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Oration VII

Panegyric on His Brother S. Cæsarius

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committed to your care,²⁹²⁹ and Him Who committed it, and the Sufferings of Christ, and your hopes therefrom, holding fast the faith which ye have received, and in which ye were brought up, by which also ye are being saved, and trust to save others (for not many, be well assured, can boast of what you can), and reckoning piety to consist, not in often speaking about God, but in silence for the most part, for the tongue is a dangerous thing to men, if it be not governed by reason. Believe that listening is always less dangerous than talking, just as learning about God is more pleasant than teaching. Leave the more accurate search into these questions to those who are the Stewards of the Word; and for yourselves, worship a little in words, but more by your actions, and rather by keeping the Law than by admiring the Lawgiver; shew your love for Him by fleeing from wickedness, pursuing after virtue, living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, drawing your knowledge from Him, building upon the foundation of the faith, not wood or hay or stubble,²⁹³⁰ weak materials and easily spent when the fire shall try our works or destroy them; but gold, silver, precious stones, which remain and stand.

VIII. So may ye act, and so may ye honour us, whether present or absent, whether taking your part in our sermons, or preferring to do something else: and may ye be the children of God, pure and unblamable, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation:²⁹³¹ and may ye never be entangled in the snares of the wicked that go round about, or bound with the chain of your sins. May the Word in you never be smothered with cares of this life and so ye become unfruitful: but may ye walk in the King's Highway, turning aside neither to the right hand nor to the left,²⁹³² but led by the Spirit through the strait gate. Then all our affairs shall prosper, both now and at the inquest There, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

Oration VII.

Panegyric on His Brother S. Cæsarius.

The date of this Oration is probably the spring of A.D. 369. It is placed by S. Jerome first among S. Gregory's Orations. Cæsarius, the Saint's younger brother, was born probably about A.D. 330. Educated in his early years at home, he studied later in the schools of Alexandria, where he attained great proficiency in mathematics, astronomy, and, especially, in medicine. On his return from Alexandria, he was offered by the Emperor Constantius, in response to a public petition, an

²⁹²⁹ Gen. i. 27.

²⁹³⁰ 1 Cor. iii. 12.

²⁹³¹ Phil. ii. 15.

²⁹³² Num. xxi. 22; Isa. xl. 3.

honourable and lucrative post at Byzantium, but was prevailed upon by Gregory to return with him to Nazianzus. After a while he went back to Byzantium, and, on the accession of Julian, was pressed to retain his appointment at court, and did so, in spite of Gregory's reproaches, until Julian, who had long been trying to win him from Christianity, at last invited him to a public discussion. Cæsarius, in spite of the specious arguments of the Emperor, gained the day, but, having now distinctly declared himself a Christian, could no longer remain at court. On the death of Julian, he was esteemed and promoted by successive Emperors, until he received from Valens the office of treasurer of Bithynia. The exact character of this office and its rank are still undecided by historical writers, some of whom attribute to him other offices not mentioned by S. Gregory, which most probably were filled by a namesake. On the 11th of October A.D. 368 the city of Nicæa was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake and Cæsarius miraculously escaped with his life. Impressed by his escape, he received Holy Baptism, and formed plans for retiring from office and (as it seems) devoting himself to a life of ascetic discipline, which were dissipated by his early and sudden death.



1. IT may be, my friends, my brethren, my fathers (ye who are dear to me in reality as well as in name) that you think that I, who am about to pay the sad tribute of lamentation to him who has departed, am eager to undertake the task, and shall, as most men delight to do, speak at great length and in eloquent style. And so some of you, who have had like sorrows to bear, are prepared to join in my mourning and lamentation, in order to bewail your own griefs in mine, and learn to feel pain at the afflictions of a friend, while others are looking to feast their ears in the enjoyment of my words. For they suppose that I must needs make my misfortune an occasion for display—as was once my wont, when possessed of a superabundance of earthly things, and ambitious, above all, of oratorical renown—before I looked up to Him Who is the true and highest Word, and gave all up to God, from Whom all things come, and took God for all in all. Now pray do not think this of me, if you wish to think of me aright. For I am neither going to lament for him who is gone more than is good—as I should not approve of such conduct even in others—nor am I going to praise him beyond due measure. Albeit that language is a dear and especially proper tribute to one gifted with it, and eulogy to one who was exceedingly fond of my words—aye, not only a tribute, but a debt, the most just of all debts. But even in my tears and admiration I must respect the law which regards such matters: nor is this alien to our philosophy; for he says The memory of the just is accompanied with eulogies,²⁹³³ and also, Let tears fall down over the dead, and begin to lament, as if thou hadst suffered great harm thyself:²⁹³⁴ removing us equally from insensibility and immoderation. I shall proceed then, not only to exhibit the weakness of human nature, but also to put you in mind of the dignity of the soul, and, giving such consolation as is due to those who are in sorrow, transfer our

²⁹³³ Prov. x. 7 (LXX.).

²⁹³⁴ Ecclus. xxxviii. 16.

grief, from that which concerns the flesh and temporal things, to those things which are spiritual and eternal.

