

Methodius of Olympus
On Leprosy – an allegorical explanation of Leviticus 13
(De Lepra ad Sistelium)

CPG 1815

Translated by Ralph Cleminson and Andrew Eastbourne¹

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¹ This translation was commissioned and edited by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, and is released by him into the public domain.

Introductory note

De Lepra (On Leprosy) is a short work by Methodius of Olympus giving an explanation of the regulations about leprosy in Leviticus 13. The chapter in Leviticus is of some length and begins:

13 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ² When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease on the skin of his body, he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. ³ The priest shall examine the disease on the skin of his body, and if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous disease; after the priest has examined him he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. ⁴ But if the spot is white in the skin of his body, and appears no deeper than the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest shall confine the diseased person for seven days. ...

Methodius gives an allegorical explanation of these regulations, with references to different colours of leprosy. He does not seem to have any one thing in mind by “leprosy”, other than various kinds of sin.

The date of the work is uncertain. Because of references in 6:1 to “green leprosy” as cowardice in time of persecution, Musurillo in his translation of the *Symposium* of Methodius (p.9) dated *De Lepra* to after 303 AD. But this date must be taken with caution, because it depends on the not unreasonable assumption that Methodius is referring to an actual contemporary persecution rather than persecution in general. If this is the case, then indeed the persecution of 303–311 is the most likely.

De Lepra is preserved in a complete, but evidently abbreviated form, in Old Slavonic translation, preserved in a number of manuscripts. Curiously the Old Slavonic text has never been printed. The manuscript used for this translation is number 40 on the Holy Trinity-St Sergius Lavra website (<http://stsl.ru>), but is held in the Russian State Library (=RGB) in the collection of the old Moscow Spiritual Academy. The shelfmark of the manuscript is ф. 173.I, №40, and *De Lepra* appears on folios 120v-129v.

A number of fragments of the original Greek text survive in a medieval collection of extracts or “florilegium”. This collection is found in at least twenty manuscripts, of which Paris BNF Coislin 294 (11-12th c.) is the most complete. It seems likely that most of the others will also contain at least some of the Methodius fragments, and some may contain a better text of these than that provided by Coislin 294, which a future editor will want to use. It is already known that this is the case for some other portions of the text in manuscripts Athens, NB 464 and Paris, BN gr. 924.

The text of *De Lepra* was printed by G. Bonwetsch, “Methodius”, in: *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* 27 (1917), 451-474. This gives the Greek fragments only from Coislin 294, and fills in the gaps with a German translation of the Old Slavonic.

A Russian translation was published by M. Chub, in: Богословские труды (= *Bogoslovskie Trudy*) 2 (1961), 160-172.

This translation was made from the online manuscript of the Old Slavonic, and the Greek fragments printed by Bonwetsch.

A two column format has been used where the Greek text survives. The material translated from Old Slavonic is in the left-hand column, the material translated from Greek in the right-hand

column. Since the cutover points are not always at the end of a sentence, the places in the Old Slavonic text where there is a Greek fragment are marked with ► ... ◄.

Note that some of the footnotes use Ponomar Unicode font to render an unusual Old Slavonic character.

St Methodius, Bishop of Philippi,² to <S>istelius,³ on Leprosy⁴

[I.1]⁵ “Whence [have you come], O Eubulius?”⁶

“Is it not clear that [I have come] from a journey, catching one by one understandings⁷ of Holy Scripture?”

In the morning one of Sistelius’s people knocked on the door, and when the servant opened it to him, he said that Sistelius had invited us to visit him. I arose immediately and went, [2] and when we were near his home Sistelius met me, embraced me, and said: “Having been away from us for a time, you have deprived us of understanding of the scriptures. As when a cloud goes across the sun, and does not allow the sun to be seen clearly, so when good exposition is removed, souls are darkened and the mind benighted.”

“Well said,” I answered.

[3] And we went into the house and sat down, and Sistelius said, “Now let us examine the scriptures by the truth itself.⁸ Let us drive away with herbs this evil leprosy, and with words like medicines that soothe wounds, saying ‘Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’⁹ [4] For now is the time for your preaching, when you should tell us about the leprosy that is in the law.¹⁰ For the Lord commands [us] to make many figurative interpretations¹¹ of that which is indicated in the law, and to share the freely-given¹² gift with anyone who thirsts for God’s gifts.”

[II.1] <Eubulius:> “Then do not think that I would reject those who desire to receive such a grace, even if I am weak in deed and word. He who plants words in the souls of us all shall pull up the evil roots from our hearts, and plant all virtue there; [2] for when plants like nettles wither, then the flower of virtue shall flourish; which Christ, speaking another way, compares to a grain of mustard seed producing great growth. [3] For he implores us, condescending to our weaknesses. If ever the seed of divine faith first falls into the furrow of the soul, it grows up into greatness, and reaches the height of piety in the understanding of the mind. [4] The Lord truly calls his Father the planter of this planting. ‘For,’ he says, ‘every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.’¹³

Understand that this is not because of a plurality of souls, as some have thought to make this word, but it is about right doctrine, and about pious words that the careful gardener has caused to be planted in unknown ways in our hearts, pulling up unsuitable plants (that is, wicked thoughts and deeds) out of our hearts.

² Methodius’s see is given variously in the sources, the most favoured locations being Patara or Olympus (in Lycia). See the discussion of the various possibilities on pp.170–173 of Herbert Musurillo’s English edition of the *Symposium* (Methodius of Olympus, *The Symposium: a Treatise on Chastity*, transl. and annotated by H. Musurillo, Westminster, Md., 1958: Ancient Christian Writers 27).

³ “Istelius” at this point in the manuscripts, but Sistelius elsewhere: evidently the scribe of the protograph failed to supply the initial letter.

⁴ This is the title in the manuscript.

⁵ The chapter and section numbers are those of Bonwetsch.

⁶ Eubulius, who appears in several of Methodius’ works, appears to be another name for the saint himself, or else his *alter ego*. This deliberately abrupt opening seems to be an allusion to the opening of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (cf. Methodius’ re-working of Plato’s *Symposium*).

⁷ The word is *osobie*, which is derived from *o sobě*, “by oneself”.

