quanto majora sunt dona quae portat. Oportet ergo excellentiam vestram in tanto hoc de conversione gentis subditae munere quod accepit summopere custodire prius humilitatem cordis, ac deinde munditiam corporis. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Augustine, cf. Aelred of Rievaulx, *Sermo in Adventu Domini* 16 (PL 184:825): qui Domino Jesu Christo non serviunt, sed suo ventri, qui terrena cupiunt et coelestia contemnunt. Hi nimirum illo onere miserabiliter punientur, quod quibusdam jumentis austri Isaias terribiliter intentat. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Seneca, *Epistula* 115.16 (LCL 77:328): Nulla enim avaritia sine poena est, quamvis satis sit ipsa poenarum. O quantum lacrimarum, quantum laborum exigit! quam misera desideratis, quam misera partis est! Adice cotidianas sollicitudines quae pro modo habendi quemque discruciant. Maiore tormento pecunia possidetur quam quaeritur.

For one must pay the penalty for all greedy acts; although the greed is enough of a penalty in itself. What tears and toil does money wring from us! Greed is wretched in that which it craves and wretched in that which it wins! Think besides of the daily worry which afflicts every possessor in proportion to the measure of his gain! [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Jerome, cf. S. Geronimo quoted in *Della limosina* ed Paolo de Angelis (Roma: Per Giacomo Marcardi, 1611), p. 376: Si quis avarus pecuniam amiserit, in vehementissimum labitur dolorem. Si fures rapiant, aut ignis ardeat, contristatur, et dolens dicit se raptum aut combustum esse. Non enim dicit sua, sed se, ac si diceret, Plus diligo mea quam me. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 8.56 (LCL 353:94-95): Praeparant hiemi et irenacei cibos ac volutati supra iacentia poma adfixa spinis, unum amplius tenentes ore, portant in cavas arbores.

To prepare for winter, hedgehogs roll on fallen apples to stick them to their spines, then taking one or more in their mouths, carry the load to hollow trees. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Bonaventure, *Diaetae Salutis* 1.6 (Peltier 1866, 8:255): Avaritia multas habet comparationes. Primo enim comparatur avaritia mari, morti, et inferno. Nam sicut *mare numquam redundat*, ut dicitur in *Ecclesiaste* sic avarus nunquam redundat dando eleemosynam, vel faciendo restitutionem, licet ad modum maris omnes fluvios mundi bibat, id est, absorbeat omnes divitias per cupiditatem. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Bonaventure, *Diaetae Salutis* 1.6 (Peltier 1866, 8:255): Secundo, avarus similis es talpae in quatuor: avarus enim ad modum talpae est niger per nequitiam; caecus per ignorantiam; quot habet possessiones, tot habet tumulos in quibus sepelit seipsum per continuam sollicitudinem; quidquid fodit, ponit supra se, quia de omnibus facit Deum. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Bonaventure, *Diaetae Salutis* 1.6 (Peltier 1866, 8:255): Tertio, comparatur sterquilinio, quia, sicut sterquilinium congregatum corrumpitur et foetet, dispersus vero facit agros fructificare. ... juxta illud: *Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis*. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Seneca, cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 48 (PL 40.1330): Omnia in homine senescunt vitia, sola avaritia juvenescit. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. A line, or perhaps only a word, may have dropped out of the transmitted copy. Cf. T. H. White, *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New Work: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1954-1960), p. 34: Such is the nature of a monkey that, when she gives birth to twins, she esteems one of them highly but scorns the other. Hence, if it ever happens that she gets chased by a sportsman she clasps the one she likes in her arms in front of her, and carries the one she detests with its arms round her neck, pickaback. But for this very reason, when she is exhausted by running on her hind legs, she has to throw away the one she loves, and carries the one she hates, willy-nilly. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Ambrose, *De officiis*, 2.12.61 (PL 16.119): Quid enim prodest habere sapientiam, si consilium neges? Si consulendi intercludas copiam, clausisti fontem; ut nec aliis influat, nec tibi prosit. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. This semi quotation is a play on the orginal wording of Prou. 30:16: ignis vero numquam dicit: Sufficit. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Jerome, cf. *Latinum Chaos...* “Compendiolum” 46 (p. 74): Nihil aliud est Avarus, quam Bursa Principum, Collarium Latronum, rixa Parentum, sibilus hominum. *S. Hieron.*

https://books.google.com/books?id=rydDAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA74&lpg=PA74&dq=collarium+latronum&source=bl&ots=-sh-fNhA3d&sig=vTkqMsEXZL\_r4Q3OLGgS5R\_S6E0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiT57rG5cbfAhVJX60KHR2mDsUQ6AEwCXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=collarium%20latronum&f=false [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Jerome, *Epistola* 53.19 (PL 22.549): Antiquum dictum est: Avaro tam deest quod habet, quam quod non habet. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Petronius, *Satyricon* 14 (LCL 15:22-23): Quid faciant leges, ubi sola pecunia regnat, aut ubi paupertas uincere nulla potest?

