332 Wisdom (*Sapiencia*)

Some seem wise and are not, just as brass appears to be gold. No one appears like the generous bird.[[1]](#endnote-1) These are the provident ones in earthly matters, negligent in divine, wise so that they may do evil, they do not know how to act rightly, Rom. 1[:22]: “Professing themselves to be wise.” But then just as the middle of a staff in water does not appear straight,[[2]](#endnote-2) but never the less it is, these persons are provident in divine matters, neglecting those on earth, 1 Cor. 3[:18]: “If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be” aware. 1 Cor. 3[:19]: “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” Others neither seem wise nor are they, as notorious sinners, Job 13[:5]: “I wish you would hold your peace, that you might be thought to be wise men.” For talking reveals us. Others seem wise and are, as they who do and teach wisdom as the holy teachers, Prov. 3[:13]: “Blessed is the man that finds wisdom.” Others have the wisdom of a dog who serves his master in the hope of food, and the farmer cultivates his land in the hope of a harvest, Prov. 6[:11]. Others have the wisdom of a serpent that flees the crowd of men, Prov. 14[:16]: “A wise man fears and declines from evil.”

¶ Again, [the serpent] puts off the old skin[[3]](#endnote-3) at the narrow cleft of the rock, Matt. [10:16]: “Be therefore wise as serpents.” Others have the wisdom of the ant[[4]](#endnote-4) which gathers in the summer whereby she may live in the winter, Prov. 6[:6]: “Go to the ant, O sluggard,” etc. and Prov. 10[:5]: “He that gathers in the harvest is a wise son.” Others have the wisdom of the lion[[5]](#endnote-5) that destroys its tracks with its tail lest it be caught by the hunter, Prov. 20[:26]: “A wise king scatters the wicked.” Eccle. 2[:3]: “I thought in my heart, to withdraw my flesh from wine, that I might turn my mind to wisdom.” On the other hand, it is as for many, Psal. [106:27]: “They were troubled and reeled like a drunken man; and all their wisdom was swallowed up.” Nor is it any wonder because where there is madness, there wisdom is shut out.

¶ The example of the rural sinners when they come to the city for the sake of drinking. Note there concerning the grades of drunkenness.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Therefore,[[7]](#endnote-7) true wisdom is a most splendid gift like the sun, even more than the sun. For the sun makes us know what things are under the heaven, but wisdom makes us know all things, namely, hell that we may fear the world so that we may disdain it, heaven that we may seek it, God that we may praise and love him, Wis. 7[:29]: “She is more beautiful than the sun,” etc. Because by the sun visible things are seen, by wisdom the invisible.

¶ Again,[[8]](#endnote-8) wisdom is a most tasty gift like to harvested crops, even more than honey, Eccli. 24[:27]: “My spirit is sweet above honey.” It has one flavor and they are deceived by that taste. Other tastes like wine tasted after honey does not appear flavorful, but divine wisdom has every flavor. Because in it they tasted all things, just as they ought to taste temporal things as vile, spiritual things as dear, Eccli. 6[:23]: “The wisdom is according to her name.” The taste for knowledge is not detected by many.

¶ Third,[[9]](#endnote-9) wisdom is the most profound gift like to the sea. Rather deeper than the sea, because the sea has a limited depth, wisdom does not, Job 11[:9]: “The measure of him is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” Therefore, the Apostle says, Rom. 11[:33]: “O the depth,” that is, the profundity, “of the riches of the wisdom of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments,” etc. Therefore, it is called a gift because it is not acquired by study, but by inspiration, James 1[:5]: “If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth [to all men abundantly],” etc. and Wis. 9[:4]: “Give me wisdom, Lord, that sits by your throne.”

