

The
Problem of
Predestination
and Free Will as seen
within the Context of the
Universal Salvific Will of God
—A Study in the Prose Works of
Saint Prosper Tiro of Aquitaine.

by

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PREFACE

Predestination, which Fulgence Cayré refers to as "the corner stone . . . of the spiritual edifice,"¹ holds a place of eminence in the history of the Christian religion. "It has fanned burning controversies, and generated popular fear; it has fostered stern ideals, and moulded strong natures."² Understood in a broad sense, the problem of predestination has attracted the minds of the greatest intellectuals of the Church, all of whom have seen in it mystery and challenge. Those periods of history where Christian ideals were most successfully moulded into an advancing culture owe much to this problem; for, in many cases, they gained their impetus in this direction from it.³

The problem of the eternal destiny of man has vexed nearly all thinking men throughout the history of mankind. The a priori rejection of a belief in an immortal soul which characterizes the atheist has found little favor among the vast majority of thinkers. These thinkers agree that there are solid intellectual motives in favor of a contrary

¹Fulgence Cayré, Manual of Patrology and History of Theology, translated by H. Howitt (Paris: Society of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Company, 1936), I, p. 695.

²A. S. Martin, "Predestination," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, X (1924), pp. 225-235.

³Ibid., p. 231.

view. They acknowledge the fact that man is not master of the universe and so they concern themselves with the destiny that awaits them after their departure from this world. The Church teaches of a kingdom that awaits the just man after his short trial on earth. She teaches that God intends all men to find salvation after the words of Saint Paul (I Tim. 2:4). Yet, she preaches God's Providence, of how God somehow governs with the minutest of care all happenings in the universe. Also, she teaches that many will be those cast into the eternal fires. "Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi" Matt: 22:14.⁴

How can the words of Matthew be compatible with the rest of our knowledge of God. How can a God who loves all his creatures with an infinite love, who truly wills their salvation, not in fact produce it when such is within his omnipotent power. Why did not this God who has power over all things not prevent all sinners from sinning, why did he not transform their hearts while still respecting their freedom. If God truly wills the salvation of all men, how can he allow any sinner to reject for eternity the goal he has set for him. Must we conclude that God does not will the salvation of all men. Must we conclude that the power of God operates irrespective of man's will and that man is cast about as a leaf on the sea. To do so is to oppose the

⁴Admèhar d'Alès, "Prédestination," Dictionnaire Apologetique de la Foi Catholique, IV (1928), cols. 195-270.

teachings of the Church. It is to fall into the heresy of predestinarianism.

The problem of predestination is a mystery. It is the mystery of how God chooses certain souls from a state of sin and guides them without failing to eternal life without thereby injuring their freedom or impairing their will. It is the mystery of how man can truly be responsible for his own salvation, while at the same time, God is totally responsible. It is the mystery of how man earns salvation through his own efforts while receiving it gratuitously as a pure gift. It is the mystery of how God can truly will all men to be saved and at the same time save but a few.

Predestinarianism, on the other hand, is not a mystery but a logical, tightly knit solution to the overwhelming problem of God's mysterious ways with men. It is an anti-mystery, an oversimplification. It is an attempt to reduce the question of man's eternal destiny—his salvation or his damnation—to one cause alone, namely, the sovereign will of God. It is a heresy that excludes the free cooperation of man as a factor of import in determining his ultimate future.⁵ It is a heresy according to which God determines from eternity, and infallibly wills both damnation for some and salvation for others with no consideration whatsoever for the free wills of men.⁶

⁵J. Pohle, "Predestinarianism," The Catholic Encyclopedia, XII (1911), pp. 376-378.

⁶E. Amann, "Prédestinarianisme," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, XII:2 (1935), cols. 2803-2809.

Predestinarianism is an attempt to solve the problem of predestination. But the solution it offers is a destruction of the mystery. It reduces the relationship of free men with a free God to the relationship of puppets with their puppet master. The mistake of the predestinarians is not that they sought enlightenment from mystery; it is that they sought a final clear-cut solution to it. Strict mysteries are meant to be explored; they are meant to shed light. But the light that is obtained from probing is false light if it shatters the veil of the unknown. True knowledge of a strict mystery is not knowledge of its solution but knowledge of where the mystery lies. It is with this in mind that the great intellects of the faith have explored the problem of predestination.

