Against Publishing the Errors of the Brethren

John Chrysostom (c. AD 349–407)

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Upon the Not Publishing the Errors of the Brethren, Nor Uttering Imprecations Upon Enemies.

1. I Account you happy for the zeal, beloved, with which you flock into the Father's house. For from this zeal I have ground for feeling confidence about your health also with respect to the soul; for indeed the school of the Church is an admirable surgery-a surgery, not for bodies, but for souls. For it is spiritual, and sets right, not fleshly wounds, but errors of the mind, and of these errors and wounds the medicine is the word. This medicine is compounded, not from the herbs growing on the earth, but from the words proceeding from heaven-this no hands of physicians, but tongues of preachers have dispensed. On this account it lasts right through; and neither is its virtue impaired by length of time, nor defeated by any strength of diseases. For certainly the medicines of physicians have both these defects; for while they are fresh they display their proper strength, but when much time has passed; just as those bodies which have grown old; they become weaker; and often too the difficult character of maladies is wont to baffle them; since they are but human. Whereas the divine medicine is not such as this; but after much time has intervened, it still retains all its inherent virtue. Ever since at least Moses was born (for from thence dates the beginning of the Scripture) it has healed so many human beings; and not only has it not lost its proper power, but neither has any disease ever yet overcome it.

This medicine it is not possible to get by payment of silver; but he who has displayed sincerity of purpose and disposition goes his way having it all. On account of this both rich and poor alike obtain the benefit of this healing process. For where there is a necessity to pay down money the man of large means indeed shares the benefit; but the poor man often has to go away deprived of the gain, since his income does not suffice him for the making up of the medicine. But in this case, since it is not possible to pay down silver coin, but it is needful to display faith and a good purpose, he who has paid down these with forwardness of mind, this is he who most reaps the advantage; since indeed these are the price paid for the medicinal treatment. And the rich and the poor man share the benefit alike; or rather it is not alike that they share the benefit, but often the poor man goes away in the enjoyment of more. What ever can be the reason? It is because the rich man, possessed beforehand

by many thoughts, having the pride and puffed-up temper belonging to wealthiness; living with carelessness and lazy ease as companions, receives the medicine of the hearing of the Scriptures not with much attention, nor with much earnestness; but the poor man, far removed from delicate living and gluttony and indolence; spending all his time in handicraft and honest labours;

and gathering hence much love of wisdom for the soul; becomes thereby more attentive and free from slackness, and is wont to give his mind with more accurate care to all that is said: whence also, inasmuch as the price he has paid is higher, the benefit which he departs having reaped is greater.

2. It is not as absolutely bringing an accusation against those who are wealthy that I say all this; nor as praising the poor without reference to circumstances: for neither is wealth an evil, but the having made a bad use of wealth; nor is poverty a virtue, but the having made a virtuous use of poverty. That rich man who was in the time of Lazarus was punished, not because he was rich, but because he was cruel and inhuman. And that poor man who rested in the bosom of Abraham was praised, not because he was poor, but because he had borne his poverty with thankfulness.

For of things-(now attend carefully to this saying; for it will avail to put into you sufficient religious knowledge, and to cast out all unsound reasoning, and to bring about your having your judgment right concerning the truth of things)-well, of things some are by nature morally good, and others the contrary; and others neither good nor evil, but they occupy the intermediate position. A good thing piety is by nature, impiety an evil thing; a good thing virtue, an evil thing wickedness; but wealth and poverty in themselves are neither the one nor the other; but from the will of those who use them they become either the one or the other. For if thou hast used thy wealth for purposes of philanthropy, the thing becomes to thee a foundation of good; but if for rapine and grasping and insolence, thou hast turned the use of it to the direct opposite; but for this wealth is not chargeable, but he who has used his wealth for insolence. So also we may say of poverty: if thou have borne it nobly by giving thanks to the Master, what has been done becomes to thee a cause and ground for receiving crowns; but if on account of this thou blaspheme thy Creator, and accuse Him for His providence, thou hast again used the thing to an evil purpose.

But just as in that case it is not wealth that is responsible for the avarice, but the person who has made a bad use of wealth, so also here we are not to lay the blame of the blasphemy on poverty, but on him who did not choose to bear the thing in a sober spirit. For in every case both the praise and the blame belong to our own will and choice. Good is wealth, yet not absolutely, but to him only to whom it is not sin; and again poverty is wicked, but not absolutely, but only in the mouth of the impious, because he is discontented, because he blasphemes, because he is indignant, because he accuses Him who has made him.