⁸ “by” – the word literally means “from”. The meaning is obscure.

⁹ Ephesians 5:14.

¹⁰ I.e. the Law of Moses.

¹¹ Bonwetsch says “vieles im Gesetz allegorisch zu deuten”, which must be the sense, if a little free as a translation.

¹² Literally “ungrudging”; possibly an adverb was originally intended.

¹³ Matthew 15:13.

[5] For if this is not how we believe, we shall be followers of the most irreligious Marcion,¹⁴ who said that there is another good besides the God who is, and therefore the souls of¹⁵ the Demiurge cannot receive the life of the good that is preached [and] are deprived of good planting.¹⁶ But let us ignore those things at the moment, for we have no time for this subject now.”¹⁷

[III.1] “Indeed, you say, these things are to be ignored, for since the riches of the word come from God, we should have the fruits of firm wisdom, according to the word of the apostle, who says, ‘We are God’s field.’¹⁸ [2] So, lest the disease spread, we should heal everyone’s sores¹⁹ by the hymns of the Gospel, and ‘see to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it²⁰ many become defiled,’²¹ as the apostle said, writing to the Hebrews.

[3] And the law teaches us, saying,²² The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: When a person has on his skin the sign of leprosy, and he comes to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priest shall examine the appearance of the sore, whether it is clearly leprosy on the skin of his body. [4] And afterwards: When the priest has seen the leprosy on the seventh day, and the leprosy remains as it was, and the leprosy has not spread in his skin, the priest shall separate him for another seven days. And only if the leprosy has not spread, the priest shall purify him: it is only the appearance of it, and he shall wash his clothes. [5] And afterwards: If there is a plague of leprosy in any garment, be it woollen or linen, or in anything made of skin, and if the leprosy is red or green...”²³

[IV.1] “Thus having said a little in other things,²⁴ you forbid us, O Sistelius, to speak only of the actual [text], that is, of the law, but to show an understanding of it spiritually, that we should understand what is written in the law not literally, but spiritually. [2] And again, continuing in the word, he²⁵ adds: ‘If the disease has spread in the cloth,’ after it has been put aside, when it is shown to the priest, ‘in warp or woof, or in the skin, [...] this is a spreading leprous disease; it is unclean. He shall burn the clothing, whether diseased in warp or woof,’²⁶ etc.[3] This is what it says in the law about leprosy.

Now I think the prophet used these words as if they were certain veils or shadows, for this is how God wishes to bring us to the light of truth. [4] For this reason I think the blessed Paul says, ‘Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has

¹⁴ “irreligious” for Беззаконный, almost certainly ἄνομος, i.e. “lawless”. This is probably wordplay, an allusion to Marcion’s rejection of the Old Testament, including the Law of Moses.

¹⁵ Marcion taught that the Creator of the World, the Demiurge, was another deity, rather than God. So these are the souls belonging to the Demiurge.

¹⁶ Note that the Slavonic here does not make sense, and is grammatically incoherent. Bonwetsch read instead: „...Markion, welcher sagt, dass ein anderer guter anstatt des wirklichen Gottes sei, und deshalb konnten die Seelen des Welterschöpfers das verheissene Leben des Guten nicht empfangen, sie seien entbehrend der Pflanzung des Guten.“ I.e., “...Marcion, who said that there is another good instead of the real God, and for this reason the souls of the Creator do not receive the promised life of the good; they are lacking the planting of the good.”

¹⁷ Literally: But let us ignore these things at the moment, for we have no time for these words now.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:9. Translations are unanimous in saying “you are...”, but the actual text has no pronoun, being merely Θεοῦ γεώργιον, and Methodius has evidently preferred to take the verb ἐσμὲν from the previous clause instead of ἐστε from the following one.

¹⁹ Reading **ИЗЪМ** for **ИВН**.

²⁰ διὰ ταύτης.

²¹ Hebrews 12:15.

²² What follows is an abridgement of Leviticus 13:1–6, 47–49.

²³ There appears to be a lacuna in the text, as first indicated by Bonwetsch.

²⁴ Literally “in the rest”. Again there seems to be something wrong with the text at this point.

²⁵ Moses.

²⁶ Leviticus 13:51–52.

blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.²⁷

He says plainly that to those who believe and are being saved the gospel is uncovered, but to those who are perishing it is veiled, as if it were bound on the outside with copper bands, [5] for anyone who understands the scriptures from outside goes away devoid of any spiritual understanding, like one who has seen empty walls made of stone. But one who strikes hard and tears away the mental curtain, given wings by the Spirit of God, flies in like a bird and reaches the inner meaning, which is the Holy of Holies. And when he has reached it he is nourished by the effulgence of the beauty of truth.

[6] As trees in winter are denuded of the beauty of their fruit, but in spring receive the beauty of their leaves again, so I think the prophetic words when perceived by mere intellect are thought dry and meaningless, but understood with wisdom are seen to be full of good fruit and leaves, and have flowers of multiple virtue. Therefore let us too, renouncing the literal understanding, understand the scriptures spiritually and thoroughly.

[V.1] For we say (Christ being our teacher) that ► the prophet commanded us to avoid four different types of leprosy, the white, the yellow, the green and the red.²⁸ The yellow and the white erupt from a healthy body and quickly corrupt a man. The green and the red manifest themselves in sores or scabs and make the whole body waste away. [2] This is like the four leprosy types that corrupt the soul. The white, half yellow, resembles adultery, for from adultery yellow froth spreads into the blood.²⁹ [3] The yellow is to be compared to fear and timidity, which the Lord has commanded us to trample underfoot, saying ‘Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.’³⁰ [4]

[Greek] (1) ... The great lawgiver teaches us to watch out for and flee four kinds of leprosy, differing from each other in their colour, blossoming forth for us from the same mother: the white, the grey, the green, and the red.³¹ The grey and the white, he says, emerge suddenly from undiseased flesh, and devastate and putrefy the affected person, whereas he shows that the green and the red arise from a pre-existing cause, being engendered in scars from burns and wounds, and ‘feed’ on the entire body. (2) He is likening the types of leprosy to the four fundamental and harm-producing ills of the soul, coming as it were from a single overflowing spring of excessive and

²⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:3–4

²⁸ See introductory note on the colours. The interpretation of the four leprosy types is pretty clearly based on the 4 Stoic passions (fear, pain, anger, lust).