2. The parents of Cæsarius, to take first the point which best becomes me, are known to you all. Their excellence you are eager to notice, and hear of with admiration, and share in the task of setting it forth to any, if there be such, who know it not: for no single man is able to do so entirely, and the task is one beyond the powers of a single tongue, however laborious, however zealous. Among the many and great points for which they are to be celebrated (I trust I may not seem extravagant in praising my own family) the greatest of all, which more than any other stamps their character, is piety. By their hoar hairs they lay claim to reverence, but they are no less venerable for their virtue than for their age; for while their bodies are bent beneath the burden of their years, their souls renew their youth in God.

3. His father²⁹³⁵ was well grafted out of the wild olive tree into the good one, and so far partook of its fatness as to be entrusted with the engrafting of others, and charged with the culture of souls, presiding in a manner becoming his high office over this people, like a second Aaron or Moses, bidden himself to draw near to God,²⁹³⁶ and to convey the Divine Voice to the others who stand afar off;²⁹³⁷ gentle, meek, calm in mien,²⁹³⁸ fervent in spirit, a fine man in external appearance, but richer still in that which is out of sight. But why should I describe him whom you know? For I could not even by speaking at great length say as much as he deserves, or as much as each of you knows and expects to be said of him. It is then better to leave your own fancy to picture him, than mutilate by my words the object of your admiration.

4. His mother²⁹³⁹ was consecrated to God by virtue of her descent from a saintly family, and was possessed of piety as a necessary inheritance, not only for herself, but also for her children—being indeed a holy lump from a holy firstfruits.²⁹⁴⁰ And this she so far increased and amplified that some, (bold though the statement be, I will utter it,) have both believed and said that even her husband's perfection has been the work of none other than herself; and, oh how wonderful! she herself, as the reward of her piety, has received a greater and more perfect piety. Lovers of their children and of Christ as they both were, what is most extraordinary, they were far greater lovers of Christ than of their children: yea, even their one enjoyment of their children was that they should be acknowledged and named by Christ, and their one measure of their blessedness in

²⁹³⁵ *His father.* S. Gregory the elder. Cf. Orat. xviii., 5, 6, 12–29, 32–39. Also viii., 4, 5; xii., 2, 3; xvi., 1–4, 20.

²⁹³⁶ Exod. xxiv. 1, 2.

²⁹³⁷ Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 27.

²⁹³⁸ *In mien.* v. l. “in disposition.”

²⁹³⁹ *His mother.* S. Nonna. Cf. Orat. xviii., 7–12, 30, 31, 42, 43. Also viii. 4, 5.

²⁹⁴⁰ Rom. xi. 16.



their children was their virtue and close association with the Chief Good.²⁹⁴¹ Compassionate, sympathetic, snatching many a treasure from moths and robbers,²⁹⁴² and from the prince of this world,²⁹⁴³ to transfer it from their sojourn here to the [true] habitation, laying up in store²⁹⁴⁴ for their children the heavenly splendour as their greatest inheritance. Thus have they reached a fair old age, equally reverend both for virtue and for years, and full of days, alike of those which abide and those which pass away; each one failing to secure the first prize here below only so far as equalled by the other; yea, they have fulfilled the measure of every happiness with the exception of this last trial, or discipline, whichever anyone may think we ought to call it; I mean their having to send before them the child who was, owing to his age, in greater danger of falling, and so to close their life in safety, and be translated with all their family to the realms above.

5. I have entered into these details, not from a desire to eulogize them, for this, I know well, it would be difficult worthily to do, if I made their praise the subject of my whole oration, but to set forth the excellence inherited from his parents by Cæsarius, and so prevent you from being surprised or incredulous, that one sprung from such progenitors, should have deserved such praises himself; nay, strange indeed would it have been, had he looked to others and disregarded the examples of his kinsfolk at home. His early life was such as becomes those really well born and destined for a good life. I say little of his qualities evident to all, his beauty, his stature, his manifold gracefulness, and harmonious disposition, as shown in the tones of his voice—for it is not my office to laud qualities of this kind, however important they may seem to others—and proceed with what I have to say of the points which, even if I wished, I could with difficulty pass by.

6. Bred and reared under such influences, we were fully trained in the education afforded here,²⁹⁴⁵ in which none could say how far he excelled most of us from the quickness and extent of his abilities—and how can I recall those days without my tears showing that, contrary to my promises, my feelings have overcome my philosophic restraint? The time came when it was decided that we should leave home, and then for the first time we were separated, for I studied rhetoric in the then flourishing schools of Palestine; he went to Alexandria, esteemed both then and now the home of every branch of learning. Which of his qualities shall I place first and foremost, or which can I omit with least injury to my description? Who was more faithful to his teacher than he? Who more kindly to his classmates? Who more carefully avoided the society and companionship of the depraved? Who attached himself more closely to that of the most excellent, and among others, of the most esteemed and illustrious of his countrymen? For he knew that we are strongly influenced to virtue or vice by our companions. And in consequence of all this, who was more honoured by

²⁹⁴¹ *The Chief Good.* τὸ κρείττον, lit. “that which is better.”

²⁹⁴² S. Matt. vi. 19: S. John x. 1.

²⁹⁴³ S. John xiv. 30.

²⁹⁴⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 19.

²⁹⁴⁵ *Here*, at Nazianzus.

the authorities than he, and whom did the whole city (though²⁹⁴⁶ all individuals are concealed in it, because of its size), esteem more highly for his discretion, or deem more illustrious for his intelligence?

