

0330-0395 – Gregorius Nyssenus – Oratio funebris in Meletium episcopum

Funeral Oration on Meletius

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V.—Oratorical Works.



Funeral Oration on Meletius²⁰⁶³.

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THE number of the Apostles has been enlarged for us by this our late Apostle being reckoned among their company. These Holy ones have drawn to themselves one of like conversation; those athletes a fellow athlete; those crowned ones another crowned like them; the pure in heart one chaste in soul: those ministers of the Word another herald of that Word. Most blessed, indeed, is our Father for this his joining the Apostolic band and his departure to Christ. Most pitiable we! for the unseasonableness of our orphaned condition does not permit us to congratulate ourselves on our Father's happy lot. For him, indeed, better it was by his departure hence to be with Christ, but it was a grievous thing for us to be severed from his fatherly guidance. Behold, it is a time of need for counsel; and our counsellor is silent. War, the war of heresy, encompasses us, and our Leader is no more. The general body of the Church labours under disease, and we find not the physician. See in what a strait we are. Oh! that it were possible I could nerve my weakness, and rising to the

²⁰⁶³ Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, died at Constantinople, whither he had gone to attend the second Œcumenical Council, A.D. 381. Of the "translation" of the remains to his own metropolis, described in this oration, Sozomen (vii. 10) says, "The remains of Meletius were at the same time conveyed to Antioch; and deposited near the tomb of Babylas the Martyr. It is said that by the command of the Emperor, the relics were received with honour in every city through which they had to be conveyed, and that psalms were sung on the occasion, a practice that was quite contrary to the usual Roman customs. After the pompous interment of Meletius, Flavian was ordained in his stead....This gave rise to fresh troubles." The rationale of the rising relic-worship, at all events of the sanctity of tombs, is thus given by Origen: "A feeling such as this (of bodies differing, as tenanted by different souls) has prompted some to go so far as to treat as Divine the remains of uncommon men; they feel that great souls have been there, while they would cast forth the bodies of the morally worthless without the honour of a funeral (μ). This perhaps is not the right thing to do: still it proceeds from a right instinct (). For it is not to be expected of a thinking man that he would take the same pains over the burial of an Anytus, as he would over a Socrates, and that he would place the same barrow or the same sepulchre over each" (*c. Cels.* iv. 59). Again, "The dwelling-place of the reasoning soul is not to be flung irreverently aside, like that of the irrational soul; and more than this, we Christians believe that the reverence paid to a body that has been tenanted by a reasoning soul *passes to him also* who has received a soul which by means of such an instrument has *fought a good fight*," viii. 30.

full proportions of our loss, burst out with a voice of lamentation adequate to the greatness of the distress, as these excellent preachers of yours have done, who have bewailed with loud voice the misfortune that has befallen them in this loss of their father. But what can I do? How can I force my tongue to the service of the theme, thus heavily weighted, and shackled, as it were, by this calamity? How shall I open my mouth thus subdued to speechlessness? How shall I give free utterance to a voice now habitually sinking to the pathetic tone of lamentations? How can I lift up the eyes of my soul, veiled as I am with this darkness of misfortune? Who will pierce for me this deep dark cloud of grief, and light up again, as out of a clear sky, the bright ray of peace? From what quarter will that ray shine forth, now that our star has set? Oh! evil moonless night that gives no hope of any star! With what an opposite meaning, as compared with those of late, are our words uttered in this place now! Then we rejoiced with the song of marriage, now we give way to piteous lamentation for the sorrow that has befallen us! Then we chanted an epithalamium, but now a funeral dirge! You remember the day when we entertained you at the feast of that spiritual marriage, and brought home the virgin bride to the house of her noble bridegroom; when to the best of our ability we proffered the wedding gifts of our praises, both giving and receiving joy in turn²⁰⁶⁴. But now our delight has been changed to lamentation, and our festal garb become sackcloth. It were better, maybe, to suppress our woe, and to hide our grief in silent seclusion, so as not to disturb the children of the bride-chamber, divested as we are of the bright marriage garment, and clothed instead with the black robe of the preacher. For since that noble bridegroom has been taken from us, sorrow has all at once clothed us in the garb of black; nor is it possible for us to indulge in the usual cheerfulness of our conversation, since Envy²⁰⁶⁵ has stripped us of our proper and becoming dress. Rich in blessings we came to you; now we leave you bare and poor. The lamp we held right above our head, shining with the rich fulness of light, we now carry away quenched, its bright flame all dissolved into smoke and dust. We held our great treasure in an earthen vessel. Vanished is the treasure, and the earthen vessel, emptied of its wealth, is restored to them who gave it²⁰⁶⁶. What shall we say who have consigned it? What answer will they make by whom it is demanded back? Oh! miserable shipwreck! How, even with the harbour around us, have we gone to pieces with our hopes! How has the vessel, fraught with a thousand bales of goods, sunk with all its cargo, and left