In truth however, the study of wisdom is material to man, just as light is to the traveler walking in darkness. For the wise see dangers and sing to themselves and to others, Prov. 17[:16]: “What does it avail a fool to have riches, seeing he cannot buy wisdom.” Therefore, it said in Apo. 3[:18]: “I counsel you to buy” money doubly tried by study and prayer, “gold fire tried.” that is, wisdom burning for the love of God. For to know that the diagonal is commensurate to the side[[10]](#endnote-10) does not so inflame to the love of God as that, Lam. [1:12]: “O all you that pass by the way, attend, and see.” To become rich, it is as much about having an exterior honest and let not the confusion of your nudity appear. In the future judgment for who even is near the counsel of wisdom, Prov. 16[:16]: “Get wisdom, because it is better than gold.” Because often by gold one goes to death, Eccli. 8[:3]: “Gold and silver have destroyed many.” But by wisdom one goes to life. Wherefore Boethius, *De discol*,[[11]](#endnote-11)the highest solace in life is this study of wisdom, which he who finds it, is happy. But the wise men of the world do not know this, Rom. 1[:22]: “For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” For what is more foolish than to lose an eternal good for a temporal. Therefore, in the end that happens, Baruc. 3[:28]: “Because they had not wisdom, they perished through their folly.” Who therefore wished to have that, let him read the enigmas of Aristotle[[12]](#endnote-12) which Jerome recites in his *Epistola* to Rufinus.[[13]](#endnote-13)

¶ Therefore without wisdom the gift of wisdom seems useless. For it is more healthful to guard the intellect than to know many things. Wherefore Gregory, *Moralia* 22,[[14]](#endnote-14) Solomon treated many things of the intellect, investigating the secrets of nature [3 Kings 4:33]: “From the cedar that is in Libanus, unto the hyssop [that comes out of the wall].” But because he had a little of wisdom he went to ruin. And as commonly the antique philosophers treated many things of the intellect disputing, defining, and concluding, but because they had little of wisdom they vanished and their followers with them perished according to Hugh, *De Archa* c. 4,[[15]](#endnote-15) where he says, as many literate men as we now distinguish, who wish to be called Christians, in whose hearts more often is the memory of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, than of Christ and his saints. I predict that for them in the end they will be associating with those whom now they join in the mind. Seneca, *Epistula* 7,[[16]](#endnote-16) he gives the difference between wisdom and the other arts saying, the other arts are instructions of life, wisdom is the art of life. Wherefore the same Seneca in *Epistula* 86,[[17]](#endnote-17) says, wisdom communicates facts, not words. One must think about divine things and human, the past and the future, the ephemeral and the eternal.

Wherefore in the book, which is entitled *Flores Bernardi* book 8, c. 29,[[18]](#endnote-18) wisdom is triple, of the heart, the mouth, and the work. Wisdom of the heart is in the fullness of past sins, in contempt of present conveniences, and in the desire of future rewards. Certainly, you have found wisdom if you weep for the sins of your previous life. Esteem but little the desirable things of this earthly existence if you want the eternal beatitude. You have found wisdom if you tasted each of these just as they are. If first as arms and to be fled. If second as vain and to be contemned. If finally, as perfect and to be sought after.

And what is in the mouth of the wise man if it is in his mouth. Confession properly is of iniquity, if of graces action, if of praise the voice, if of edification the word.

In work, certainly I think that wise man who continently, patiently, and obediently converses, that namely he mortifies his own will by faithful obedience, his carnal will by humble continence, and that he sustains sluggishness and worldly adversity with cheerful patience. And certainly, in these matters “Wisdom is better than strength,” as it is said in Wis. 6[:1] On account of this it is said in Exod. 35[:10]: ”Whosoever of you is wise, let him come, and make that which the Lord has commanded.”

There is even a triple wisdom: worldly, bestial, and spiritual of the commoners. The ambitious had the first as the desirous. The voluptuous and obtuse had the second. Concerning the first it is said, 1 Cor. 3[:18]: “If any man among you seem to be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” Concerning which Gregory, 10 in the *Moralia* upon that of Job 12[:4]:[[19]](#endnote-19) “The simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn.” He says thus, the wisdom of this world is, to cover the heart with machinations, to veil the sense with words, to show what things are false as if true, and what things are true to demonstrate as false. They know this and despise other men. They who do not know this are timid and admire it in other men. She dictates to her followers to seek the high places of honor, to triumph in attaining the vain acquisition of temporal glory; to return manifold the mischiefs that others bring upon us; when the means are with us, to give way to no man’s opposition; when the opportunity of power is lacking, all whatsoever he cannot accomplish in wickedness to represent in the guise of peaceable good nature. This is Gregory.