7. What branch of learning did he not master, or rather, in what branch of study did he not surpass those who had made it their sole study? Whom did he allow even to approach him, not only of his own time and age, but even of his elders, who had devoted many more years to study? All subjects he studied as one, and each as thoroughly as if he knew no other. The brilliant in intellect, he surpassed in industry, the devoted students in quickness of perception; nay, rather he outstripped in rapidity those who were rapid, in application those who were laborious, and in both respects those who were distinguished in both. From geometry and astronomy, that science so dangerous²⁹⁴⁷ to anyone else, he gathered all that was helpful (I mean that he was led by the harmony and order of the heavenly bodies to reverence their Maker), and avoided what is injurious; not attributing all things that are or happen to the influence of the stars, like those who raise their own fellow-servant, the creation, in rebellion against the Creator, but referring, as is reasonable, the motion of these bodies, and all other things besides, to God. In arithmetic and mathematics, and in the wonderful art of medicine, in so far as it treats of physiology and temperament, and the causes of disease, in order to remove the roots and so destroy their offspring with them, who is there so ignorant or contentious as to think him inferior to himself, and not to be glad to be reckoned next to him, and carry off the second prize? This indeed is no unsupported assertion, but East and West²⁹⁴⁸ alike, and every place which he afterward visited, are as pillars inscribed with the record of his learning.

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8. But when, after gathering into his single soul every kind of excellence and knowledge, as a mighty merchantman gathers every sort of ware, he was voyaging to his own city, in order to communicate to others the fair cargo of his culture, there befell a wondrous thing, which I must, as its mention is most cheering to me and may delight you, briefly set forth. Our mother,²⁹⁴⁹ in her motherly love for her children, had offered up a prayer that, as she had sent us forth together, she might see us together return home. For we seemed, to our mother at least, if not to others, to form a pair worthy of her prayers and glances, if seen together, though now, alas, our connection has been severed. And God, Who hears a righteous prayer, and honours the love of parents for well-disposed children, so ordered that, without any design or agreement on our part, the one from Alexandria, the other from Greece, the one by sea, the other by land, we arrived at the same city at the same time. This city was Byzantium, which now presides over Europe, in which Cæsarius, after the lapse of a short time, gained such a repute, that public honours, an alliance with an illustrious

²⁹⁴⁶ *Though*, etc. The Ben. ed. translates "Although his teaching was exceedingly sublime and abstruse."

²⁹⁴⁷ *Dangerous*, as being so closely connected with astrology.

²⁹⁴⁸ *East and West*, ἐὼά τε ὁμοῦ λῆξις καὶ ἐσπέριος—λήξις significat *regionem, locum*: *culmen* item, seu *fastigium*. Cf. S. Greg. Naz. Orat. xxv. 13. p. 464. S. Chrys. Hom. LVI. in Ioan. p. 786.

²⁹⁴⁹ *Our mother*. For further detail cf. Orat. xviii. 31.

family, and a seat in the council of state were offered him; and a mission was despatched to the Emperor by public decision, to beg that the first of cities be adorned and honoured by the first of scholars (if he cared at all for its being indeed the first, and worthy of its name); and that to all its other titles to distinction this further one be added, that it was embellished by having Cæsarius as its physician and its inhabitant, although its brilliancy was already assured by its throngs of great men both in philosophy and other branches of learning. But enough of this. At this time there happened what seemed to others a chance without reason or cause, such as frequently occurs of its own accord in our day, but was more than sufficiently manifest to devout minds as the result of the prayers to god-fearing parents, which were answered by the united arrival of their sons by land and sea.

9. Well, among the noble traits of Cæsarius' character, we must not fail to note one, which perhaps is in others' eyes slight and unworthy of mention, but seemed to me, both at the time and since, of the highest import, if indeed brotherly love be a praiseworthy quality; nor shall I ever cease to place it in the first rank, in relating the story of his life. Although the metropolis strove to retain him by the honours I have mentioned, and declared that it would under no circumstances let him go, my influence, which he valued most highly on all occasions, prevailed upon him to listen to the prayer of his parents, to supply his country's need, and to grant me my own desire. And when he thus returned home in my company, he preferred me not only to cities and peoples, not only to honours and revenues, which had in part already flowed to him in abundance from many sources and in part were within his reach, but even to the Emperor himself and his imperial commands. From this time, then, having shaken off all ambition, as a hard master and a painful disorder, I resolved to practise philosophy and adapt myself to the higher life: or rather the desire was earlier born, the life came later. But my brother, who had dedicated to his country the firstfruits of his learning, and gained an admiration worthy of his efforts, was afterwards led by the desire of fame, and, as he persuaded me, of being the guardian of the city, to betake himself to court, not indeed according to my own wishes or judgment; for I will confess to you that I think it a better and grander thing to be in the lowest rank with God than to win the first place with an earthly king. Nevertheless I cannot blame him, for inasmuch as philosophy is the greatest, so is it the most difficult, of professions, which can be taken in hand by but few, and only by those who have been called forth by the Divine magnanimity, which gives its hand to those who are honoured by its preference. Yet it is no small thing if one, who has chosen the lower form of life, follows after goodness, and sets greater store on God and his own salvation than on earthly lustre; using it as a stage, or a manifold ephemeral mask while playing in the drama of this world, but himself living unto God with that image which he knows that he has received from Him, and must render to Him Who gave it. That this was certainly the purpose of Cæsarius, we know full well.