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²⁰⁶⁴ This all refers to the very recent installation of Gregory of Nazianzum in the episcopal chair of Constantinople: on which occasion also Gregory of Nyssa seems to have preached.

²⁰⁶⁵ Casaubon very strongly condemns the sentiment here expressed, as savouring more of heathenism than Christianity. He gives other instances, in which the loss from the death of friends and good men is attributed by Christian writers to the envy of a Higher Power. That the disturbed state of the Church should be attributed by Gregory Nazianzen to "Envy" is well enough, but he in the same strain as his namesake speaks thus in connection with the death of his darling brother Cæsarius, and of Basil. Our Gregory uses the word also in lamenting Pulcheria and Flacilla. It only proves, however, how strong the habit still was of using heathen expressions.

²⁰⁶⁶ The text is τοῖς δεδωκόσιν ἐπανασώζεται. The people of Antioch must here be referred to, if the text is to stand.

us destitute who were once so rich! Where is that bright sail which was ever filled by the Holy Ghost? Where is that safe helm of our souls which steered us while we sailed unhurt over the swelling waves of heresy? Where that immovable anchor of intelligence which held us in absolute security and repose after our toils? Where that excellent pilot²⁰⁶⁷ who steered our bark to its heavenly goal? Is, then, what has happened of small moment, and is my passionate grief unreasoning? Is it not rather that I reach not the full extent of our loss, though I exceed in the loudness of my expression of grief? Lend me, oh lend me, my brethren, the tear of sympathy. When you were glad we shared your gladness. Repay us, therefore, this sad recompense. “Rejoice with them that do rejoice²⁰⁶⁸.” This *we* have done. It is for *you* to return it by “weeping with them that weep.” It happened once that a strange people bewailed the loss of the patriarch Jacob, and made the misfortune of another people their own, when his united family transported their father out of Egypt, and lamented in another land the loss that had befallen them. They all prolonged their mourning over him for thirty days and as many nights²⁰⁶⁹. Ye, therefore, that are brethren, and of the same kindred, do as they who were of another kindred did. On that occasion the tear of strangers was shed in common with that of countrymen; be it shed in common now, for common is the grief. Behold these your patriarchs. All these are children of our Jacob. All these are children of the free-woman²⁰⁷⁰. No one is base born, no one supposititious. Nor indeed would it have become that Saint to introduce into the nobility of the family of Faith a bond-woman’s kindred. Therefore is he our father because he was the father of our father²⁰⁷¹. Ye have just heard what and how great things an Ephraim and a Manasses²⁰⁷² related of their father, and how the wonders of the story surpassed description. Give me also leave to speak on them. For this beatification of him from henceforth incurs no risk. Neither fear I Envy; for what worse evil can it do me? Know, then, what the man was; one of the nobility of the East, blameless, just, genuine, devout, innocent of any evil deed. Indeed the great Job will not be jealous if he who imitated him be decked with the like testimonials of praise. But Envy, that has an eye for all things fair, cast a bitter glance upon our blessedness; and one who stalks up and down the world also stalked in our midst, and broadly stamped the foot-mark of affliction on our happy state. It is not herds of oxen or sheep²⁰⁷³ that he has maltreated, unless in a mystical sense

²⁰⁶⁷ Meletius was president of the Council.