Second, wisdom is bestial, about which see Rom. 8[:7]: “The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God.”

¶ Third, wisdom is spiritual, about which Colo. 1[:9]: “That you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding.” And James 3[:17]: “But the wisdom, that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable.”

Through the first of these it excludes bestial knowledge.

Through the second worldly which never is peaceable but turbulent.

This third wisdom of the saints is that about which Gregory speaks,[[20]](#endnote-20) as above, the wisdom of the just is nothing feigned through ostentation, to discover the meaning by words, to love the truth as it is, to avoid falsehood, to set forth good deed for free, to bear evil more gladly than to do it; to seek no revenging of a wrong, to account opprobrium for truth’s sake to be a gain. But this simplicity of the righteous is laughed to scorn, and in that goodness of purity is taken for folly with the wise men of the world. For what seems worse folly to the world than not to seek what was lost, to given in to those robbing us of our possessions, to render nothing in return for injuries received, to offer excessive patience. Here however note that in many things wisdom and prudence are reckoned for the same, as in Prov. 15[:21] it is said, “The wise man makes straight his steps.” But how this happens Seneca teaches in his little book *De copia verborum*,[[21]](#endnote-21) if your mind is prudent, it is managed by three timely matters. Order the present, foresee the future, and remember the past. For he who does not think upon the past, he loses his life, he who does not consider the future, falls into everything unwary.

Earlier, concerning prudence, see above in the chapter [302] Prudence (*Prudencia*).

¶ Again, Seneca, *Epistula* 29,[[22]](#endnote-22) wisdom is the habit of the perfect mind, to know is the purpose of the perfect mind. But because “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” 1 Cor. 3[:19]. It is evident figuratively in the Pharaoh who said wisely we will overwhelm Israel, but the Lord turned this wisdom into foolishness, because he with his people were drowned. Wherefore Chrysostom says, *Homilia* 42,[[23]](#endnote-23) the first cause of ruin is to hope in one’s own wisdom.

¶ For according to Hugh, *De magistro* which in another way is entitled *Didascalicon*,[[24]](#endnote-24) the beginning of wisdom is humility. Who lacks this is without philosophy. Therefore, he perishes.

Again, Seneca, *Epistula* 57,[[25]](#endnote-25) this is the office and indication of wisdom, that a man should be equal to himself everywhere. And it follows wisdom is always to want the same and rejecting the same. May you not add this little clause, as it is right, what you wish; for no one can always be satisfied with the same thing unless it is right. So therefore, Seneca says, *Epistula* 72,[[26]](#endnote-26) Socrates who reduced the whole of philosophy to rules of conduct, this he said is the highest wisdom, to distinguish the good from the evil, scorn affronts. Therefore, the one knowing rightly stands under whatever burden. Therefore, Pythagoras did not dare to permit himself to be called wise, but a philosopher, that is a lover of wisdom. Wherefore Seneca, *Epistula* 7,[[27]](#endnote-27) says, the old style of wisdom commanded only what should be done or avoided, and then the men were by far better than now. Afterwards in truth the learned appeared, and the good men disappeared.

Note also from the oath of Tully, book three *De Officiis*,[[28]](#endnote-28) by which the wiseman is on his guard to be without sins because of honesty alone. He also narrates there that Gyges was a shepherd of the king of the Liddians. And when he saw a great cleft in the earth, he descended into it. He found a brass horse on whose sides were doors, which when opened he saw the corpse of a man.