10. Among physicians he gained the foremost place with no great trouble, by merely exhibiting his capacity, or rather some slight specimen of his capacity, and was forthwith numbered among the friends of the Emperor, and enjoyed the highest honours. But he placed the humane functions of his art at the disposal of the authorities free of cost, knowing that nothing leads to further



advancement than virtue and renown for honourable deeds; so that he far surpassed in fame those to whom he was inferior in rank. By his modesty he so won the love of all that they entrusted their precious charges to his care, without requiring him to be sworn by Hippocrates, since the simplicity of Crates was nothing to his own: winning in general a respect beyond his rank; for besides the present repute he was ever thought to have justly won, a still greater one was anticipated for him, both by the Emperors²⁹⁵⁰ themselves and by all who occupied the nearest positions to them. But, most important, neither by his fame, nor by the luxury which surrounded him, was his nobility of soul corrupted; for amidst his many claims to honour, he himself cared most for being, and being known to be, a Christian, and, compared with this, all other things were to him but trifling toys. For they belong to the part we play before others on a stage which is very quickly set up and taken down again—perhaps indeed more quickly destroyed than put together, as we may see from the manifold changes of life, and fluctuations of prosperity; while the only real and securely abiding good thing is godliness.

11. Such was the philosophy of Cæsarius, even at court: these were the ideas amidst which he lived and died, discovering and presenting to God, in the hidden man, a still deeper godliness than was publicly visible. And if I must pass by all else, his protection of his kinsmen in distress, his contempt for arrogance, his freedom from assumption towards friends, his boldness towards men in power, the numerous contests and arguments in which he engaged with many on behalf of the truth, not merely for the sake of argument, but with deep piety and fervour, I must speak of one point at least as especially worthy of note. The Emperor²⁹⁵¹ of unhappy memory was raging against us, whose madness in rejecting Christ, after making himself its first victim, had now rendered him intolerable to others; though he did not, like other fighters against Christ, grandly enlist himself on the side of impiety, but veiled his persecution under the form of equity; and, ruled by the crooked serpent which possessed his soul, dragged down into his own pit his wretched victims by manifold devices. His first artifice and contrivance was, to deprive us of the honour of our conflicts (for, noble man as he was, he grudged this to Christians), by causing us, who suffered for being Christians, to be punished as evil doers: the second was, to call this process persuasion, and not tyranny, so that the disgrace of those who chose to side with impiety might be greater than their danger. Some he won over by money, some by dignities, some by promises, some by various honours, which he bestowed, not royally but in right servile style, in the sight of all, while everyone was influenced by the witchery of his words, and his own example. At last he assailed Cæsarius. How utter was the derangement and folly which could hope to take for his prey a man like Cæsarius, my brother, the son of parents like ours!

12. However, that I may dwell awhile upon this point, and luxuriate in my story as men do who are eyewitnesses in some marvellous event,²⁹⁵² that noble man, fortified with the sign of Christ,

²⁹⁵⁰ *The Emperors.* Constantius II., A.D. 337–361. Julian, A.D. 361–363. Jovian, A.D. 363–4. Valens, A.D. 364–378.

²⁹⁵¹ *The Emperor, i.e.,* Julian the Apostate.

²⁹⁵² Some edd. read “in the spectacle,” which would make better sense, but has not MS. authority.

and defending himself with His Mighty Word, entered the lists against an adversary experienced in arms and strong in his skill in argument. In no wise abashed at the sight, nor shrinking at all from his high purpose through flattery, he was an athlete ready, both in word and deed, to meet a rival of equal power. Such then was the arena, and so equipped the champion of godliness. The judge on one side was Christ, arming the athlete with His own sufferings: and on the other a dreadful tyrant,²⁹⁵³ persuasive by his skill in argument, and overawing him by the weight of his authority; and as spectators, on either hand, both those who were still left on the side of godliness and those who had been snatched away by him, watching whether victory inclined to their own side or to the other, and more anxious as to which would gain the day than the combatants themselves.

13. Didst thou not fear for Cæsarius, lest aught unworthy of his zeal should befall him? Nay, be ye of good courage. For the victory is with Christ, Who overcame the world.²⁹⁵⁴ Now for my part, be well assured, I should be highly interested in setting forth the details of the arguments and allegations used on that occasion, for indeed the discussion contains certain feats and elegances, which I dwell on with no slight pleasure; but this would be quite foreign to an occasion and discourse like the present. And when, after having torn to shreds all his opponent's sophistries, and thrust aside as mere child's play every assault, veiled or open, Cæsarius in a loud clear voice declared that he was and remained a Christian—not even thus was he finally dismissed. For indeed, the Emperor was possessed by an eager desire to enjoy and be distinguished by his culture, and then uttered in the hearing of all his famous saying—O happy father, O unhappy sons! thus deigning to honour me, whose culture and godliness²⁹⁵⁵ he had known at Athens, with a share in the dishonour of Cæsarius, who was remanded for a further trial²⁹⁵⁶ (since Justice was fitly arming the Emperor against the Persians),²⁹⁵⁷ and welcomed by us after his happy escape and bloodless victory, as more illustrious for his dishonour than for his celebrity.