²⁰⁶⁸ Rom. xii. 15.

²⁰⁶⁹ According to Gen. i. 3, the Egyptian mourning was seventy days, but there is no precise mention of the length of the Israelites’ mourning, except that at Atad, beyond the Jordan, they appear to have rested, on their way up, and mourned for seven days.

²⁰⁷⁰ Gal. iv. 31.

²⁰⁷¹ *i.e.* the spiritual father of Basil, the “father” (brother really) of Gregory.

²⁰⁷² *i.e.* preachers (perhaps of the *Egyptian Church*) who had preceded Gregory, spiritual sons of Basil, and so of Meletius, in the direct line of blessing. See Gen. xlviii. 5.

²⁰⁷³ *i.e.* as those of Job.

one transfers the idea of a flock to the Church. It is not in these that we have received injury from Envy; it is not in asses or camels that he has wrought us loss, neither has he excruciated our bodily feelings by a wound in the flesh; no, but he has robbed us of our very head. And with that head have gone away from us the precious organs of our senses. That eye which beheld the things of heaven is no longer ours, nor that ear which listened to the Divine voice, nor that tongue with its pure devotion to truth²⁰⁷⁴. Where is that sweet serenity of his eyes? Where that bright smile upon his lips? Where that courteous right hand with fingers outstretched to accompany the benediction of the mouth. I feel an impulse, as if I were on the stage, to shout aloud for our calamity. Oh! Church, I pity you. To you, the city of Antioch, I address my words. I pity you for this sudden reversal. How has your beauty been despoiled! How have you been robbed of your ornaments! How suddenly has the flower faded! “Verily the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away²⁰⁷⁵.” What evil eye, what witchery of drunken malice has intruded on that distant Church? What is there to compensate her loss? The fountain has failed. The stream has dried up. Again has water been turned into blood²⁰⁷⁶. Oh! the sad tidings which tell the Church of her calamity! Who shall say to the children that they have no more a father? Who shall tell the Bride she is a widow? Alas for their woes! What did they send out? What do they receive back? They sent forth an ark, they receive back a coffin. The ark, my brethren, was that man of God; an ark containing in itself the Divine and mystic things. There was the golden vessel full of Divine manna, that celestial food²⁰⁷⁷. In it were the Tables of the Covenant written on the tablets of the heart, not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God²⁰⁷⁸. For on that pure heart no gloomy or inky thought was imprinted. In it, too, were the pillars, the steps, the chapters, the lamps, the mercy-seat, the baths, the veils of the entrances. In it was the rod of the priesthood, which budded in the hands of our Saint; and whatever else we have heard the Ark contained²⁰⁷⁹ was all held in the soul of that man. But in their stead what is there now? Let description cease. Cloths of pure white linen scarves of silk, abundance of perfumes and spices; the loving munificence of a modest and beautiful lady²⁰⁸⁰. For it must be told, so as to be for a memorial of her²⁰⁸¹, what *she* did for that Priest when, without stint, she poured the alabaster box of ointment on his head. But the treasure preserved within, what is it? Bones, now

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2074 τὸ ἀγνὸν ἀνάθημα τῆς ἀληθείας.

2075 1 Pet. i. 24; Is. xl. 8.

2076 Exod. vii. 17.

2077 Ps. lxxviii. 25; Wisd. xvi. 20: but τροφῆς, not τροφῆς, must have been the reading in the ms. which Sifanus used, “plena caelestium deliciarum.”

2078 Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. x. 16.