¶ From whose finger he extracted a ring for his own finger. Which when he put it on, as often as he turned it to his palm, he became invisible. When he turned it outward, he was visible seeing others. Using this opportunity finally he committed debauchery upon the queen by whose counsel he killed the king and he made himself the king of the Liddians. Concerning this ring Tully[[29]](#endnote-29) concluded that if a wise man had it, he would no more think he would be permitted to sin, than if he did not have it; for good men seek honesty, not the hidden.

1. Cf. Bonaventure, *De virtutibus theologicis et cardinalibus* 2 (8:293b): Charitas enim est sicut avis generosa, quae vivit de praeda, sicut accipiter, et falco, et aquila. Istae namque aves nobiles vix vel nunquam tangunt terram, nisi quando rapiunt praedam: sic homines charitatem habentes bona ista transitoria non tangunt, vel terrena, per affectum, n isi quaerendo solummodo simplicem victum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Nicole Oresme, *De visione stellarum* 2.1 (p. 126): Et propter hoc apparet baculus fractus cuius medietas est inaqua, quia pars que est in aqua apparet visui propinquior quam est. Et si oculus esset in aqua ab eadem parte baculi, tunc propter idem apparet fractio e converso. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. *Sancti Epiphanii ad Physiologium* (pp. 50-51): Cum senio grauatur, caligant illi oculi: & cum iterum iuuenescere parat, quadraginta diebus cibo abstinet, & et tandem emollita cute, quaerit petram per cuius foramen magno nisu contendens pronusque transire nititur, cutemque exuit; qua deosita gaudet, atque iterum iuuenescit.

The first property of the serpent is that when it grows old its eyes become dim. To become young again the serpent fasts for forty days until its skin loosens, then it crawls through a narrow crack in a rock to shed its old skin and become new again. The interpretation is that the "spiritual man" must go through the narrow way of abstinence and tribulation to shed his old life and become new again. <http://spcoll.library.uvic.ca/Digit/physiologum/animal/snake1.htm>

Cf. Bestiary, “Snake: General Attributes”: To renew its youth, it fasts until its skin becomes loose, then it crawls through a narrow crack and sheds its old skin. <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast264.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 12.3.9 (PL 82:441): Providet enim in futurum, et praeparat aestate quod hieme comedat. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologia* 12.2,5 (PL 82:434): cum ambulant, cauda sua cooperiunt vestigia sua, ne eos venator inveniat. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. *Gesta Romanorum* 159 (Oesterley, p. 539): Josephus in libro de causis rerum naturalium refert, quod [Noe] invenit vitem silvestrem, id est labruscam a labris terre et viarum dictam. Que cum esset amara, tulit sanguinem quatuor animalium scilicet leonis, agni, porci et simee, quo terre mixto fecit fimum, quem ad radices labruscarum posuit. Sic ergo vinum eorum sanguine est dulceatum. Quo facto Noe postea de vino inebriabatur, et nudatus jacens a filio juniori derisus, qui omnibus filiis ejus congregatis dixit, se ideo sanguinem dictorum animalium posuisse hominibus pro doctrina.

Carissimi, per vinum multi facti sunt leones per iram, nec illo tempore habent discretionem, aliqui agni per verecundiam, aliqui sunt simee per curiositatem assumptam ineptamque leticiam; nam simea omnia coram se facta eciam facere proponit, sed destruit. Quam si capere volueris, plumbeos calceos habeas, et dum te illos exuentem induentemque conspexerit et fortiter ligantem, similiter facit; que, cum currere temptat, torquetur gravedine et capitur; quod de multis hominibus est simile, qui dum singula temptant in ebrietatibus, vix aliqua perficiunt, sed sicut simea destruunt et confundunt.