14. This victory I esteem far more sublime and honourable than the Emperor's mighty power and splendid purple and costly diadem. I am more elated in describing it than if he had won from him the half of his Empire. During the evil days he lived in retirement, obedient herein to our Christian law,²⁹⁵⁸ which bids us, when occasion offers, to make ventures on behalf of the truth, and not be traitors to our religion from cowardice; yet refrain, as long as may be, from rushing into danger, either in fear for our own souls, or to spare those who bring the danger upon us. But when the gloom had been dispersed, and the righteous sentence had been pronounced in a foreign land, and the glittering sword had struck down the ungodly, and power had returned to the hands of

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²⁹⁵³ *A dreadful tyrant.* The Evil One: with Billius and Clémencet. Julian was antagonist, not Judge—unless we consider that he combined unfairly the two offices.

²⁹⁵⁴ S. John xvi. 33.

²⁹⁵⁵ *Godliness*, εὐσεβειαν: here, as often, used in the sense of “orthodoxy.”

²⁹⁵⁶ *A further trial.* Which Julian did not survive to carry out. S. Greg. may allude to Cæsarius' later return to Court.

²⁹⁵⁷ *Persians.* The expedition in which he met his death. Ammian, Marcellin. xxv. 3, 7. Soz. vi. 2. Socr. iii. 21.

²⁹⁵⁸ Matt. x. 23.

Christians, what boots it to say with what glory and honour, with how many and great testimonies, as if bestowing rather than receiving a favour, he was welcomed again at the Court; his new honour succeeding to that of former days; while time changed its Emperors, the repute and commanding influence of Cæsarius with them was undisturbed, nay, they vied with each other in striving to attach him most closely to themselves, and be known as his special friends and acquaintances. Such was the godliness of Cæsarius, such its results. Let all men, young and old, give ear, and press on through the same virtue to the same distinction, for glorious is the fruit of good labours,²⁹⁵⁹ if they suppose this to be worth striving after, and a part of true happiness.

15. Again another wonder concerning him is a strong argument for his parents' piety and his own. He was living in Bithynia, holding an office of no small importance from the Emperor, viz., the stewardship of his revenue, and care of the exchequer: for this had been assigned to him by the Emperor as a prelude to the highest offices. And when, a short time ago, the earthquake²⁹⁶⁰ in Nicæa occurred, which is said to have been the most serious within the memory of man, overwhelming in a common destruction almost all the inhabitants and the beauty of the city, he alone, or with very few of the men of rank, survived the danger, being shielded by the very falling ruins in his incredible escape, and bearing slight traces of the peril; yet he allowed fear to lead him to a more important salvation, for he dedicated himself entirely to the Supreme Providence; he renounced the service of transitory things, and attached himself to another court. This he both purposed himself, and made the object of the united earnest prayers to which he invited me by letter, when I seized this opportunity to give him warning,²⁹⁶¹ as I never ceased to do when pained that his great nature should be occupied in affairs beneath it, and that a soul so fitted for philosophy should, like the sun behind a cloud, be obscured amid the whirl of public life. Unscathed though he had been by the earthquake, he was not proof against disease, since he was but human. His escape was peculiar to himself; his death common to all mankind; the one the token of his piety, the other the result of his nature. The former, for our consolation, preceded his fate, so that, though shaken by his death, we might exult in the extraordinary character of his preservation. And now our illustrious Cæsarius has been restored to us, when his honoured dust and celebrated corse, after being escorted home amidst a succession of hymns and public orations, has been honoured by the holy hands of his parents; while his mother, substituting the festal garments of religion for the trappings of woe, has overcome her tears by her philosophy, and lulled to sleep lamentations by psalmody, as her son enjoys honours worthy of his newly regenerate soul, which has been, through water, transformed by the Spirit.

16. This, Cæsarius, is my funeral offering to thee, this the firstfruits of my words, which thou hast often blamed me for withholding, yet wouldst have stripped off, had they been bestowed on thee; with this ornament I adorn thee, an ornament, I know well, far dearer to thee than all others,

²⁹⁵⁹ Wisd. iii. 15.

²⁹⁶⁰ *The earthquake*, described by Theodoret, H.E. ii. 26.

²⁹⁶¹ S. Greg. Epist. xx.



though it be not of the soft flowing tissues of silk, in which while living, with virtue for thy sole adorning, thou didst not, like the many, rejoice; nor texture of transparent linen, nor outpouring of costly unguents, which thou hadst long resigned to the boudoirs of the fair, with their sweet savours lasting but a single day; nor any other small thing valued by small minds, which would have all been hidden to-day with thy fair form by this bitter stone. Far hence be games and stories of the Greeks, the honours of ill-fated youths, with their petty prizes for petty contests; and all the libations and firstfruits or garlands and newly plucked flowers, wherewith men honour the departed, in obedience to ancient custom and unreasoning grief, rather than reason. My gift is an oration, which perhaps succeeding time will receive at my hand and ever keep in motion, that it may not suffer him who has left us to be utterly lost to earth, but may ever keep him whom we honour in men's ears and minds, as it sets before them, more clearly than a portrait, the image of him for whom we mourn.