²⁹ The syntax of this sentence is very confused and any translation can only be approximate.

³⁰ Matthew 10:28.

³¹ The Slavonic reads: “the prophet commanded us to avoid four different types of leprosy, the white, the *yellow*, the green and the red,” while the Greek fragment reads “the white, the *grey*, the green, and the red.” The Greek is λευκαῖον, γλαυκαῖον, χλωρίζον καὶ πυρρίζον, and the Slavonic is *běla i želta i zelena i červlena*. The first term, λευκαῖον = *běla* = white. This is found in the Septuagint Greek text of Leviticus 13:4, 10, 19, and 24, so may be presumed to be correct. The second term is the problem. The Old Slavonic is *Žlūtū* which always means “yellow” and normally renders ξανθός (“yellow”), which is the word found in Leviticus 13:30–31. But the Greek fragment of Methodius at this point reads γλαυκός (“grey”). This difference has been retained in the translation. Two other authors list the colours, and give interpretations of them. One uses “grey” and the other uses “yellow”. Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua ad Joannem* 10.115 gives the “disease” of leprosy divided into 4 types—white, green (chlōron), yellow (xanthon), and “dark” (amauron). Nilus of Ancyra, *Epistulae* 1.224 mentions a four-headed leprosy, like a hydra—white (leukainousan), grey (glaukainousan), green (chlōrizousan), and red (purrizousan), and 1.244: “white-blooming” (leukanthizousan) and red (purizousan) leprosy; also grey (glaukizousan), and green (chlōrizousan) leprosy. It is tempting to suppose that Methodius really wrote ξανθός (i.e. “yellow”), but that the Greek fragment has become corrupt in transmission. But the witness of Maximus and Nilus suggests that “yellow” and “grey” are legitimate variations. The third term, *Zelenū* (which is definitely green) certainly falls within the colour range of χλωρός, the term for “green-yellow” used in Leviticus 13:49. The fourth term, πυρρίζον = *červlena* = red. This appears in Leviticus 13:19, 24, and 49. Assuming that Methodius wrote “yellow”, then it is interesting to note that

The red is like anger, which causes angry people to go red. The green is like envy and care, for from this people waste away and acquire a greenish pallor. ◀ Hence the scriptures [say that] Moses' sister had leprosy because she spoke ill of her brother. For all these things are harmful to people, as if the devil pours evils onto human nature from some muddy spring.

prevalent wickedness. Now, we must say that the white leprosy denotes the *sting* that provokes quarrels and pushes people vigorously toward couplings; for as the bodies are raging in their embraces, and moving, it makes the blood that is welling up foamy at the collision—just as the sea and the rivers are said to roil with foam at the impacts of the savage winds—and for this reason the lawgiver rightly called this pleasure the ‘white leprosy.’ (3) The grey leprosy denotes *fear*, which rouses fluttering excitement³² and terrible astonishment in the soul, on the basis of evil. For David says, ‘Rescue my soul from fear of an enemy.’³³ ... (4) The green leprosy denotes the *envy* and *pain*, from the fact that the natural look of one's face dissolves and turns paler. And, likewise, the red leprosy is what he is calling *wrath*, on account of the fact that one becomes enflamed and reddens by virtue of anger, and it turns the appearance of the face red.

[5] For the blessed prophet Jeremiah says, ‘Do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, remove the foreskin of your hearts.’³⁴ He means, remove evil passions, so that we may offer purity to God. [6] For I think that when the Lord commanded his disciples to go out without a staff and without two shirts,³⁵ it is fitting that those who preach the gospel, and possess unfading joy, and unnecessary...³⁶ [7] And he called forth the new man, but [rejected] the wicked works of the old.

[8] Therefore, lest we join ourselves to them once more, or have fellowship with the unrighteous, the Lord commands that we should use only the garment of integrity, and forbids his disciples to receive imaginings;³⁷ and he prays us to wear only the simple garment of heaven; [9] but the footwear made of dead skins that pinches our feet he compares to that which causes harm and sorrow to the soul, forbidding us to be shod with the cares of this world – to put it simply, being once washed by the Lord, let us not step into the corruption of death.

[VI.1] ► Therefore let us flee self-indulgent pleasures, let us flee the urges of carnal passions, for this is the white leprosy. Let us flee wrath and self-importance and slander, for this is the red leprosy. Let us flee hypocrisy, and fear under persecution,

[Greek] (1) Therefore let us flee from pleasure-loving cogitations and passionate pleasures <of the body>—this is the white leprosy. Let us flee anger and vanity, let us flee slander, for this is the red leprosy. Let us drive out hypocrisy and cowardice in

colours have the same symbolism for Methodius as they do in modern times: yellow for cowardice, green for envy, red for rage. However in Greek, *chloros* was associated with fear, back to Homer, and means “green” or “yellow”, or “greenish-yellow”, or “pale”.

³² By “fluttering excitement” I am translating the single Greek term *ptoêsis*.

³³ Ps. 63[64].2[1].

³⁴ Jeremiah 4:3–4.

³⁵ Cf. Matthew 10:10.

³⁶ Bonwetsch assumes a lacuna in the text.

³⁷ Perhaps “the desires of the imagination”? Receiving “imaginings” presumably reflects Greek *phantasia* and Stoic ideas about “assenting” to “impressions” (i.e., of external objects, or here, internally, of passions); similarly in IX.4.

for this is the yellow leprosy. Let us flee worry and envy, for this is the green leprosy. [2] For if the least of these things lodge in our mind, they will rot our soul and our flesh, unless we swiftly cast them out and heal them by repentance. ◀

time of persecution—for this is the grey leprosy. Let us drive out <pain and> envy—for this is the green leprosy. (2) For even the briefest, unexpected instance of these [passions], if it arrives and arises around our thoughts, and is not immediately cut off and cast out, flows forth afar, like a fire or a many-headed hydra, and feeds upon the soul, until it spreads into the body and ravages and rots out the entire person.