3. Let us not therefore accuse riches, nor revile poverty absolutely, but those who do not will to use these virtuously; for the things themselves lie in the middle. But as I was saying

(for it is good to return to the former subject), both rich and poor enjoy the benefit of the medicines administered here with the same boldness and freedom; and often the poor with more earnestness. For the special excellence of the medicines is not this only, that they heal souls, that their virtue is not destroyed by length of time, that they are not worsted by any disease, that the benefit is publicly offered gratuitously, that the healing treatment is on a footing of equality both for rich and poor-but they have another quality also not inferior to these good points. Pray of what character is this? It is that we do not publicly expose those who come to this surgery. For they who go off to the surgeries of the outside world, have many who examine their wounds, and unless the physician have first uncovered the sore, he does not apply the dressing; but here not so, but seeing as we do innumerable patients, we go through the medical treatment of them in a latent manner. For not by dragging into publicity those who have sinned do we thus noise abroad the sins committed by them; but after putting forth our teaching, as common to all, we leave it entirely to the conscience of the hearers;

so that each may draw to himself from what is said the suitable medicine for his own wound. For there proceeds the word of doctrine from the tongue of the speaker, containing accusation of wickedness, praise of virtue, blame of lewdness, commendation of chasteness, censure of pride, praise of gentleness, just as a medicine of varied and manifold ingredients, compounded from every kind; and to take what is applicable to himself and salutary is the part of each of the hearers. The word then issues openly, and settling into the conscience of each, secretly both affords the healing treatment which comes from it, and before the malady has been divulged, has often restored health.

4. You at all events heard yesterday how I extolled the power of prayer, how I reproached those who pray with listlessness; without having publicly exposed one of them. Those then who were conscious to themselves of earnestness, accepted that commendation of prayer, and became still more earnest by the praises, while those who were conscious to themselves of listlessness, accepted on the other hand the rebuking, and put off their carelessness. But neither these nor those do we know; and this ignorance is serviceable to both-how, I now tell you. He who has heard the commendations of prayer and is conscious to himself of earnestness, were he to have many witnesses of the commendations, would have lapsed towards pride; but, as it is, by having secretly accepted the praise, he is removed from all arrogance. On the other hand he who is conscious to himself of listlessness, having heard the accusation, has become better from the accusation, as having no one of men a witness of the rebuking; and this was of no ordinary profit to him. For on account of the being flurried at the opinion of the vulgar, so long as we may think that we escape notice in our wickedness, we exert ourselves to become better; but when we have become notorious to all, and have lost the consolation derived from the escaping notice, we grow more shameless and remiss rather.

And just as sores become more painful by being unbandaged and frequently exposed to cold air, so also the soul after having sinned, if in the presence of many it be rebuked for what it

has done amiss, grows thereby more shameless. In order therefore that this might not take place, the word administered its medicine to you covertly. And that you may understand that the gain which this covert treatment has is great, hear what the Christ says. "If thy brother have committed a fault against thee convince him of it," and he did not say "between him and the whole town," nor, "between thee and the whole people," but "only between thee and him. Let the accusation, he says, be unwitnessed to, in order that the change to amendment may be made easy of digestion. A great good surely, the making the advice unpublished. Sufficient is the conscience, sufficient that incorruptible judge. It is not so much thou who rebukest him who has done wrong as his own conscience (that accuser is the sharper), nor dost thou do it with the more exact knowledge of the faults committed. Add not therefore wound to wound by exposing him who has done wrong; but administer for thyself the counsel unwitnessed. This therefore we are doing now-the very thing that Paul also did, framing the indictment against him who among the Corinthians had sinned without citing of witnesses. And hear how. "On this account," he says, "brethren, I have applied these figures of speech to myself and Apollos.

And yet not he himself nor Apollos were they who had rent the people in schism and divided the Church; but all the same he concealed the accusation, and just as by some masks, by hiding the countenances of the defendants by his own and Apollos' names, he afforded them power to amend of that wickedness. And again, "Lest in some way after I have come God humble me, and I may have to mourn many of those who have before sinned, and have not repented over the uncleanness and lasciviousness which they had committed. See how here also he indefinitely mentions those who had sinned, in order that he might not, by openly bringing the accusation, render the soul of those who had sinned more shameless. Therefore, just as we administer our reproofs with so much sparing of your feelings, so do ye also with all seriousness receive the correction; and attend with carefulness to what is said.

