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Prayer as Divine Dialogue: Theological Perspectives from the Ancient Georgian Collection “Three Hundred”

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Abstract

This study explores the theological significance of prayer through the lens of the collection “Three Hundred” (compiled by Gabriel Mtsire) and its primary sources, with particular emphasis on the teachings attributed to Basil of Caesarea. Within this compilation, prayer is defined not merely as verbal expression but as a direct encounter and dialogue with God, requiring spiritual preparation, inner purification, and humility. The analysis of the Georgian translation tradition reveals that prayer is understood as an ascetic and transformative act: it demands detachment from sinful thoughts, repentance expressed through tears, and a conscious alignment with divine will. Drawing on comparative textual evidence, the study demonstrates how Gabriel Mtsire preserves and transmits this theological vision while adapting its linguistic form for later audiences. At the same time, the concept of prayer presented in these texts resonates with broader patterns found across world religions, where prayer functions as a means of communion with the transcendent, moral self-examination, and spiritual discipline. The research highlights key elements such as repentance, humility, and interior transformation as universal dimensions of prayer, while emphasizing the distinctively Christian understanding of personal dialogue with God. Ultimately, the study positions the “Three Hundred” as an important witness not only to Georgian literary and editorial tradition but also to the enduring theological interpretation of prayer as a path toward divine communion.

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