Cf. Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, 9.44-45 (Benson, p. 282b): “I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape, / And that is whan men pleyen with a straw.” [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:311a): Primo ergo donum sapientiæ est donum splendidissimum, non solum sicut sol, sed et plusquam sol. Sol enim iste non ostendit nobis quæ sunt supra terram, et infra coelum; sapientia autem Dei facit nos cognoscere omnia, scilicet infernum, ut timeamus; mundum, ut contemnamus; cælum, ut appetamus; Deum, ut laudemus, et istud est ultimum doni *Sapientiæ,* et ab isto donatur, scilicet cognitio divinorum, ut dicit Augustinus. Et propterea dicitur in libro *Sapientiæ*: *Hæc*, scilicet sapientia, *est speciosior sole, et super omnem dispositionem stellarum; luci comparata, invenitur prior:* quia per lucem visibilia videntur tantum, per sapientiam vero etiam invisibilia cognoscuntur. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:311a-b): Secundo sapientia est donum sapidissimum instar mellis, non solum sicut mel, sed etiam plusquam mel. Unde dicit Sapientia in *Ecclesiastico* *Spiritus meus super mel dulcis, et he reditas mea super mel et favum.* Mel namque unum habet saporem, et illo gustato desipiunt alia etiam meliora; sicut vinum, quod post mellis gustum, non apparet sapidum. Sed sapientia divina omnem habet saporem, quia sibi sapiunt oinnia ut debent: scilicet tam mala quam bona temporalia, ut vilia et insipida; bona spiritualia, ut cara; bona æterna, ut fructuosa et summe nobilia. Unde dicitur in *Ecclesiastico: Sapientia secundum nomen suum est,* scilicet sapida scientia, *et non multis est manifesta*. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:311b): Tertio sapientia est donum profundissimum instar maris; non solum sicut mare, sed etiam plusquam mare: quia mare habet fundum; sapientia divina nullum habet fundum, ut dipientia citur in *Job: Longior est terra mensura ejus, et latior mari.* Et propterea dicit Apostolus: *0 altitudo,* id est, profunditas, *divitiarum sapientiæ, et scientiæ Dei, quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus!* quia nimis longe sunt sapientiæ divinæ judicia, quibus disposuit omnia investigabilia, quam guttæ maris valeant numerari. Exemplum de patre et filio volentibus haurire totum mare cum cochleari parvo, ut narrat Hieronymus. Ideo dicitur donum, quia nunquam per studium acquiritur, nisi per inspirationem divinam habeatur. Et ideo dicit *Jacobus: Si quis vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, et non improperat, et dabitur ei.* Et in *Sapientia: Da mihi, Domine, sedium tuarum assistricem sapientiam*.... [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.2 983a15-16 (Barnes 2:1555): the incommensurability of the diagonal of a square with the side.

Cf. Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum* 173 (Wright, p. 294): Quis enim illud Aristotelicum intelligeret, si diameter est costae symmeter, erunt abundantia aequalia perfectis, sine intelligentia geometricae disciplinae? Sensus quidem hic est. Posito hoc impossibili, quod diameter sit numerali proportione commensurabilis costae, dabitur quod impar numerus est aequalis pari. Aristoteles enim vocat imparem numerum, abundantem,

propter excessum unitatis intermediae. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Boethius, cf. Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalicae* 1.2 (PL 176:142): Summum igitur in vita solamen est studium sapientiae, quam qui invenit, felix est, et qui possidet, beatus.

Cf. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* chap. 11: Poetry and Scholasticism trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1953 [2013]), (p. 480): Hugh explains the origin and systematic connection of the various branches of knowledge and sees in their exploration the perfection of the soul. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Aristotle, cf. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Johannes Gobi, Robertus Holkot Catalog number Manuscripta Mediaevalia Objektnummer, 90126924,T: 193r-198r [Robertus Holcot OP: ]Moralitates, IV. >Aenigmata Aristotelis moralizata.< Posside sapienciam quoniam melior est auro [Prv 16,16] Sepe quidem homo … Qui igitur sapiens voluerit esse audiat enigmata Aristotelis que sunt septem et recitata a Valerio Maximo libro tercio ad Ruffanum. … (193r Text:) Primum enigma Aristotelis est: stateram ne transilias … 198r … … Eccli. 5 Ne tardas de die in diem … et vindicte de te[sic]. [Sir 5,9] >Expliciunt septem enigmata Aristotelis moralizata que recitantur a Valerio libro tercio ad Ruffanum.

