

BASIL THE GREAT: Seventh Epistle

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St Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea: EPISTLE VII

(To St. Gregory Theologos. Probable date: 359)

Translated by Rev. Blomfield Jackson

Edited by Friar Martin Fontenot, CANDLE Library

TO GREGORY MY FRIEND.

When I wrote to you  
I was perfectly well aware  
that no theological term is adequate  
to the thought of the speaker,  
or the want of the questioner,  
because language is  
of natural necessity  
too weak to act in the service  
of objects of thought.

If then, our thought is weak,  
and our tongue weaker than our thought,  
what was to be expected of me in what I said  
but that I should be charged with poverty of expression?

Still, it was not possible  
to let your question pass unnoticed.  
It looks like a betrayal,  
if we do not readily give an answer  
about God to them that love the Lord.  
What has been said, however,  
whether it seems satisfactory,  
or requires some further and more careful addition,  
needs a fit season for correction.

For the present, I implore you,  
as I have implored you before,  
to devote yourself entirely  
to the advocacy of the truth,  
and to the intellectual energies God gives you  
for the establishment of what is good.  
With this be content.  
And ask nothing more from me.

I am really less capable  
that is supposed,

and am more likely to do harm to the word  
by my weakness  
than to add strength to the truth  
by my advocacy.

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The St. Pachomius Orthodox Library, St. Dionysius' Day, 1995.  
Have mercy, O Lord, upon Thy servants the translator Blomfield and the Friar Martin.  
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THE END, AND TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

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