[3] Therefore let us not allow any wicked lust to make its nest in our minds, but as the men of old showed themselves to the priest, so should we: [4] for now we should take much greater care, according to Christ's word. For the Lord said: 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'³⁸ [5] He called him an adulterer who had entertained the passion, but not committed it, for this is the work and fruit of adultery. Therefore he does not call him entirely clean who resists the thought, but him who does not heed it at all. For it is not the fruit of adultery that he commands us to cast out, but its seed – which is like the fig tree that was withered before it bore fruit. [6] And likewise foolish anger against one's brother is the seed of murder. Therefore John³⁹ compared him to an axe which cuts the root of evil: the ancients cut off the fruit of adultery, but the Saviour⁴⁰ the seeds, desiring to do away with evils altogether, like some sort of leprosy.

[Greek] [7] Therefore, each one of those who have a mark or spot or disease—that is, one who is driven by anger or desire for a woman or avarice or envy—let him immediately approach the high priest (I mean through prayer) whose likeness and type Aaron was, and let him show to him 'the secret things of his heart,'⁴¹ keeping himself back from the offering,⁴² before the passion of the sin becomes hardened. [8] And if the evil should cease and abate, such that when he appears to the archangel at the altar he is far from having a bad conscience, then he has been purified. For 'the disease did not spread in the skin,'⁴³ that is, the *desire* did not spread to the body so as to be brought to completion, but only a certain 'mark' (that is, a cogitation) arose and then dimmed. [9] But if, on the other hand, it should not cease and abate, let him approach the chastisers,⁴⁴ in order to show

▶ For what do the scriptures say? 'The priest shall examine the disease on the skin of his body, ◀

³⁸ Matthew 5:27–28.

³⁹ John the Baptist: see Matthew 3:10 and Luke 3:9.

⁴⁰ Following Bonwetsch in reading σίψς for σπλ.

⁴¹ Cf. Leviticus 13:2 for the instructions; for the phrase, "the secret things of his heart," cf. Ps. 43[44].22[21]; 1 Corinthians 14:25.

⁴² I.e., the Eucharist.

⁴³ Leviticus 13:6.

⁴⁴ The term (Gk. *sôphronistês*) originally refers to a man in charge of discipline in the training of youths (ephebes) in

his disease to the bishop, the priest, the son of the true high priest who calls his disciples ‘children’ in the Gospel.⁴⁵ Let him not be ashamed to make a declaration, in obedience to the Scripture which says, ‘For any person, if a disease of leprosy arises in the skin of his flesh, he shall go to Aaron the priest; and the priest shall see the disease in the skin of his body’⁴⁶...

[VII.1] and if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous disease,⁴⁷ etc. [2] For as beauty is the fruit of our flesh, so integrity is the fruit of our soul. But if it changes to weakness and lust (this is what the white leprosy means), it begins to sink in.

[3] Consider how Paul says that the inner man should not grow old, but be renewed.⁴⁸ As Hosea also says about Ephraim, ‘Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples; [...] Foreigners devour his strength, but he does not know it; grey hairs are sprinkled upon him, but he does not know it.’⁴⁹

► [4] If therefore one who is young is growing old and grey with wicked passions, let him come to the priest in confession, [5] let him be separated from society, and let him repent with tears, [6] and after a week or two let him be visited [to see] whether he has been sorrowful, whether he has wept; and so by the mercy of God he will take his place again. [7] But if he is not sorry for his wickedness, and remains without repentance, let him be cut off from the church. ‘The person,’ it says, ‘who has the leprous disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head be uncovered; and he shall cover his upper lip [...] He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; [...] his dwelling shall be outside the camp.’⁵⁰ [8] His self-indulgence is indicated by his bad garments, and by the uncovered head of the inner man, that ◀ the sinner must be deprived of help: for it is not fitting that one who abides in sin should partake of the mysteries of salvation.

[Greek] [4] For, as I said, Aaron was a type of Christ, and the son of Aaron a type of the bishop—to these the one who has a festering sore or leprosy *around the ruling faculty*⁵¹ must go to be healed, so that the true causes and antecedent causes of the sin may be rooted out immediately by prayer and chastisements before it becomes hardened. [5] And like a wise doctor, let the bishop keep the feverish one away from the healthy regimen,⁵² so that he may be able to recover. Let him set him apart for penance;⁵³ let him dishonour him by keeping him from fellowship; let him weep; let him make intercession on his behalf in accordance with what is written: ‘Who is ailing, and I am not ailing? Who is made to stumble, and I am not inflamed?’⁵⁴ [6] And if he should cease, after he has been restrained from congregating for one week and a second week he shall be inspected again: If he has grieved and been distressed, with the grief that is according to

Athens.

⁴⁵ Cf. Mark 10:24.

⁴⁶ Leviticus 13:2-3.

⁴⁷ Leviticus 13:3.

⁴⁸ Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16.

⁴⁹ Hosea 7:8-9.

⁵⁰ Leviticus 13:45-46.

⁵¹ Gk. *hêgemonikon*—i.e., the faculty of reason (originally Stoic terminology).

⁵² That is, the regimen that the healthy take part in—the Eucharist.

⁵³ Or "confession." (Gk. *exomologêsis*.)

⁵⁴ 2 Corinthians 11:29.

God, which works repentance leading to salvation,⁵⁵ there is hope for him—he is pure; for the evil has not spread. (7) But if he should persist in being neglectful and unheedful, he has an inveterate leprosy, composed of many unclean evils. ‘He is a leper—he is unclean’;⁵⁶ let him be cast out of the church. For the Scripture says, ‘Let every ‘leper, on whom is the disease, wear his clothing loosened, and let his head be uncovered, with something put round his mouth, and he will be called unclean for as many days as the disease is upon him; being unclean, he shall be unclean; he shall sit down separately; his haunt shall be outside the camp.’⁵⁷ (8) It is calling the ignoble and feminized quality of the licentious a ‘loosened garment’ (I believe), and his head ‘uncovered,’ meaning the outer man has its *ruling faculty* deprived of God's protection.