Stegmüller RB 7411, IV.

<http://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss&list=ms&id=lg-rb-theol-4f-8&catalog=Staehli&lang=en> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Jerome, *Adversus scripta Rufini* 3.39 (PL 23:485-486): Illaque aenigmata, quae diligentissime Aristoteles in suis libris prosequitur: Stateram ne transilias, [Col.0485C] id est, ne praetergrediare justitiam. Ignem gladio ne fodias. Iratum videlicet et tumidum animum verbis maledicis ne lacessas. Coronam minime [Col.0486A] carpendam, id est, leges urbium conservandas. Cor non comedendum, id est, moerorem de animo projiciendum. Cum profectus fueris, inquit, ne redeas; id est, post mortem vitam istam ne desideres. Per viam publicam ne ambules; id est, ne multorum sequaris errores [Al. errorem]. Hirundinem in domum non suscipiendam; id est, garrulos et verbosos homines sub eodem tecto non habendos. Oneratis superponendum onus: deponentibus non communicandum; id est, ad virtutem incedentibus, augmentanda [Al. augenda] praecepta: tradentes se otio, relinquendos. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Gregory, *Moralia* 22.5.8 (PL 76:216-217): Has etenim Salomon sapientiae divitias contemplatus ait: Corona sapientium divitiae eorum (Prov. XIV, 24). Qui quia divitias non metalla terrena, sed prudentiam nominat, illico per contrarietatem subdit: Fatuitas stultorum imprudentia (Ibid., 24). Si enim coronam sapientium terrenas divitias diceret, procul dubio fatuitatem stultorum paupertatem potius quam imprudentiam fateretur. Sed dum fatuitatem stultorum imprudentiam subdidit, sapientum divitias quia prudentiam [Col.0217A] dixerit, indicavit. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Arca Noe* 4.8 (PL 176:747): quot modo litteratos cernimus, qui vocari Christiani volunt, et cum caeteris fidelibus Ecclesiam intrant, et de sacramentis Christi participant, in quorum cordibus saepius est memoria Saturni [Col.0674C] et Jovis, Herculis et Martis, sive Achillis et Hectoris, Pollucis et Castoris, Socratis et Platonis et Aristotelis, quam Christi et sanctorum ejus? Nugas poetarum diligunt; et veritatem divinarum Scripturarum aut negligunt, aut (quod pejus est!) irrident, et contemnunt. Videant nunc quid eis prosit foris Ecclesiam ingredi, et intus in corde a fide fornicari. Ego eis pronuntio, quod illis in fine sociandi sunt, quos nunc in cogitationibus suis per affectum cordis sibi conjungunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Seneca, *Epistula* 95.7 (LCL 77:62-63): “Si aliae,” inquit, “artes contentae sunt praeceptis, contenta erit et sapientia, nam et haec ars vitae est.”

“Then,” comes the reply, “if the other arts are content with precepts, wisdom will also be content therewith; for wisdom itself is an art of living.” [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Seneca, Epistula 88.32-33 (LCL 76:368-369): Quid est autem, quare existimem non futurum sapientem eum, qui litteras nescit, cum sapientia non sit in litteris? Res tradit, non verba, et nescio an certior memoria sit, quae nullum extra se subsidium habet. Magna et spatiosa res est sapientia. … De divinis humanisque discendum est, de praeteritis de futuris, de caducis de aeternis, de tempore.