“Of what avail are laws to be where money rules alone, and the poor suitor can never succeed? T [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Cf. John Chrisostom, *Homilia* 65 (64).3 on John 11:49 (PG 59:363): Hinc venatu difficilis haec fera est; haec Giesi ex discipulo et propheta leprosum fecit; haec Ananiam perdidit; haec Judam proditorem fecit; haec principes Judaeorum corrupit, qui dona accipiebat et furum socii efficiebantur…. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Bernard, *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum,* 21.8 (PL 183.876): Procul dubio respondebit: Sapienter. Quaere item cur quod approbat, ipse non facit? Non possum, inquiet. Quare? Profecto quia domina avaritia non permittit; quia liber non est; quia non sunt sua quae possidere [Col.0876B] videtur; sed nec ipse sui juris. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Aristotle, cf. Thomas Aquinas, Super Sent., lib. 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 co.: Sed in nobilioribus creaturis invenitur aliud principium praeter naturam, quod est voluntas; quod quanto vicinius est Deo, tanto a necessitate naturalium causarum magis est liberum, ut dicit Boetius; [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Ambrose, *De officiis* 3.7.45 (PL 16.158-159): Ferae non expellunt feras, et homo excludit hominem. Fere ac bestiae communem putant omnibus victum, quem terra ministrat. Illae etiam conformem sui generis adjuvant, homo impugnat, qui nihil a se alienum debet credere quidquid humani est. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Augustine, *Sermo* 123.5.5 (PL 38.686): Qui panem quotidianum petis, pauper es, an dives? Et tamen Christus dicit tibi: Da mihi ex eo quod dedi tibi. Quid enim attulisti, quando huc venisti? Omnia quae creavi, creatus hic invenisti: nihil attulisti, nihil hinc tolles. De meo mihi quare non donas? Quia tu plenus es, et pauper inanis est. Primordia vestra attendite: ambo nudi nati estis. Et tu ergo nudus natus es. Multa hic invenisti: numquid tecum aliquid attulisti? De meo quaero: da, et reddo. Habuisti me largitorem, fac cito debitorem. Parum est quod dixi, Habuisti me largitorem, fac me debitorem: habeam te feneratorem. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Augustine, *Sermo* 72.4.5 (PL 38.469): Rogo te, praepone vitam tuam caligae tuae. Omnia quae circumjacent oculis tuis, elegantia et pulchra tibi chara sunt; et tibi ipse vilis es ac foedus? Si tibi possent respondere bona quibus est plena domus tua, quae habere optasti, perdere timuisti; nonne et tibi clamarent, Sicut tu nos bona vis habere, sic et nos volumus bonum habere Dominum? [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Augustine, *Epistola Joannis ad Parthos* 8.4.6 (PL 25.2039): Quid avarius illo, cui Deus sufficere non potuit? [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 12.11.16 (PL 42.1006-1007): Honor enim hominis verus est imago et similitudo Dei, quae non custoditur nisi ad ipsum a quo imprimitur. Tanto magis itaque inhaeretur Deo, quanto minus diligitur proprium. Cupiditate vero experiendae potestatis suae, quodam nutu suo ad se ipsum tanquam ad medium proruit. Ita cum vult esse sicut ille sub nullo, et ab ipsa sui medietate poenaliter ad ima propellitur, id est, ad ea quibus pecora laetantur: atque ita cum sit honor ejus similitudo Dei, dedecus autem ejus similitudo pecoris, [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Seneca, *Epistula* 94.56 (LCL 77:46): Nihil, quo avaritiam nostram irritaret, posuit in aperto. Pedibus aurum argentumque subjecit calcandumque ac premendum. Illa vultus nostros erexit ad coelum et quidquid magnificum mirumque fecerat, videri a suspicientibus voluit.

Nature does not ally us with any vice; she produced us in health and freedom. She put before our eyes no object which might stir in us the itch of greed. She placed gold and silver beneath our feet, and bade those feet stamp down and crush everything that causes us to be stamped down and crushed. Nature elevated our gaze towards the sky and willed that we should look upward to behold her glorious and wonderful works. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Bernard, *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum,* 21.7 (PL 183.875): Possident et terrena, et quidem tanquam nihil habentes, sed omnia possidentes: non mendicantes, ut miseri, sed ut domini possidentes, eo pro certo magis domini, quo minus cupidi. Denique fideli homini totus mundus divitiarum est. Totus plane: quia tam adversa, quam prospera ipsius, aeque omnia serviunt ei, et cooperantur in bonum. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Seneca, *Epistula* 119.12 (LCL 77:376): Nam quod ad illos pertinet, apud quos falso diuitiarum nomen inuasit occupata paupertas, sic diuitias habent, quomodo habere dicimur febrem, cum illa nos habeat. E contrario dicere solemus: febris illum tenet. Eodem modo dicendum est: divitiae illum tenent. Nihil ergo monuisse te malim quam hoc, quod nemo monetur satis, ut omnia naturalibus desideriis metiaris, quibus aut gratis satis fiat aut paruo; tantum miscere vitia desideriis noli.

And in the same way we should say: “Riches grip him.” There is therefore no advice—and of such advice no one can have too much—which I would rather give you than this: that you should measure all things by the demands of Nature; for these demands can be satisfied either without cost or else very cheaply. Only, do not mix any vices with these demands. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Seneca, *Epistula* 2.6 (LCL 75:8): Illa vero non est paupertas, si laeta est. Non qui parum habet, sed qui plus cupit, pauper est.

Indeed, if it be contented, it is not poverty at all. It is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more, that is poor. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Gregory, *Moralia* 1.4.5 (PL 76.1092): Terrena quippe omnia servando amittimus, sed bene largiendo servamus. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, 18 (1505, p. 480): Et quando capitur peluis ardentem aspectu excecatur catenis colligatur ludere compellitur et per verbera domesticatur.

Cf. *Mediaeval Lore* from Bartholomew Anglicus Robert Steele (London: Alexander Moring (The King's Classics), 1893/1905); Series: King's Classics: When he is taken he is made blind with a bright basin, and bound with chains ... and goeth therefore all day about the stake [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologies* 12.5.2 (PL 82:448): Aranea, vermis aeris, ab aeris nutrimento cognominata, quae exiguo corpore longa fila deducit, et telae semper intenta nunquam desinit laborare, perpetuum sustinens in sua arte suspendium.

Spiders are worms of the air and get their food from the air. From their body they produce a long thread and they never stop working, but are always kept hanging by their art. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)