17. Such is my offering; if it be slight and inferior to his merit, God loveth that which is according to our power.²⁹⁶² Part of our gift is now complete, the remainder we will now pay by offering (those of us who still survive) every year our honours and memorials. And now for thee, sacred and holy soul, we pray for an entrance into heaven; mayest thou enjoy such repose as the bosom of Abraham affords, mayest thou behold the choir of Angels, and the glories and splendours of sainted men; aye, mayest thou be united to that choir and share in their joy, looking down from on high on all things here, on what men call wealth, and despicable dignities, and deceitful honours, and the errors of our senses, and the tangle of this life, and its confusion and ignorance, as if we were fighting in the dark; whilst thou art in attendance upon the Great King and filled with the light which streams forth from Him: and may it be ours hereafter, receiving therefrom no such slender rivulet, as is the object of our fancy in this day of mirrors and enigmas, to attain to the fount of good itself, gazing with pure mind upon the truth in its purity, and finding a reward for our eager toil here below on behalf of the good, in our more perfect possession and vision of the good on high: the end to which our sacred books and teachers foretell that our course of divine mysteries shall lead us.

18. What now remains? To bring the healing of the Word to those in sorrow. And a powerful remedy for mourners is sympathy, for sufferers are best consoled by those who have to bear a like suffering. To such, then, I specially address myself, of whom I should be ashamed, if, with all other virtues, they do not show the elements of patience. For even if they surpass all others in love of their children, let them equally surpass them in love of wisdom and love of Christ, and in the special practice of meditation on our departure hence, impressing it likewise on their children, making even their whole life a preparation for death. But if your misfortune still clouds your reason and, like the moisture which dims our eyes, hides from you the clear view of your duty, come, ye elders, receive the consolation of a young man, ye fathers, that of a child, who ought to be admonished by men as old as you, who have admonished many and gathered experience from your

²⁹⁶² 2 Cor. viii. 3; ix. 7.

many years. Yet wonder not, if in my youth I admonish the aged; and if in aught I can see better than the hoary, I offer it to you. How much longer have we to live, ye men of honoured eld, so near to God? How long are we to suffer here? Not even man's whole life is long, compared with the Eternity of the Divine Nature, still less the remains of life, and what I may call the parting of our human breath, the close of our frail existence. How much has Cæsarius outstripped us? How long shall we be left to mourn his departure? Are we not hastening to the same abode? Shall we not soon be covered by the same stone? Shall we not shortly be reduced to the same dust? And what in these short days will be our gain, save that after it has been ours to see, or suffer, or perchance even to do, more ill, we must discharge the common and inexorable tribute to the law of nature, by following some, preceding others, to the tomb, mourning these, being lamented by those, and receiving from some that meed of tears which we ourselves had paid to others?

19. Such, my brethren, is our existence, who live this transient life, such our pastime upon earth: we come into existence out of non-existence, and after existing are dissolved. We are unsubstantial dreams, impalpable visions,²⁹⁶³ like the flight of a passing bird, like a ship leaving no track upon the sea,²⁹⁶⁴ a speck of dust, a vapour, an early dew, a flower that quickly blooms, and quickly fades. As for man his days are as grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.²⁹⁶⁵ Well hath inspired David discoursed of our frailty, and again in these words, "Let me know the shortness of my days;" and he defines the days of man as "of a span long."²⁹⁶⁶ And what wouldst thou say to Jeremiah, who complains of his mother in sorrow for his birth,²⁹⁶⁷ and that on account of others' faults? I have seen all things,²⁹⁶⁸ says the preacher, I have reviewed in thought all human things, wealth, pleasure, power, unstable glory, wisdom which evades us rather than is won; then pleasure again, wisdom again, often revolving the same objects, the pleasures of appetite, orchards, numbers of slaves, store of wealth, serving men and serving maids, singing men and singing women, arms, spearmen, subject nations, collected tributes, the pride of kings, all the necessaries and superfluities of life, in which I surpassed all the kings that were before me. And what does he say after all these things? Vanity of vanities,²⁹⁶⁹ all is vanity and vexation of spirit, possibly meaning some unreasoning longing of the soul, and distraction of man condemned to this from the original fall: but hear, he says, the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God.²⁹⁷⁰ This is his stay in his perplexity, and this



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²⁹⁶³ Job xx. 8.
²⁹⁶⁴ Wisd. v. 10 et seq.
²⁹⁶⁵ Ps. ciii. 15.
²⁹⁶⁶ Ps. xxxix. 4, 5.
²⁹⁶⁷ Jer. xv. 10.
²⁹⁶⁸ Eccles. i. 14.
²⁹⁶⁹ Ib. xii. 8.
²⁹⁷⁰ Ib. xii. 13.

is thy only gain from life here below, to be guided through the disorder of the things which are seen²⁹⁷¹ and shaken, to the things which stand firm and are not moved.²⁹⁷²