What reason have I, however, for supposing that one who is ignorant of letters will never be a wise man, since wisdom is not to be found in letters? Wisdom communicates factsb and not words; and it may be true that the memory is more to be depended upon when it has no support outside itself. … One must learn about things divine and human, the past and the future, the ephemeral and the eternal; and one must learn about Time [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. *Flores sancti Bernardi* 8.52 (Venice: per nobilem virum Luceantonium de Gionta Florentinum, 1503), (f. 132rb-132va): De triplici distinctione sapientie. In sententiis. Capitulum liii. Dicitur sapientia carnis que inimica est deo. Et sapientia huius mundi stultitia est apud deum. Utraque ista scilicet, Jacobus apostolum: terrena est: animalis diabolica. Secundum hanc sapientiam dicuntur sapientes vt faciant mala: Bene autem facere nesciunt. Nulla talis sapientia siue carnis: siue mundi edificat immo destruit quecumque domum inhabitat. Est ergo alia sapientia que desursum est. Primum quidem pudica deinde pacifica. Nam sapientia carnis voluptuosa est non pudica. Sapientia mundi tumultuosa non pacifica. Sapientia ver que ex deo est: primum quidem pudica est non querens que sua sunt sed que Jesu Christi vt non quosque suam faciat voluntatem sed onsideret que sit voluntas dei. De inde pacifica non abundans in sensu suo: sed alieno magis acquiescens consilio vel iudicio. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Gregory, *Moralia* 10.39.48 (PL 75:947): Hujus mundi sapientia est, cor machinationibus tegere, sensum verbis velare, quae falsa sunt vera ostendere, quae vera sunt fallacia demonstrare. Haec nimirum prudentia usu a juvenibus scitur, haec a pueris pretio discitur, hanc qui sciunt caeteros despiciendo superbiunt; hanc qui nesciunt, subjecti et timidi in aliis mirantur, quia ab eis haec eadem duplicitas iniquitatis, nomine palliata, diligitur, dum mentis perversitas urbanitas vocatur. Haec sibi obsequentibus praecipit honorum culmina quaerere, adepta temporalis gloriae vanitate gaudere, irrogata ab aliis mala multiplicius [Col.0947B] reddere, cum vires suppetunt nullis resistentibus cedere, cum virtutis possibilitas deest, quidquid explere per malitiam non valet, hoc in pacifica bonitate simulare. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Gregory, Moralia 10.39.48 (PL 75:947): At contra sapientia justorum est nil per ostensionem fingere, sensum verbis aperire, vera ut sunt diligere, falsa devitare, bona gratis exhibere, mala libentius tolerare quam facere; nullam injuriae ultionem quaerere, pro veritate contumeliam lucrum putare. Sed haec justorum simplicitas deridetur, quia ab hujus mundi sapientibus puritatis virtus, fatuitas creditur. Omne enim quod innocenter agitur, ab eis procul dubio stultum putatur; et quidquid in opere veritas approbat, carnali sapientiae fatuum sonat. Quid namque stultius videtur mundo quam mentem verbis ostendere, nil callida machinatione [Col.0947C] simulare, nullas injuriis contumelias reddere, pro maledicentibus orare, paupertatem quaerere, possessa relinquere, rapienti non resistere, percutienti alteram maxillam praebere? [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Seneca cf. Martin of Braga, *Formula Honestae Vitae* 1 (PL 72:24): Si prudens est animus tuus, [Col.0024C] tribus temporibus dispensetur. Praesentia ordina, futura praevide, praeterita recordare. Nam qui nil de praeterito cogitat, perdit vitam, qui nil de futuro praemeditatur, in omnia incautus incidit. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Seneca, *Epistula* 117.16 (LCL 77:348-349): Sapientia habitus perfectae mentis est, sapere usus perfectae mentis. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Hom. 24 ex cap. 10 (PL 56:759): Qui ergo sollicitus est quid loquatur, in sua sapientia sperat: quae est prima causa ruinae. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* 3.14 (PL 176:773): Principium autem disciplinae humilitas est. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Seneca, *Epistula* 20.2, 5 (LCL 75:132-135): Maximum hoc est et officium sapientiae et indicium, ut verbis opera concordent, ut ipse ubique par sibi idemque sit. … Quid est sapientia? Semper idem velle atque idem nolle. Licet illam exceptiunculam non adicias, ut rectum sit, quod velis; non potest enim cuiquam idem semper placere nisi rectum.