[VIII.1] This is about visible things, but the mysteries and the things of our hearts he entrusts to the angel who is the guardian of that church, who visits and examines our inner man. [2] And so if we sin and conceal it, and enter the church, he exposes us with a spiritual weapon. [3] And that the lip is covered [means] the silence of the sinner. ‘But to the wicked God says: ‘What right have you to recite my statutes,’ etc.’⁵⁸ [4] That his dwelling shall be outside the camp means outside the Kingdom of Heaven, for everyone who sins is outside it, says the apostle. Even if he thinks that he is inside, he deceives himself: he is far away, he is outside. And he who does right is inside, even if he thinks he is outside, [5] and he has fine garments and his head covered, and on his head is the helmet of salvation, and his mouth is open to study the scriptures and his tongue is open to wisdom.

[IX.1] ► Therefore let us keep ourselves from all these things. For what does God care about clothes, or about the warp or the woof, or any of these other things? [2] We should test these things and interpret them. We shall, I say, liken the mind to the warp, and the soul to the woof, and the body to the skin, and the whole person to the garment; the man to wool, and the woman to linen. [3] ‘Concerning clothing: when a leprous disease appears in it, in woollen or linen cloth,’ and then, ‘if the disease shows greenish or reddish in the garment, whether in warp or woof or in skin or in anything made of skin,’⁵⁹ [4] the warp allegorically means the strength of the soul, for the life of

[Greek] [1] Therefore, let us preserve ourselves pure—for these are the rules and ordinances of the church—before God, who is able to see keenly, according to the Scriptures.⁶¹ For let someone come forward and answer me—so that I may call to mind also what follows. What is such a great concern ‘to God’⁶² and [why this] enthusiasm for talking about garments of wool and linen, the warp and woof, and skins? Or did he prophesy these things ‘altogether on our account’⁶³? [2] Come now, let us precisely distinguish the interpretations and receive an image fitting for each kind: The more powerful and primary *mind* is to be connected with the

⁵⁵ Cf. 2 Corinthians 7:10.

⁵⁶ Leviticus 13:44.

⁵⁷ Leviticus 13:45-46.

⁵⁸ Psalm 49 (50) 16.

⁵⁹ Leviticus 13:47, 49.

man is composed of soul and flesh. Sin first begins with external fantasy entering through the eyes and ears, like a sort of leprosy befalling the mind.⁶⁰ ◀

warp, the *soul* with the woof, the *body* with the skin, and the *entire human being* with the garment—the man with the woollen garment, the woman with the linen. [3] ‘And in a garment—if a disease of leprosy appears in it, in a woollen garment or in a garment of tow, either in the warp or in the woof, or in linen garments or in woollen garments <or in skin> or in any worked skin; and the disease becomes reddish or greenish in the skin or in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof.’⁶⁴ [4] You see, the Law figuratively termed the sinews of the soul—our *mind*—the warp; for it has been taught that the human being is a *composite creature*, put together like something woven, a web. If it has been demonstrated that he said he obtained his constituent structure, in short, from soul, flesh and spirit, the lawgiver—understood symbolically—is making an inspired declaration that the first conception of one's sinful acts is born as a leprosy that flows from external appearance through the eyes or ears into the mind, just as though on a warp.

So also the Lord said about those who were unbelieving concerning the forgiveness of sins, ‘Why do you raise such questions in your hearts?’⁶⁵ For the leprosy of unbelief was in their minds. For ‘he has conceived trouble, and brought forth iniquity.’⁶⁶ [5] A predilection for the passions should be thought of as the woof, for it is woven as passion grows with indulgence.

[X.1] So what do the scriptures say?⁶⁷

⁶¹ Cf. Isaiah. 50:4.

⁶² Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:9.

⁶³ Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:10.

⁶⁰ See note on V.8.

⁶⁴ Leviticus 13:47-49.

⁶⁵ Luke 5:22.

⁶⁶ Psalm 7:14 (LXX).

⁶⁷ Bonwetsch suggests that there is a lacuna in the text here, though the scriptural quotation follows naturally from the question. In the manuscripts, however, between question and quotation there is the more or less meaningless phrase *понѣ тѣм бо и порочныхъ* (literally, ‘at least, for thereby also of the vicious’), which suggests that it might rather be a matter of an accidental interpolation.

► ‘If the disease has not spread, after the priest’s examination, in the garment or in the warp or the woof the skin, it is a single⁶⁸ leprosy and the skin is unclean, and he shall burn the garment or the woof. In the wool or in the leather vessel⁶⁹ as it is a single leprosy it shall be burnt with fire.’⁷⁰ [2] This, again, is about penitents, and those who have altogether abandoned their sins. He commands the garments – that is, the covering of sin – to be burnt. [4] For this reason another prophet says, ‘O Jerusalem, the holy city; the uncircumcised and the unclean shall enter you no more,’⁷¹ but the circumcised and the clean; ◀

[Greek] [1] ... ‘But if the disease spreads’ (being inspected by the high priest after it was set apart) ‘in the garment or in the skin, either in the warp or in the woof, the disease is a chronic leprosy—it is unclean. And he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in woollen garments or in linen garments or in any item made of skin, in whatever thing the disease is, because it is a chronic leprosy; it shall be burned in fire,’⁷² which is... [2] For it is manifestly hinting at the one who laments over his sin and begs for mercy. So then, if the disease is not dispersed,⁷³ that is, the sin is not diminished after he has approached and asked for pardon from God, after he has repented and been seen by the bishop: If <the> *passion* is not dispersed and scattered, and ceasing already, in <the one> who has been set apart for healing—that is, for penance—(3) this sort of man or this sort of woman is *testing* God, simulating faith. ‘It is a chronic leprosy’—the sin is ineradicable; it shall be consumed all at once in the everlasting fire of Gehenna, because those who are to be taken up into the fullness of the heavenly city must go, pure and sound, to Christ who has made them fit for himself and clothed them with immortality... (4) ‘Jerusalem, holy city, the uncircumcised and unclean shall no longer continue to pass through you’⁷⁴—but [only] the one who has been circumcised <and cleansed>, that is, of the ancient error, the lawless Law that stirs up activity in the members of the flesh.

that is, that the Lord, and that very word, shall not cease to circumcise us from the ancient deceit by means of integrity.