20. Let us not then mourn Cæsarius but ourselves, knowing what evils he has escaped to which we are left behind, and what treasure we shall lay up, unless, earnestly cleaving unto God and outstripping transitory things, we press towards the life above, deserting the earth while we are still upon the earth, and earnestly following the spirit which bears us upward. Painful as this is to the faint-hearted, it is as nothing to men of brave mind. And let us consider it thus. Cæsarius will not reign, but rather will he be reigned over by others. He will strike terror into no one, but he will be free from fear of any harsh master, often himself unworthy even of a subject's position. He will not amass wealth, but neither will he be liable to envy, or be pained at lack of success, or be ever seeking to add to his gains as much again. For such is the disease of wealth, which knows no limit to its desire of more, and continues to make drinking the medicine for thirst. He will make no display of his power of speaking, yet for his speaking will he be admired. He will not discourse upon the dicta of Hippocrates and Galen, and their adversaries, but neither will he be troubled by diseases, and suffer pain at the misfortunes of others. He will not set forth the principles of Euclides, Ptolemæus, and Heron, but neither will he be pained by the tumid vaunts of uncultured men. He will make no display of the doctrines of Plato, and Aristotle, and Pyrrho, and the names of any Democritus, and Heracleitus, Anaxagoras, Cleanthes and Epicurus, and all the members of the venerable Porch and Academy: but neither will he trouble himself with the solution of their cunning syllogisms. What need of further details? Yet here are some which all men honour or desire. Nor wife nor child will he have beside him, but he will escape mourning for, or being mourned by them, or leaving them to others, or being left behind himself as a memorial of misfortune. He will inherit no property: but he will have such heirs²⁹⁷³ as are of the greatest service, such as he himself wished, so that he departed hence a rich man, bearing with him all that was his. What an ambition! What a new consolation! What magnanimity in his executors! A proclamation has been heard, worthy of the ears of all, and a mother's grief has been made void by a fair and holy promise, to give entirely to her son his wealth as a funeral offering on his behalf, leaving nothing to those who expected it.

21. Is this inadequate for our consolation? I will add a more potent remedy. I believe the words of the wise, that every fair and God-beloved soul, when, set free from the bonds of the body, it departs hence, at once enjoys a sense and perception of the blessings which await it, inasmuch as that which darkened it has been purged away, or laid aside—I know not how else to term it—and feels a wondrous pleasure and exultation, and goes rejoicing to meet its Lord, having escaped as it

²⁹⁷¹ 2 Cor. iv. 18.

²⁹⁷² Heb. xii. 27.

²⁹⁷³ *Heirs*, Cf. S. Basil Ep. 26 (32). Cæsarius left all his property to the poor. This passage shows that his own family welcomed and approved the bequest, which S. Gregory was at much pains to carry out, but was greatly embarrassed by the rapacity of his brother's servants.

were from the grievous poison of life here, and shaken off the fetters which bound it and held down the wings of the mind, and so enters on the enjoyment of the bliss laid up for it, of which it has even now some conception. Then, a little later, it receives its kindred flesh, which once shared in its pursuits of things above, from the earth which both gave and had been entrusted with it, and in some way known to God, who knit them together and dissolved them, enters with it upon the inheritance of the glory there. And, as it shared, through their close union, in its hardships, so also it bestows upon it a portion of its joys, gathering it up entirely into itself, and becoming with it one in spirit and in mind and in God, the mortal and mutable being swallowed up of life. Hear at least how the inspired Ezekiel discourses of the knitting together of bones and sinews,²⁹⁷⁴ how after him Saint Paul speaks of the earthly tabernacle, and the house not made with hands, the one to be dissolved, the other laid up in heaven, alleging absence from the body to be presence with the Lord,²⁹⁷⁵ and bewailing his life in it as an exile, and therefore longing for and hastening to his release. Why am I faint-hearted in my hopes? Why behave like a mere creature of a day? I await the voice of the Archangel,²⁹⁷⁶ the last trumpet,²⁹⁷⁷ the transformation of the heavens, the transfiguration of the earth, the liberation of the elements, the renovation of the universe.²⁹⁷⁸ Then shall I see Cæsarius himself, no longer in exile, no longer laid upon a bier, no longer the object of mourning and pity, but brilliant, glorious, heavenly, such as in my dreams I have often beheld thee, dearest and most loving of brothers, pictured thus by my desire, if not by the very truth.

22. But now, laying aside lamentation, I will look at myself, and examine my feelings, that I may not unconsciously have in myself anything to be lamented. O ye sons of men, for the words apply to you, how long will ye be hard-hearted and gross in mind? Why do ye love vanity and seek after leasing,²⁹⁷⁹ supposing life here to be a great thing and these few days many, and shrinking from this separation, welcome and pleasant as it is, as if it were really grievous and awful? Are we not to know ourselves? Are we not to cast away visible things? Are we not to look to the things unseen? Are we not, even if we are somewhat grieved, to be on the contrary distressed at our lengthened sojourn,²⁹⁸⁰ like holy David, who calls things here the tents of darkness, and the place of affliction, and the deep mire,²⁹⁸¹ and the shadow of death;²⁹⁸² because we linger in the tombs we

²⁹⁷⁴ Ezek. xxxvii. 3 et seq.

²⁹⁷⁵ 2 Cor. v. 1, 6; Phil. i. 23.

²⁹⁷⁶ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

²⁹⁷⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 52.

²⁹⁷⁸ 2 Pet. iii. 10.

²⁹⁷⁹ Ps. iv. 3.