5. We discoursed to you yesterday about the power which is in prayer. I pointed out how the devil then lies in wait, deceiver that he is. For since he sees very great gain accruing to us from prayer, then most he assails us, in order that he may disable us from our defence; that he may send us off home empty-handed. And just as before magistrates, when the officers of the court who are about the person of the magistrate have a hostile feeling toward those who come before him, they by their staves drive them away to a distance, preventing their coming near and resorting to lamentation and so obtaining compassion; so also the devil, when he has seen us coming to the judge, drives us away to a distance, not by any staff, but through our own slackness. For he knows, he knows clearly, that if they have come to him in a sober spirit, and have told the sins committed, and have mourned with their soul fervent, they will depart having received full forgiveness; for God loves mankind; and on this account he is beforehand with them, and debars them from access, in order that they may obtain no one of the things which they need. But the soldiers of magistrates with violence scare away those who are coming to them; but he with no compulsion, but by deceiving us, and

throwing us into security. On this account we are not deserving even of allowance, since we voluntarily deprive ourselves of the good things.

Prayer with earnestness is a light of the understanding and soul-a light unquenchable and perpetual. On this account he throws into our minds countless rubbish-heaps of imaginations; and things which we never had imagined, these collecting together at the very moment of prayer he pours down upon our souls. And just as winds often rushing from an opposite quarter by a violent gust extinguish a lamp's flame as it is being lighted, so also the devil, when he has seen the' flame of our prayer being kindled, blowing it on every side with the blasts of countless thoughts, does not desist before and until he has quenched the light. But the very thing which they who are kindling those lamps do, this let us also do. And what do they do? When they see a violent wind coming, by laying their finger upon the opening of the lamp they bar the entrance against the wind. For so long as he assails from without we shall be able to stand against him; but when we have opened to him the doors of the mind, and have received the enemy inside; after that we are no longer able to withstand even a little; but, having on all sides completely extinguished the memory, just as a smoking lamp, he allows our mouth to utter empty words. But just as they put their finger upon the opening of the lamp, so let us lay consideration upon our mind:

let us close off from the wicked spirit the entrance, in order that he may not quench our light of prayer. Remember both those illustrations, both that of the soldiers and the magistrate, and that respecting the lamp. For with this purpose we adduce to you these illustrations; with which we are conversant, in which we live, in order that, after we have departed hence and have returned home, we may from things of familiar occurrence receive a reminder of what has been said.

6. Prayer is a strong piece of armour and a great security. You heard yesterday how the three children, fettered as they were, destroyed the power of the fire; how they trampled down the blaze; how they overcame the furnace, and conquered the operation of the element. Hear to-day again how the noble and great Isaac overcame the nature itself of bodies through prayer. They destroyed the power of fire, this man to-day loosed the bonds of incapacitated nature. And learn how he effected this. "Isaac," it says, "prayed concerning his wife, because she was barren. This has to-day been read to you; yesterday the sermon was about prayer; and to-day again there is a demonstration of the power of prayer. See how the grace of the Spirit has ordered that what has been read to-day harmonises with what was said yesterday. "Isaac," it says, "prayed concerning Rebecca his wife, because she was barren. This first is worth inquiring into, for what cause she was barren. She was of a life admirable and replete with much chastity-both herself and her husband. We cannot lay hold of the life of those just ones, and say that the barrenness was the work of sin. And not only was she herself barren, but also his mother Sarah, who had borne him; not only was his mother barren and his wife, but also his daughter-in-law, the wife of Jacob, Rachel. What is the meaning of this band of barren ones? All were righteous, all living in virtue, all were witnessed to by God.

For it was of them that He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Of the same persons Paul also thus speaks. "For which cause God is not ashamed to call himself their God. Many are the commendations of them in the New, many the praises of them in the Old Testament. On all sides they were bright and illustrious, and yet they all had barren wives, and continued in childlessness until an advanced period. When therefore thou seest man and wife living with virtue; when thou seest them beloved of God, caring for piety, and yet suffering the malady of childlessness; do not suppose that the childlessness is at all a retribution for sins. For many are God's reasons for the dispensation, and to us inexplicable; and for all we must be heartily thankful, and think those only wretched who live in wickedness; not those who do not possess children. Often God does it expediently, though we know not the cause of events. On this account in every case it is our duty to admire His wisdom, and to glorify His unspeakable love of man.