[5] What then, O Lord, is your law for your servants? Tell us! ‘If you do the will of my Father, you

⁶⁸ Mistranslating ἔμμονος as μόνος.

⁶⁹ σκεῦος.

⁷⁰ A somewhat garbled summary of Leviticus 13:53–57.

⁷¹ Isaiah 52:1.

⁷² Leviticus 13:51-52.

⁷³ The term for "dispersing" is the same as one of those for "spreading"—the terminology is confusing, but also in the background is the stipulation that "leprosy" in a garment is to be checked first, then after seven days checked again, and if it has not spread, it is washed, and after a further seven days, if it has not changed colour—even if it has not spreads—it is judged to be a chronic disease (Lev. 13.54-55). In moral terms, for Methodius, if the basic disease persists even after washing and waiting "seven days," it is an indication of a deep problem of hypocrisy.

⁷⁴ Isaiah 52:1.

will be as lamps full of eternal life. Watch, so as to be capable of setting out with me on the sea of incorruption. Therefore see that your lamps do not go out, so that you enter into the eternal palace.”

[XI.1] And as I had said this, Euthymius⁷⁵ said: “Indeed, concerning this, when I consider myself, when I hear about higher things (by higher things I mean the words of Christ), I am very glad, because I am brought to life by them, and I imagine that by heavenly things I have fixed my eyes on them, and forgetting myself, I think that I have left this world.”

[2] And I [said]: “Therefore it is fitting that we should speak when we have come back again.⁷⁶ Let us join this to the rest.⁷⁷ For we have spoken, setting ourselves well to the word, but we have not made a sufficient end.⁷⁸

[3] Let us remember how we said that man is composed of soul and flesh. Therefore the laws concerning cloth and skin are given, so that one should not sin in the mind, nor in the flesh, nor in the desire. For not all, like many, are leprous in mind but healthy in soul and body, or else sound in mind, but sick in flesh and soul.

[4.] These are not heretical words that we speak, that one can sin in the mind. For they too confess Christ, and, concerning righteousness and truth (I promise) they keep the cloth and the skin clean, but they have their mind leprous because of their wrong belief. Or else they blaspheme against the very nature, that is, of the Father, or his eternal Word, or the Most Holy Spirit.

[5] Therefore indeed I say that heretics are sick of a foul leprosy.”

[Greek] Hence, the lawgiver rightly says that those who are going astray in doctrines and words have been harmed in the warp.

[XII.1] ► And I said: “It is clear even to children that all those who are arrogant and have high pride, though they are healthy in understanding, and speak right words, and keep their body pure in holiness, yet are they sick in soul because of their love of authority, and look down on the brethren as if from the heavens, with contempt. They pride themselves on understanding the scriptures, and occupy the place of a teacher. [2] They offend the poor, pushing them away rather than greeting them. Therefore it really is fitting to call spiritual pride leprosy. [3] For it says in the Proverbs, ‘The Lord resists the proud; but he gives grace to the humble.’⁷⁹ What then? Shall dust and ashes resist God,⁸⁰ or humble itself? [4] But let us humble ourselves before men of like passions to our own, and

[XII.1] Who, then, are the ones who are leprous in the woof, but pure in the skin and the warp? ...those who have deluded themselves and have their eyebrows raised up on high; for on the one hand, being healthy in their minds, and representing the Word himself in an orthodox manner, they actually preserve the "skin" pure in holiness; but on the other hand, they are swollen in their souls out of a desire for power, and like people who turn their attention from the heavens to other matters with an arrogant manner, they are puffed up by this very knowledge of the Scriptures and by the fact that they have been allotted the position of teacher. [2] And so, they rush eagerly forward with their hands in their salutations, vainly taking pride in

⁷⁵ Or Euphemius: the two names are homonymous in Slavonic.

⁷⁶ This could mean, "now that we have come back", and it is a participle in Slavonic; but the translation given is preferable, because it is said in response to Euthymius, who has said that he feels that he is transported out of this world not just now, but whenever he hears the words of Christ.

⁷⁷ I.e. let's carry on. [RP]

⁷⁸ I.e. not finished the subject, or not adequately.

⁷⁹ Proverbs 3:34 (LXX).

⁸⁰ Genesis 18:27.

we shall receive praise from God. ◀

deigning to speak to⁸¹ a poor man. For this reason, one should rightly consider as disease and leprosy their vanity and conceit and arrogance, which are the most God-hated passions, and hindrances to one's entry into Paradise. [3] For 'the Lord opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the lowly'⁸²—those who are lowly-minded in respect to people with the same passions and affections,⁸³ *not* those who are humbled indeed with respect to God, but disposed to be disdainful toward people of lower degree. What, then? ... 'Earth and ashes' shall be humbled with respect to God.⁸⁴ [4] One ought to be humble with respect to human beings who have the same passions and affections, just as one ought to give bread and clothing to the hungry and the naked. For we ants do not extend nourishment to the one who put the universe together and directs it fittingly and nourishes it; rather, by acts of kindness and generosity we are fulfilling his commandments. For God takes pleasure in these things and refers this kind of enthusiasm back up to himself.⁸⁵

[5] So much for these. But there are many who are sound in mind and soul (as [it says] there, in warp and woof), but in skin, that is, carnal pleasures, they are unclean, being seduced by their imaginations. Therefore it is well to look to oneself, so as not to founder in that great storm; for this, O Sistelius, is our healing."

[XIII.1] Having said this, I got up to go. But he got up and took hold of my coat from behind.

"Come," he said, "and I too will say a word to you, which once I heard in Lycia, the piety of a woman, who was well-versed in the scriptures, and prudent, and taught the things of the Lord wisely. What I heard I will declare to you all. [2] For this hospitable, and prudent woman, who always sought after understanding, used to say, 'Someone who seeks the truth above all should not be afraid or disturbed by the heights of reason. But when someone supposes that he has descended into the depths, and into difficult reasonings, he gives up, and, as it were, turns back half-way, and because he has not attained understanding he becomes slothful, and, as it says in the gospels, leaves his tower half-built. [3] Therefore it is well to be patient and undismayed. For the one who seeks the goodness of the scriptures with patience will see more clearly.