2079 The above description enumerates the whole furniture of the Tabernacle. According to Heb. ix. 4, all that was actually in the Ark was, the pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the Tables of the Covenant. See also Exod. xvi. 33; xxv. 37–40

2080 Flacilla, the wife of the Emperor Theodosius.

2081 S. Matt. xxvi. 13; S. Mark xiv. 9.

dead, and which even before dissolution had rehearsed their dying, the sad memorials of our affliction. Oh! what a cry like that of old will be heard in Rama, Rachel weeping²⁰⁸², not for her children but for a husband, and admitting not of consolation. Let alone, ye that would console; let alone; force not on us your consolation²⁰⁸³. Let the widow indulge the deepness of her grief. Let her feel the loss that has been inflicted on her. Yet she is not without previous practice in separation. In those contests in which our athlete was engaged she had before been trained to bear to be left. Certainly you must remember how a previous sermon to ours related to you the contests of the man; how throughout, even in the very number of his contests, he had maintained the glory of the Holy Trinity, which he ever glorified; for there were three trying attacks that he had to repel. You have heard the whole series of his labours, what he was in the first, what in the middle, and what in the last. I deem it superfluous to repeat what has been so well described. Yet it may not be out of place to add just so much as this. When that Church, so sound in the faith, at the first beheld the man, she saw features truly formed²⁰⁸⁴ after the image of God, she saw love welling forth, she saw grace poured around his lips, a consummate perfection of humility beyond which it is impossible to conceive any thing further, a gentleness like that of David, the understanding of Solomon, a goodness like that of Moses, a strictness as of Samuel, a chastity as of Joseph, the skill of a Daniel, a zeal for the faith such as was in the great Elijah, a purity of body like that of the lofty-minded John²⁰⁸⁵, an unsurpassable love as of Paul. She saw the concurrence of so many excellences in one soul, and, thrilled with a blessed affection, she loved him, her own bridegroom, with a pure and virtuous passion. But ere she could accomplish her desire, ere she could satisfy her longing, while still in the fervour of her passion, she was left desolate, when those trying times called the athlete to his contests. While, then, he was engaged in these toilsome struggles for religion, she remained chaste and kept the marriage vow. A long time intervened, during which one, with adulterous intent²⁰⁸⁶, made an attempt upon the immaculate bridal-chamber. But the Bride remained undefiled; and again there was a return, and again an exile. And thus it happened thrice, until the Lord dispelled the gloom of that heresy, and sending forth a ray of peace gave us the hope of some respite from these lengthened troubles²⁰⁸⁷. But when at length they had seen each other, when there was a renewal

2082 Jer. xxxi. 15.

2083 This is from the LXX. of Is. xxii. 4, μὴ κατισχύσητε παρακαλεῖν με ἐπὶ τὸ σύντριμμα, κ.τ.λ.: “Nolite contendere ut me consolemini super contritione:” S. Jerome. Ducæus has rightly restored this, for κατισχύσηται

2084 πρόσωπον ἀληθῶς μεμορφωμένον. This is the reading of the best mss. Morell has ἀλιέως.

2085 κατὰ τὸν ὑψηλὸν Ἰωάννην ἐν τῇ ἀφθορίᾳ 139· τοῦ σώματος. Sifanus translates “integritate corporis ornatum.” Rupp rejects the idea that the John who “should not die” is here meant: and thinks that the epithet, and ἀφθορία (= the more technical ἀφθαρσία) point to the monasticism of John the Baptist.

2086 He alludes here to Paulinus and Demophilus, two Arians mentioned by Socrates and Sozomen.

2087 In 379 the Council of Antioch settled the schism of Antioch, which seemed as if it would disturb the whole East, and even the West. Even the Catholics of Antioch had been divided, between Meletius and Paulinus, since the days of Julian. It was

of those chaste joys and spiritual desires, when the flame of love had again been lit, all at once his last departure breaks off the enjoyment. He came to adorn you as his bride, he failed not in the eagerness of his zeal, he placed on this fair union the chaplets of blessing, in imitation of his Master. As did the Lord at Cana of Galilee²⁰⁸⁸, so here did this imitator of Christ. The Jewish waterpots, which were filled with the water of heresy, he filled with genuine wine, changing its nature by the power of his faith. How often did he set before you a chalice, but not of wine, when with that sweet voice he poured out in rich abundance the wine of Grace, and presented to you the full and varied feast of reason! He went first with the blessing of his words, and then his illustrious disciples were employed in distributing his teaching to the multitude.