7. Well, this consideration indeed is able to school us in moral character, but it is necessary also to state the cause for which those women were barren. What then was the cause? It was in order that when thou hast seen the Virgin bringing forth our common Master, thou mightest not disbelieve. Wherefore exercise thy mind in the womb of the barren; in order that when thou hast seen the womb, disabled and bound as it is, being opened to the bearing of children from the grace of God, thou mightest not marvel at hearing that a virgin has brought forth. Or rather even marvel and be astounded; but do not disbelieve the marvel. When the Jew says to thee, "how did the virgin bear? say to him "how did she bear who was barren and enfeebled by old age? There were then two hindrances, both the unseasonableness of her age and the unserviceableness of nature; but in the case of the Virgin there was one hindrance only, the not having shared in marriage. The barren one therefore prepares the way for the virgin. And that thou mayest learn that it was on this account that the barren ones had anticipated it, in order that the Virgin's childbirth might be believed, hear the words of Gabriel which were addressed to her-For when he had come and said to her, "thou shalt conceive in the womb and bear a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus;

the Virgin was astonished and marvelled, and said, "how will this be to me, since I know not a man. What then said the Angel? "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. Seek not the sequence of nature, he says, when that which takes place is above nature; look not round for marriage and throes of child-birth, when the manner of the birth is too grand for marriage. "And how will this be," she says, "since I know not a husband. And verily on this account shall this be, since thou knowest no husband. For didst thou know a husband, thou wouldest not have been deemed worthy to serve this ministry. So that, for the reason why thou disbelievest, for this believe. And thou wouldest not have been deemed worthy to serve this ministry, not because marriage is an evil; but because virginity is superior; and fight it was that the entry of the Master should be more august than ours; for it was royal, and the king enters through one more august. It was necessary that He should both share as to birth, and be diverse from ours. Wherefore both these things are managed.

For the being born from the womb is common in respect to us, but the being born without marriage is a thing greater than on a level with us. And the gestation and conception in the belly belongs to human nature; but that the pregnancy should take place without sexual intercourse is too august for human nature. And for this purpose both these things took place, in order that thou mayest learn both the pre-eminence and the fellowship with thee of Him who was born.

8. And pray consider the wisdom of all that was done. Neither did the pre-eminence injure the likeness and kinship to us, nor did the kinship to us dim the pre-eminence; but both were displayed by all the circumstances; and the one had our condition in its entirety, and the other what was diverse compared with us. But just as I was saying, on this account the barren ones went before, in order that the Virgin's child-birth might be believed, that she might be led by the hand to faith in that promise and undertaking which she heard from the angel, saying, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the miraculous power of the Most High shall overshadow thee"-thus, he says, thou art able to bear. Look not to the earth; it is from the heavens that the operation will come. That which takes place is a grace of the Spirit; pray inquire not about nature and laws of marriage. But since those words were too high for her, he wills to afford also another demonstration. But do thou, pray, observe how the barren one leads her on the way to the belief in this. For since that demonstration was too high for the Virgin's intelligence, hear how he brought down what he said to lower things also, leading her by the hand by sensible facts. For "behold," he says, "Elizabeth thy kinswoman-she also has conceived a son in her old age; and this month is the sixth to her who was called barren.

Seest thou that the barren one was for the sake of the Virgin? since with what object did he adduce to her the child-bearing of her kinswoman? with what object did he say, "in her old age? with what object did he add, "who was called barren? It was by way of inducing her by all these things, manifestly, to the believing the glad annunciation. For this cause he spoke of both the age and the disabling effect of nature; for this cause he awaited the time also which had elapsed from the conception; for he did not tell to her the glad tidings immediately from the beginning, but awaited for a six-months period to have passed to the barren one, in order that the puerperal swelling might, for the rest, be a pledge of the pregnancy, and an indisputable demonstration might arise of the conception. And pray again look at the intelligence of Gabriel. For he neither reminded her of Sarah, nor of Rebecca, nor of Rachel; and yet they also were barren, and they had grown old, and that which took place was a marvel; but the stories were ancient. Now things new and recent and occurring in our generation are wont to induce us into the belief of marvels more than those which are old. On this account having let those women alone, that she should understand from her kinswoman Elizabeth herself what was coming upon her, he brought it forward; so as from her to lead her to her own-that most awful and august childbirth.