So also the prophet Elijah after that spirit which rent the mountains and the rocks, and after the earthquake and after the fire, then perceived the still small voice of that spirit, proceeding from one thing to the next until he came to the truth. [4] So casting away darkness, and sanctified in soul, let

⁸¹ Lit., "extending the mouth to..."

⁸² Proverbs 3:34 (LXX), cited in James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5.

⁸³ Gk. *homoiopatheis*. I.e., their fellow human beings.

⁸⁴ Cf. Genesis 18:27: Abraham is referring to himself as "earth and ashes" in relation to God.

⁸⁵ That is, he takes kindness to the poor as a tribute to himself.

us as from step to step ascend from understanding to understanding: that is, from the mountain wind (which is like unbelief) to searching the scriptures, as if entering the earthquake, and thence to the fire, that is, the unquenchable fire of love, and being made capable by it, let us proceed to the attainment of greater things, until we reach the summit, that is, the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.’

[5] And I wondered and said, ‘O wise woman, I marvel at your sagacity, and serenity, and reverence, and above all at your wisdom.’

And she smiled and said, ‘As there are certain wise interpretations of scripture, from these it is shown that one who studies the scriptures should not be dismayed.’

[XIV.1] And I said to her, ‘I need to hear of these things in full. And since we have been speaking of these things, let us also look into those things which lie before us: “Concerning clothing: when a leprous disease appears in it, in woollen or linen cloth, in warp or woof of linen or wool, or in a skin or in anything made of skin,”⁸⁶ etc.’⁸⁷

[2] ‘The plague in the wool means the renewed inner man, for he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, so also he calls the fruit of this the woven woollen garment. [3] The linen one means man, created from dust, for it grows out of the earth. Understand that likewise Paul said in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, “I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning,” etc.’⁸⁸ and again, “Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit.”⁸⁹

[4] For there are certain heresies that leave the outer man unblemished, but corrupt the inner man in his mind and his reason. For we see many who are pure in their life but corrupt in their faith.

[5] ► “Concerning clothing: when a leprous disease appears in it, in woollen or linen cloth, in warp or woof,” [6] let the Jews after the flesh tell us how this commandment is kept among them, or how this scripture is kept literally among them, and how it is possible to see leprosy in the warp or the woof or skin, which are inanimate objects. [7] For God makes a distinction between these as he does between rational beings having free will. For if the leprosy remains after seven days, he commands the warp and the woof and the garment to be condemned, as not changing from its uncleanness. It is clear that he is speaking of animate beings, and not of inanimate objects. ◀

[Greek] [5] “And in a garment—if a disease of leprosy arises in it, in a woollen garment or in a garment of tow, either in the warp or in the woof.”⁹⁰ [6] Let the Jews after the flesh⁹¹ answer us: How is this commandment fulfilled among them—or indeed, how is the Scripture preserved among them according to the bare [literal text], so as to be able to distinguish leprosy of the warp or skin or woof of lifeless things?⁹² [7] For God is differentiating these things as being in the power of rational beings endowed with free will. For if, in short, when the leprosy persists after the seven-days' separation, it is commanded that the garment, either warp <or woof>, be *punished*, on the grounds that it is not changed away from the unclean state, then it

⁸⁶ Leviticus 13:47–48.

⁸⁷ It is not clear where Sistelius' request ends and the woman's reply begins. It may be here.

⁸⁸ 2 Corinthians 11:3.

⁸⁹ 2 Corinthians 7:1.

⁹⁰ Leviticus 13:47–8.

⁹¹ “After the flesh,” as frequently in Patristic writers, used to indicate an exclusive focus on the literalistic details of the prescriptions, rather than the allegorical lessons Methodius has been expounding. There is possibly also an allusion to the common idea that Christians are the “spiritual Israel”.

⁹² These rhetorical questions amount to: How can it be that they are satisfied with the “literal” level?

is clear that he is talking about rational creatures, not lifeless things as *they* think. How much enthusiasm, then, among them for lifeless things there—I mean warp and woof—was he producing in his legislation, he who created the universe by spirit and word?—when according to the apostle, it is not even for oxen that God is concerned, but rather these things were written for *our* admonition.⁹³

[XV.1] Let us not pass this by; so, having removed the veil from our eyes, we shall behold God's glory. For the scriptures contain nothing in vain. When he gives a commandment concerning sins of the mind and the flesh, he speaks again in order about skin and warp [2] to him who has his woollen and linen garments clean, that is, faith and work. For the church is the Lord's garment, gathered from many nations, and woven together, so that we who are weaker, like the woof, may be supported by the stronger. Therefore the prophet says, "as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."⁹⁴ He speaks concerning the union with Christ, and our unity in love. [4] For he calls the warp the stronger order of the church, that is, the bishops and teachers, and the woof, the people who are subject to them and whose shepherds they are. The skin is the catechumens, for they have not yet put off their garments of skin by baptism, [5] as Paul also said: "I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."⁹⁵ As it says also in Leviticus: "He shall marry only a woman who is a virgin. A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, a prostitute, these he shall not marry. He shall marry a virgin of his own kin."⁹⁶

[6] For if each of us is renewed day by day, and has cast off his leprosy, that is, the adultery that is the reason for our exile, his virginity is restored, and by the wisdom of God he comes back to his first virtue, and he is adorned with golden fringes,⁹⁷ that is, love, faith, purity and patience, and is purified and united with Christ. [7] Therefore the virgins love him, and he loves the virgins, as he writes in the Song of Songs,⁹⁸ souls that are young and pure in spirit. Is it not so, O Sistelius?

And I said: 'This is very reasonable.'

[XVI.1] And she said: 'Therefore, as we said at first, if we purify all our members, we shall be Christ's garment. Therefore it says of the prophet Isaiah, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, [...] for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation," etc."⁹⁹ [2] For who else will purify us? Zechariah the prophet says: "Then God showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was dressed with filthy clothes [...] The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." And afterwards: "they clothed him with clean clothes."¹⁰⁰

[3] Understand that the unclean clothes are humanity before it comes to faith; and he has enlightened humanity (once it has denuded itself of the old man) like the sun with his own flesh. [4]

⁹³ Cf. 1. Cor. 9.9-10.