We, too, were glad, and made our own the glory of your nation²⁰⁸⁹. Up to this point how bright and happy is our narrative. What a blessed thing it were with this to bring our sermon to an end. But after these things what follows? “Call for the mourning women²⁰⁹⁰,” as says the prophet Jeremiah. In no other way can the burning heart cool down, swelling as it is with its affliction, unless it relieves itself by sobs and tears. Formerly the hope of his return consoled us for the pang of separation, but now he has been torn from us by that final separation. A huge intervening chasm is fixed between the Church and him. He rests indeed in the bosom of Abraham, but there exists not one who might bring the drop of water to cool the tongue of the agonized. Gone is that beauty, silent is that voice, closed are those lips, fled that grace. Our happy state has become a tale that is told. Elijah of old time caused grief to the people of Israel when he soared from earth to God. But Elisha²⁰⁹¹ consoled them for the loss by being adorned with the mantle of his master. But now our wound is beyond healing; our Elijah has been caught up, and no Elisha left behind in his place. You have heard certain mournful and lamenting words of Jeremiah, with which he bewailed Jerusalem as a deserted city, and how among other expressions of passionate grief he added this, “The ways of Zion do mourn²⁰⁹².” These words were uttered then, but now they have been realized. For when the news of our calamity shall have been spread abroad, then will the ways be full of mourning crowds, and the sheep of his flock will pour themselves forth, and like the Ninevites utter the voice of lamentation²⁰⁹³, or, rather, will lament more bitterly than they. For in their case their mourning

settled that, at the death of either, the other should succeed to his “diocese.” Gregory himself was present, the ninth month after his brother Basil’s death.

²⁰⁸⁸ S. John ii

²⁰⁸⁹ Gregory is here addressing men of Antioch, though he said before that that city was too distant yet to have heard the news. They must have been the bishops of the neighbourhood of Antioch and other Christians from the diocese of Meletius, then present in the capital.

²⁰⁹⁰ Jer. ix. 17.

²⁰⁹¹ 2 Kings ii.

²⁰⁹² Lam. i. 4. “The ways of Zion do mourn.” The best of the three readings here is ἠκούσατε, adopted by Krabinger.

²⁰⁹³ Jonah iii. 5.

released them from the cause of their fear, but with these no hope of release from their distress removes their need of mourning. I know, too, of another utterance of Jeremiah, which is reckoned among the books of the Psalms²⁰⁹⁴; it is that which he made over the captivity of Israel. The words run thus: “We hung our harps upon the willows, and condemned ourselves as well as our harps to silence.” I make this song my own. For when I see the *confusion* of heresy, this *confusion* is Babylon²⁰⁹⁵. And when I see the flood of trials that pours in upon us from this confusion, I say that these are “the waters of Babylon by which we sit down, and weep” because there is no one to guide us over them. Even if you mention the *willows*, and the *harps* that hung thereon, that part also of the figure shall be mine. For in truth our life is among willows²⁰⁹⁶, the willow being a fruitless tree, and the sweet fruit of our life having all withered away. Therefore have we become fruitless willows, and the harps of love we hung upon those trees are idle and unvibrating. “If I forget thee, oh Jerusalem,” he adds, “may my right hand be forgotten.” Suffer me to make a slight alteration in that text. It is not we who have forgotten the *right hand*, but the *right hand* that has forgotten us: and the “tongue has cleaved to the roof of” his own “mouth,” and barred the passage of his words, so that we can never again hear that sweet voice. But let me have all tears wiped away, for I feel that I am indulging more than is right in this womanish sorrow for our loss.

Our Bridegroom has not been taken from us. He stands in our midst, though we see him not. The Priest is within the holy place. He is entered into that within the veil, whither our forerunner Christ has entered for us²⁰⁹⁷. He has left behind him the curtain of the flesh. No longer does he pray to the type or shadow of the things in heaven, but he looks upon the very embodiment of these realities. No longer through a glass darkly does he intercede with God, but face to face he intercedes with Him: and he intercedes for us²⁰⁹⁸, and for the “negligences and ignorances” of the people. He has put away the coats of skin²⁰⁹⁹; no need is there now for the dwellers in paradise of such garments as these; but he wears the raiment which the purity of his life has woven into a glorious dress.