For the child-birth of the barren one lay between ours and that of the Master less indeed than that of the Virgin, but greater than ours. On this account it was by Elizabeth lying

between, just as by some bridge, that he lifted up the mind of the Virgin from the travail which is according to nature, to that which is above nature.

9. I did desire to say more, and to teach you other reasons for which Rebecca, and Rachel, were barren; but the time does not permit; urging on the discourse to the power of prayer. For on this account indeed I have mooted all these points, that ye might understand how the prayer of Isaac unbound the barrenness of his wife; and that prayer for so long a time. "Isaac," it says, "continually prayed about Rebecca his wife, and God listened to him. For do not suppose that he invoked God and had immediately been listened to; for he had spent much time in praying to God. And if you desire to learn how much, I will tell you this too with exactness. He had spent the number of twenty years in praying to God. Whence is this manifest? from the sequence itself. For the Scripture, desiring to point out the faith and the endurance and the love of wisdom of that righteous man, did not break off and leave untold even the time, but made it also clear to us, covertly indeed, so as to rouse up our indolence; but nevertheless did not allow it to be uncertain, Hear then how it covertly indicated to us the time. "Now Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebecca, a daughter of Bethuel the Syrian. You hear how many years old he was when he brought home his wife: "Forty years old," it says, "he was when he took Rebecca.

But since we have learnt how many years old he was when he married his wife, let us learn also when he after all became a father, and how many years old he was then, when he begat Jacob; and we shall be able to see how long a time his wife had remained barren; and that during all that time he continued to pray to God. How many years old then was he when he begat Jacob? "Jacob," it says, "came forth laying hold with his right hand of his brother's heel: on this account he called him Jacob, and him Esau. Now Isaac was sixty years old when he begat them. If therefore when he brought Rebecca home he was forty years old, and when he begat the sons sixty, it is very plain that his wife had remained barren for twenty years between, and during all this time Isaac continued to pray to God.

10. After this do we not feel shame, and hide our faces, at seeing that righteous man for twenty years persevering and not desisting; we ourselves after a first or second petition often fainting and indignant? And yet he indeed had in large measure liberty of speech towards God, and all the same he felt no discontent at the delay of the giving, but remained patient, whereas we, laden with countless sins, living with an evil conscience, displaying no good will towards the Master; if we are not heard before having spoken, are bewildered, impatiently recoil, desist from asking-on this account we always retire with empty hands. Who has for twenty years besought God for one thing, as this righteous man did? or rather who for twenty months only? Yesterday I was saying that they are many who pray with slackness, and yawning, and stretching themselves, and continually shifting their attitude, and indulging in every carelessness in their prayers-but to-day I have found also another damage attaching itself to their prayers more destructive than that one. For many, throwing themselves prostrate, and striking the ground with their forehead, and pouring forth hot tears, and groaning bitterly from the heart and stretching out their hands, and displaying

much earnestness, employ this warmth and forwardness against their own salvation. For it is not on behalf of their own sins that they beseech God; nor are they asking forgiveness of the offences committed by them;

but they are exerting this earnestness against their enemies entirely, doing just the same thing as if one, after whetting his sword, were not to use the weapon against his enemies, but to thrust it through his own throat. So these also use their prayers not for the remission of their own sins, but about revenge on their enemies; which is to thrust the sword against themselves. This too the wicked one has devised, in order that on all sides we may destroy ourselves, both through slackness and through earnestness. For the one class by their carelessness in their prayers exasperate God, by displaying contempt through their slackness; and the others, when they display earnestness, display the earnestness on the other hand against their own salvation. "A certain person," he (the devil) says, "is slack: that is sufficient for me with a view to his obtaining nothing; this man is earnest and thoroughly aroused; what then must be done to accomplish the same result? I cannot slacken his earnestness, nor throw him into carelessness; I will contrive his destruction in the other way. How so? I will manage that he use his earnestness for transgressing the law: (for the praying against one's personal enemies is a transgression of law). "He shall depart therefore not only having gained nothing by his earnestness, but also having endured the hurt which is greater than that caused through slackness. Such as these are the injuries of the devil: the one sort he destroys through their remissness;

and the other through thor earnestness itself, when it is shown not according to God's laws.