²⁹⁸⁰ Ib. cxx. 4.

²⁹⁸¹ Ib. xliv. 19 (LXX.); lxix. 2.

²⁹⁸² Ib. xliv. 20.

bear about with us, because, though we are gods, we die like men²⁹⁸³ the death of sin? This is my fear, this day and night accompanies me, and will not let me breathe, on one side the glory, on the other the place of correction: the former I long for till I can say, “My soul fainteth for Thy salvation;”²⁹⁸⁴ from the latter I shrink back shuddering; yet I am not afraid that this body of mine should utterly perish in dissolution and corruption; but that the glorious creature of God (for glorious it is if upright, just as it is dishonourable if sinful) in which is reason, morality, and hope, should be condemned to the same dishonour as the brutes, and be no better after death; a fate to be desired for the wicked, who are worthy of the fire yonder.

23. Would that I might mortify my members that are upon the earth,²⁹⁸⁵ would that I might spend my all upon the spirit, walking in the way that is narrow and trodden by few, not that which is broad and easy.²⁹⁸⁶ For glorious and great are its consequences, and our hope is greater than our desert. What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?²⁹⁸⁷ What is this new mystery which concerns me? I am small and great, lowly and exalted, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. I share one condition with the lower world, the other with God; one with the flesh, the other with the spirit. I must be buried with Christ, arise with Christ, be joint heir with Christ, become the son of God, yea, God Himself. See whither our argument has carried us in its progress. I almost own myself indebted to the disaster which has inspired me with such thoughts, and made me more enamoured of my departure hence. This is the purpose of the great mystery for us. This is the purpose for us of God, Who for us was made man and became poor,²⁹⁸⁸ to raise our flesh,²⁹⁸⁹ and recover His image,²⁹⁹⁰ and remodel man,²⁹⁹¹ that we might all be made one in Christ,²⁹⁹² who was perfectly made in all of us all that He Himself is,²⁹⁹³ that we might no longer be male and female, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free²⁹⁹⁴ (which are badges of the flesh), but might bear in ourselves only the stamp of God, by Whom and for Whom we were made,²⁹⁹⁵ and have so far received our form and model from Him, that we are recognized by it alone.

²⁹⁸³ Ib. lxxii. 6, 7.

²⁹⁸⁴ Ib. cxix. 81.

²⁹⁸⁵ Col. iii. 5.

²⁹⁸⁶ S. Matt. vii. 13.

²⁹⁸⁷ Ps. viii. 5.

²⁹⁸⁸ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

²⁹⁸⁹ Rom. viii. 11.

²⁹⁹⁰ S. Luke xv. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 49.

²⁹⁹¹ Col. iii. 10.

²⁹⁹² Gal. iii. 28.

²⁹⁹³ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

²⁹⁹⁴ Col. iii. 11.

²⁹⁹⁵ Rom. xi. 36.

24. Yea, would that what we hope for might be, according to the great kindness of our bountiful God, Who asks for little and bestows great things, both in the present and in the future, upon those who truly love Him;²⁹⁹⁶ bearing all things, enduring all things²⁹⁹⁷ for their love and hope of Him, giving thanks for all things²⁹⁹⁸ favourable and unfavourable alike: I mean pleasant and painful, for reason knows that even these are often instruments of salvation; commending to Him our own souls²⁹⁹⁹ and the souls of those fellow wayfarers who, being more ready, have gained their rest before us. And, now that we have done this, let us cease from our discourse, and you too from your tears, hastening, as you now are, to your tomb, which as a sad abiding gift you have given to Cæsarius, seasonably prepared as it was for his parents in their old age, and now unexpectedly bestowed on their son in his youth, though not without reason in His eyes Who disposes our affairs. O Lord and Maker of all things, and specially of this our frame! O God and Father and Pilot of men who are Thine! O Lord of life and death! O Judge and Benefactor of our souls! O Maker and Transformer in due time of all things³⁰⁰⁰ by Thy designing Word,³⁰⁰¹ according to the knowledge of the depth of Thy wisdom and providence! do Thou now receive Cæsarius, the firstfruits of our pilgrimage; and if he who was last is first, we bow before Thy Word, by which the universe is ruled; yet do Thou receive us also afterwards, in a time when Thou mayest be found,³⁰⁰² having ordered us in the flesh as long as is for our profit; yea, receive us, prepared and not troubled³⁰⁰³ by Thy fear, not departing from Thee in our last day, nor violently borne away from things here, like souls fond of the world and the flesh, but filled with eagerness for that blessed and enduring life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to whom be glory, world without end. Amen.

Oration VIII.

On his Sister Gorgonia.

The exact date of this Oration is uncertain. It is certainly (§23) later than the death of Cæsarius, A.D. 369, and previous to the death of their father, A.D. 374. So much we gather from the Oration

²⁹⁹⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 9.
²⁹⁹⁷ Ib. xiii. 7.
²⁹⁹⁸ 1 Thess. v. 18.
²⁹⁹⁹ 1 Pet. iv. 19.
³⁰⁰⁰ Amos v. 8 (LXX.).
³⁰⁰¹ Ps. xxxiii. 6.
³⁰⁰² Ib. xxxii. 6.
³⁰⁰³ Ib. cxix. 60 (LXX.).