²⁰⁹⁴ Ps. cxxxvii. The title of this Psalm in LXX., Τῷ Δαυὶδ (διὰ) Ἰερεμίου (which the Vulgate follows), implies that it is “a Davidic song springing from Jeremiah’s heart.” But “beginning with perfects, this Psalm is evidently not written during the time of the Exile, but in recollection of it.” Delitzsch. Some see resemblances to Ezekiel in it. The poplar is meant, not the weeping-willow, which is not met with wild in anterior Asia.

²⁰⁹⁵ Gen. xi. 9.

²⁰⁹⁶ ἐν ἰτέαις. The best MSS. support this reading, so that Krabinger has not dared to alter it to ἰτέα, as Morell’s MS. Sifanus has “plane enim in salicibus vita consistit;” but Rupp, “Unser Leben ist in der That ein Weidengebüsche.” In Bellarmine’s mystical interpretation the willows are the citizens of Babylon, who resemble willows “in being unfruitful, bitter in themselves, and dwelling by choice in the midst of Babylon,” to whom the instruments of worldly mirth are left.

²⁰⁹⁷ Heb. vi. 20.

²⁰⁹⁸ Doubtless an allusion to Rom. xi. 2; “how he (Elias) maketh intercession to God against Israel;” but here Meletius *departed* intercedes *for* the people, and the Intercession of Saints is clearly intimated.

²⁰⁹⁹ Gen. iii. 21.



“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death²¹⁰⁰” of such a man, or rather it is not death, but the breaking of bonds, as it is said, “Thou hast broken my bonds asunder.” Simeon has been let depart²¹⁰¹. He has been freed from the bondage of the body. The “snare is broken and the bird hath flown away²¹⁰².” He has left Egypt behind, this material life. He has crossed²¹⁰³, not this Red Sea of ours, but the black gloomy sea of life. He has entered upon the land of promise, and holds high converse with God upon the mount. He has loosed the sandal of his soul, that with the pure step of thought he may set foot upon that holy land where there is the Vision of God. Having therefore, brethren, this consolation, do ye, who are conveying the bones of our Joseph to the place of blessing, listen to the exhortation of Paul: “Sorrow not as others who have no hope²¹⁰⁴.” Speak to the people there; relate the glorious tale; speak of the incredible wonder, how the people in their myriads, so densely crowded together as to look like a sea of heads, became all one continuous body, and like some watery flood surged around the procession bearing his remains. Tell them how the fair²¹⁰⁵ David distributed himself, in divers ways and manners, among innumerable ranks of people, and danced before that ark²¹⁰⁶ in the midst of men of the same and of different language²¹⁰⁷. Tell them how the streams of fire, from the succession of the lamps, flowed along in an unbroken track of light, and extended so far that the eye could not reach them. Tell them of the eager zeal of all the people, of his joining “the company of Apostles²¹⁰⁸,” and how the napkins that bound his face were plucked away to make amulets for the faithful. Let it be added to your narration how the Emperor²¹⁰⁹ showed in his countenance his sorrow for this misfortune, and rose from his throne, and how the whole city

²¹⁰⁰ Ps. cxvi. 15, 16.

²¹⁰¹ Gen. xliiii. 23; S. Luke ii. 30.

²¹⁰² Ps. cxxiv. 7.

²¹⁰³ Morell reads here, “Moses has left,” “Moses has crossed;” but Krabinger has no doubt that this word is due to a gloss upon the text. The Scholiast Nicetas (on Gregory Naz., *Orat.* 38) well explains this use of “Egypt”: “Egypt is sometimes taken for this present world, sometimes for the flesh, sometimes for sin, sometimes for ignorance, sometimes for mischief.”