⁹⁴ Isaiah 61:10

⁹⁵ 2 Corinthians 11:2.

⁹⁶ Leviticus 21:13-14.

⁹⁷ Cf. Psalm 44:14 (LXX).

⁹⁸ Cf. Song of Songs 1:3.

⁹⁹ Isaiah 61:10.

¹⁰⁰ Zechariah 3:1-5.

Enquire how by this God also rebuked Tyre,¹⁰¹ saying, “Why is your bed unclean?” It was made of fine linen and purple of Egypt,¹⁰² and not of the devisings of God’s wisdom, but from Egypt, and like that rich man who was clothed in purple,¹⁰³ but was not acceptable to God. [5] And for this reason is he unacceptable, because he adorns himself with these temporal things, and not with spiritual and bright deeds, like Lazarus, who was careless of external things, but rather took pains over spiritual things, and therefore he rested in Abraham’s bosom. And we find Job glorified by his sicknesses and pains. [6] Therefore also that Pharisee went away without completing his prayer,¹⁰⁴ having exalted himself over a man like himself. It would have been right to have an attitude according to the teaching of Christ, neither wrathful nor proud.

[7] For we often find such people living on fine food and dressing themselves in fine clothes, so that Christ too said of the rich that it is easier to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁰⁵ [8] For it is better to honour the strangers and the poor, one of whom Christ called himself; but instead of them they go to those who have much gold, and rather honour them, either because of their rank or for some other reasons. [9] And this is how we have become uncharitable, shutting up our kindness towards our brethren. This is how we have become ashamed of poverty, the companion of the prophets and the shaper of integrity. [10] Alas! In what way are we better than other people, we who are called to have righteousness greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees? We ought to learn to despise temporal things. But even if the ocean flowed with silver and the whole earth was covered in gold, we would not be satisfied.

[XVII.1] Which of us nowadays truly loves his brother? Or who does not plot evil against his neighbour? Or who does not envy his friend? [2] Where the bishops gnaw at their revenues, there is our woof, O leper!¹⁰⁶ Where the secular clergy¹⁰⁷ are, there is our woof. The Holy Spirit reproves them, saying, “Do shepherds feed themselves? do not the shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you feed on the milk, and clothe yourselves with the wool,” and afterwards: “And my sheep were scattered, [...] and they became meat to all the wild beasts.”¹⁰⁸ [3] And again, the Lord compares riches to thorns. The Lord told the man who asked him which was the greatest commandment to give away his possessions. The apostle calls wealth a deadly snare. The Lord says, “Love your enemies,” but we are enemies to our friends. [4] For this is good, not to love those that love us, but rather to love those that are our enemies. The Lord said, “Give to everyone who begs from you,”¹⁰⁹ but we, seeing our brethren naked, do not even think of it.

[5] It is right for us all, and especially for bishops, to despise temporal things. For what can gold or silver or pearls do? When have they been able to stop famines or prevent the death of children? [6] They are nothing but deceptions and unprofitable to us. For, no one being able to add even one hair to his head, it is vain for anyone to exert himself over these. [7] For if the birds, which neither sow nor reap, are fed, and if the flowers do not weave clothing for anybody, but by the will of God are clothed so well, how much more should we be? For our heavenly Father knows that we need all these things.¹¹⁰ And the wise Solomon, who was richer than all kings, sinned because of the

¹⁰¹ Following Bonwetsch’s emendation *симъ и тира* for *си мытаръ*, “this publican”.

¹⁰² Cf. Ezekiel 27:7.

¹⁰³ Cf. Luke 16:19.

¹⁰⁴ Evidently in the sense of not achieving anything by it.

¹⁰⁵ Mark 10:25.

¹⁰⁶ Bonwetsch emends to “there is our warp leprous” (*da ist unser Aufzug aussätzig*).

¹⁰⁷ Bonwetsch renders this “laity”. The Slavonic word is *běl’ci*, meaning ordinary, “secular” clergy, as opposed to *čern’ci*, “monks”, or “regular” clergy, who followed a monastic rule. But these are medieval ideas. The context suggests that, in the Greek, the original word must have been something like *kosmikos*, with ambiguous meanings of “worldly” (in a moral sense); “in the world” (e.g. as opposed to monks); or “laity” (as opposed to clergy).

¹⁰⁸ Ezekiel 34:2–5 (LXX).

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 5:42.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Matthew 6:26–32.

abundance of his table.

[XVIII.1] Therefore let us be vigilant, lest our hearts be encumbered with eating and drinking. For now we are drunk with the cares of the world, and all kinds of trouble. Love is dried up altogether. Therefore let us enquire, let us be zealous, let us denounce them rather than the unbaptised. For we have all these evil habits. [2] But now for our sake the Holy Spirit speaks by Micah the prophet, who said: “Woe is me! [...] The faithful have disappeared from the land, and there is no one left who is upright; they all lie in wait for blood, and they hunt each other with nets. Their hands are skilled to do evil,”¹¹¹ etc.

[3] Now all this has come to pass, for our god is our belly,¹¹² which is all we care for. We look down at the earth like cattle, and cannot look at any of the things of our Father and Creator. [4] Truly it is hard nowadays to find anyone who is conformed to the image of God’s Son by patience and humility and charity and the other virtues, and who thirsts for his departure from this world, and who teaches and rebukes with meekness; [5] one who can be seen on the earth in his body, but whose mind is in the heavens, and feeds upon holy understanding. Such a one is fit to be a true pastor and teacher.

[6] “Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?”¹¹³ First you should correct yourself, and then your neighbour. [7] For what good are words if there are no deeds? For he said to the physician, “Heal yourself.”¹¹⁴

[8] But that he would have us rebuke [others], he says elsewhere, if a brother sins against you, warn him; he commands us to receive the penitent and have him as a brother.¹¹⁵ [9] But it is well for anyone who rebukes to be blameless. Therefore try yourself, O man, beforehand, and come to rebuke others when you have understood your own [faults].”

¹¹¹ Micah 6:1–3.

¹¹² Philippians 3:19.

¹¹³ Matthew 7:3.

¹¹⁴ Luke 4:23.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Luke 17:3–4.