This, I say, is the highest duty and the highest proof of wisdom,—that deed and word should be in accord, that a man should be equal to himself under all conditions, and always the same. … “What is wisdom? Always desiring the same things, and always refusing the same things.”a You may be excused from adding the little proviso,—that what you wish, should be right; since no man can always be satisfied with the same thing, unless it is right. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Seneca, *Epistula* 71.7, 26 (LCL 76:76-77, 88-89): Socrates qui totam philosophiam revocavit ad mores et hanc summam dixit esse sapientiam, bona malaque distinguere, “sequere” inquit, “illos, si quid apud te habeo auctoritatis, ut sis beatus, et te alicui stultum videri sine. Quisquis volet, tibi contumeliam faciat et iniuriam, tu tamen nihil patieris, si modo tecum erit virtus. … Quorum nihil sapienti viro potest evenire; stat rectus sub quolibet pondere.

Socrates, who recalled the whole of philosophy to rules of conduct, and asserted that the highest wisdom consisted in distinguishing between good and evil, said: “Follow these rules, if my words carry weight with you, in order that you may be happy; and let some men think you even a fool. Allow any man who so desires to insult you and work you wrong; but if only virtue dwells with you, you will suffer nothing. … But none of these things can happen to the sage; he stands erect under any load. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Seneca, *Epistula* 95.13 (LCL 77:66-67): “Antiqua,” inquit, “sapientia nihil aliud quam facienda ac vitanda praecepit, et tunc longe meliores erant viri. Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt.

People say: “The old-style wisdom advised only what one should do and avoid; and yet the men of former days were better men by far. When savants have appeared, sages have become rare. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Cicero, *De officiis,* 1.2 (LCL 30:8-9): de officio nihil queant dicere, neque ulla officii praecepta firma, stabilia, coniuncta naturae tradi possunt nisi aut ab iis, qui solam, aut ab iis, qui maxime honestatem propter se dicant expetendam.

they could not say anything about duty; and no fixed, invariable, natural rules of duty can be posited except by those who say that moral goodness is worth seeking solely or chiefly for its own sake. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Cicero, *De officiis,* 3.9 (LCL 30:304-307): Hinc ille Gyges inducitur a Platone, qui, cum terra discessisset magnis quibusdam imbribus, descendit in illum hiatum aëneumque equum, ut ferunt fabulae, animadvertit, cuius in lateribus fores essent; quibus apertis corpus hominis mortui vidit magnitudine invisitata1 anulumque aureum in digito; quem ut detraxit, ipse induit (erat autem regius pastor), tum in concilium se pastorum recepit. Ibi cum palam eius anuli ad palmam converterat, a nullo videbatur, ipse autem omnia videbat; idem rursus videbatur, cum in locum anulum inverterat. Itaque hac opportunitate anuli usus reginae stuprum intulit eaque adiutrice regem dominum interemit, sustulit, quos obstare arbitrabatur, nec in his eum facinoribus quisquam potuit videre. Sic repente anuli beneficio rex exortus est Lydiae.

Hunc igitur ipsum anulum si habeat sapiens, nihilo1 plus sibi licere putet peccare, quam si non haberet;2 honesta enim bonis viris, non occulta quaeruntur.

By way of illustrating this truth Plato introduces the familiar story of Gyges: Once upon a time the earth opened in consequence of heavy rains; Gyges went down into the chasm and saw, so the story goes, a horse of bronze; in its side was a door. On opening this door he saw the body of a dead man of enormous size with a gold ring upon his finger. He removed this and put it on his own hand and then repaired to an assembly of the shepherds, for he was a shepherd of the king. As often as he turned the bezel of the ring inwards toward the palm of his hand, he became invisible to everyone, while he himself saw everything; but as often as he turned it back to its proper position, he became visible again. And so, with the advantage which the ring gave him, he debauched the queen, and with her assistance he murdered his royal master and removed all those who he thought stood in his way, without anyone’s being able to detect him in his crimes. Thus, by virtue of the ring, he shortly rose to be king of Lydia.

Now, suppose a wise man had just such a ring, he would not imagine that he was free to do wrong any more than if he did not have it; for good men aim to secure not secrecy but the right. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)