²¹⁰⁴ 1 Thess. iv. 13.

²¹⁰⁵ καλός. “Atticæ urbanitatis proprium,” Krabinger. But David is described as “of a fair countenance.”

²¹⁰⁶ 2 Sam. vi. 14. “That ark,” very probably refers to the *remains* of Meletius, not to the coffin or bier. The human body is called by this very term (σκῆνος, tabernacle), 2 Cor. v. 1 and 4, nor was the word in this sense unknown to Plato. The body of Meletius has been already called a κιβωτός.

²¹⁰⁷ ἑτερογλώσσοις; καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἑτέροις is added (cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 21; Is. xxviii. 11), in the text of Morell, but none of Krabinger’s MSS. recognize these words.

²¹⁰⁸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τὴν συσκηλίαν (εἶπατε): “Thirteenth Apostle!” was in these times a usual expression of the highest praise. It was even heard in the applause given to living preachers. But if εἶπατε cannot bear so extended a meaning, some funeral banquet of the “apostles” assembled at the Council is alluded to: or else (remembering the use of σκῆνος just above) “the lying in state in an Apostle’s Church,” in the capital: cf. above, “his joining the Apostolic band *and* his departure to Christ.”

²¹⁰⁹ Theodosius.

joined the funeral procession of the Saint. Moreover console each other with the following words; it is a good medicine that Solomon²¹¹⁰ has for sorrow; for he bids wine be given to the sorrowful; saying this to us, the labourers in the vineyard: “Give,” therefore, “your wine to those that are in sorrow²¹¹¹,” not that wine which produces drunkenness, plots against the senses, and destroys the body, but such as gladdens the heart, the wine which the Prophet recommends when he says: “Wine maketh glad the heart of man²¹¹².” Pledge each other in that liquor undiluted²¹¹³ and with the unstinted goblets of the word, that thus our grief may be turned to joy and gladness, by the grace of the Only-begotten Son of God, through Whom be glory to God, even the Father, for ever and ever. Amen.



On the Baptism of Christ.

 A Sermon for the Day of the Lights.²¹¹⁴

Now I recognize my own flock: to-day I behold the wonted figure of the Church, when, turning with aversion from the occupation even of the cares of the flesh, you come together in your undiminished numbers for the service of God—when the people crowds the house, coming within the sacred sanctuary, and when the multitude that can find no place within fills the space outside in the precincts like bees. For of them some are at their labours within, while others outside hum

²¹¹⁰ It is only the Rabbis that make Lemuel, the author of the last chapter of Proverbs, the same as Solomon: Grotius identifies him with Hezekiah. Some German commentators regard him as the chief of an Arab tribe, on the borders of Palestine, and brother of Agur, author of ch. xxx. But the suggestion of Eichhorn and Ewald is the more probable, that Lemuel is an ideal name signifying “for God,” the true King who leads a life consecrated to Jehovah.

²¹¹¹ Prov. xxxi. 6. Just above πρὸς ἡμᾶς is the reading of Krabinger’s mss. and of the Paris Edit.: Sifanus and Ducæus have rendered ὑμᾶς.

²¹¹² S. Gregory has misapplied both this passage from Ps. civ. 15 and the previous one from Prov. xxxi. 6. An attentive consideration of them shows that they do not lend themselves to the use he has made of them.

²¹¹³ Ζωροτέρω. For the comparative see Lobeck, *Ad Phrynich.* p. 146: μειζοτέρω is the common faulty reading. These words are joined closely to what precedes in the mss. Then, in what follows, “the unstinted goblets of the word,” πνευματικοῦ is rightly omitted before λόγου: “and gladness” (καὶ ἀγαλλίασις) is rightly added, as it is joined with εὐφροσύνη in Ps. xlv. 15; and by Gregory himself, *In Diem Nat. Christ.* (pp. 340 and 352), and *In Bapt. Christi* (p. 377).

²¹¹⁴ That is, for the Festival of the Epiphany or Theophany, when the Eastern Church commemorates especially the Baptism of our Lord.