11. But it is also worth hearing the very words of their prayer, and how the words are of a puerile mind; of how infantile a soul. I am ashamed in truth when about to repeat them; but it is absolutely necessary to repeat them, and to imitate that coarse tongue. What then are the words? "Avenge me of my enemies, show them that I too have God (on my side). They do not then learn, man, that we have God, when we are indignant and angry and impatient; but when we are gentle and meek and subdued, and practise all love of wisdom. So also God said, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens. Perceivest thou not that it is an insult to God, the making a request to God against thine enemies? And how is it an insult? one will say. Because He Himself said, "pray for your enemies; and brought in this divine law. When therefore thou claimest that the legislator should relax his own laws; and callest upon him to legislate in opposition to himself; and supplicatest him who had forbidden thee to pray against thine enemies to hear thee praying against thine enemies; thou art not praying in doing this, nor calling upon him; but thou art insulting the lawgiver, and acting with drunken violence towards him, who is sure to give to thee the good things which result from prayer.

And how is it possible to be heard when praying, tell me, when thou exasperatest him who is sure to hear? For by doing these things thou art pushing thine own salvation into a pit, and art rushing down a precipice, by striking thine enemy before the king's eyes. For even if thou doest not this with the hands, with thy words thou strikest him, the thing which thou darest

not do even in the case of thy fellow-slaves. At least dare to do this in a ruler's presence, and though thou hast done countless public services, thou wilt straightway surely be led away to execution. Then (I ask) in the presence of a ruler dost thou not dare to insult thine equal, but when doing this in God's presence, tell me, dost thou not shudder, nor fear when in the time of entreaty and prayer bring so savage and turning thyself into a wild beast; and displaying greater want of feeling than he who demanded payment of the hundred pence? For that thou art more insolent than he, listen to the story itself. A certain man owed ten thousand talents to his master; then, not having (where-with) to pay, he entreated him to be long-suffering, in order that, his wife having been sold and his house and his children, he might settle his master's claim. And the master seeing him lamenting had compassion on him, and remitted the ten thousand talents.

He having gone out and found another servant owing him a hundred pence, seizing his throat demanded them with great cruelty and inhumanity. The Master having heard this threw him into the prison, and laid on him again the debt of the ten thousand talents which he had before remitted; and he paid the penalty of the cruelty shown towards his fellow-servant.

12. Now do thou consider in how much more unfeeling and insensible in a way thou hast acted even than he, praying against thine enemies. He did not beg his master to demand, but he himself demanded, the hundred pence; whereas thou even callest on the Master for this shameless and forbidden demand. And he seized his fellow-servant's throat not before his lord's eyes, but outside; while thou in the very moment of prayer, standing in the King's presence, doest this. And if he, for doing this without either having urged his master to the demand, and after going forth, met with no forgiveness; thou, both stirring up the Master to (exacting) this forbidden payment, and doing this before his eyes, what sort of penalty will thou have to pay? tell me. But thy mind is inflamed by the memory of the enmity, and swells, and thy heart rises, and when recurring in memory to him who has caused pain, thou art unable to reduce the swelling of thy thought. But set against this inflammation the memory resulting from thine own sins committed the fear resulting from the punishment to come. Recall to memory for how many things thou art accountable to thy master, and that for all those things thou owest Him satisfaction; and this fear will surely overcome that anger; since indeed this is far more powerful than that passion. Recall the memory of hell and punishment and vengeance during the time of thy prayer;

and thou wilt not be able even to receive thine enemy into thy mind. Make thy mind contrite, humble thy soul by the memory of the offences committed by thee, and wrath will not be able even to trouble thee. But the cause of all these evils is this, that we scrutinise the sins of all others with great exactitude; while we let our own pass with great remissness. Whereas we ought to do the contrary-to keep our own faults unforgotten; but never even to admit a thought of those of others. If we do this we shall both have God propitious, and shall cease cherishing immortal anger against our neighbours, and we shall never have any one as an enemy; and even if we should have at any time we shall both quickly put an end to his

enmity, and should obtain speedy pardon for our own sins. For just as he who treasures up the memory of wrong against his neighbour does not permit the punishment upon his own sins to be done away; so he who is clear of anger will speedily be clear of sins also. For if we, wicked as we are and enslaved to passion, on account of the commandment of God overlook all the faults committed against us, much more will He who is a lover of mankind, and good, and free from any passion, overlook our delinquencies, rendering to us the recompense of our kindly spirit towards our neighbour in the forgiveness of our own sins:

which God grant that we may attain, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the dominion, to the ages of the ages. Amen.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.