Among the Fathers of the Church Augustine was the first to make a detailed study of this problem. For him the ultimate solution to man's destiny lay in God. If man was saved, his salvation was produced infallibly though freely through God's decree. If man was damned, however, his damnation was man's fault alone. God in nowise desired this evil. But excessive reasoning seemed to hamper Augustine's doctrine on one point. Augustine could not see how God who was omnipotent could fail to save all men if he truly willed their salvation. Not wishing to contradict the words of Saint Paul in I Tim., 2:4, he interpreted the words "Who will have all men to be saved . . ." in a restricted way, suggesting that God willed the salvation of all men taken as a whole but not of every man in particular.

The faithful contemporary disciple of Augustine, Prosper Tiro of Aquitaine, in his turn, tried to explore the difficult problem of predestination. As a faithful interpret of his master he wished to uphold the basic tenets of Augustinian predestination. But he also seems to have tried to hold on to a literal interpretation to the words of Saint Paul, that God intends to save all men. At first glance these two views appear contradictory. The problem of this thesis, then, is to discern whether or not Prosper was successful in presenting a doctrine of predestination that respected a literal interpretation of the words of I Tim., 2:4. The question is: What view does Prosper have of predestination that it can allow, on the one hand, for a definite intent on God's part to save all men and, on the other hand, declares that de facto only some men are saved. What are the elements of this concept of predestination. Does Prosper succeed in interpreting the words of Saint Paul literally, or does he fall into a restricted interpretation as had done Augustine.

The study of this question is made possible by the edition of the works of Prosper issued by the Benedictines F. B. LeBrun des Marettes and D. Mangeant. This edition which appears in the Patrologia Latina series volume fifty-one is regarded by Otto Bardenhewer as the best available.⁷

⁷Otto Bardenhewer, Patrology - The Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church, translated from the second edition by Thomas J. Shahan (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1908), p. 513.

A second edition of the De Vocatione Omnium Gentium appears in the same Patrologia series but in volume seventeen as an appendix to the works of St. Ambrose. I have preferred the first edition because it is regarded as superior at least by Joseph James Young,⁸ and because it is most commonly cited.

⁸"The presence of critical apparatus suggests . . . it has been constructed with greater care." cf. Joseph James Young, Studies on the Style of the De Vocatione Omnium Gentium ascribed to Prosper of Aquitaine, (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1952), p. VIII (Preface).

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INTRODUCTION

Prosper of Aquitaine¹ is regarded as the chief opponent² of the anti-Augustinian movement that arose in Southern Gaul during the latter years of Augustine's life—the movement historically known as Semi-Pelagianism.³ The movement rose

¹The very name of Prosper was, at one time, under dispute. Basing himself on a study of the two chronicles ascribed to Prosper, Henry Phillott declares "That the latter one [the shorter] is not the work of Prosper of Aquitaine. He adds: "Prosper of Aquitaine and Tiro Prosper were different persons . . ." cf. Henry Wright Phillott, "Prosper," Dictionary of Christian Biography, IV (1887), pp. 492-497. A few years later, however, the problem seems to have been resolved. Léonce Couture writes: "Les vieux critiques hésitaient entre Prosper tout court et Tiro Prosper . . . La plupart distinguaient l'un de l'autre et croyaient même avoir pour cela des raisons décisives prises de la couleur religieuse de chacun. Les difficultés semblent avoir disparu et il n'y a pas de raison de contredire M. Mommsen, qui a inscrit le double non en tête de la chronique authentique de S. Prosper." cf. Léonce Couture, "Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine," Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique, II (1901), pp. 33-49. This opinion is corroborated by Albert Hauck who writes: "His full name seems to have been Prosper Tyro . . ." cf. Albert Hauck, "Prosper of Aquitaine," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IX (1911), pp. 282-283.—At present most authors ascribe both names to the same person.

²G. Bardy explains: "Prosper tient tête à tous les anti-augustiniens." cf G. Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, XIII:1 (1936), cols. 846-850. D. M. Cappuyns points out that even before the death of Augustine the reputation of Prosper had swept across the boundaries of Provence and reached far beyond. cf. D. M. Cappuyns, "Le premier représentant de l'augustinisme médiéval: Prosper d'Aquitaine," Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale, I (1929), pp. 309-337.

³On Semi-Pelagianism cf. E. Amann, "Semi-pélagiens," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, XIV:2 (1941), cols.

to a climax soon after Augustine's death,⁴ only to subside for twenty-five years after the death of its so-called founder and chief protagonist, the Abbot Cassian.⁵ It is in the first part of the anti-Augustinian reaction that Prosper is the undisputed chief of the Augustinians.

Born around 390 somewhere in Provence possibly at Toulon⁶ or at Limoges,⁷ Prosper Tiro of Aquitaine received

1796-1850. Apparently the term "semi-Pelagianism" as such did not appear before the latter part of the sixteenth century. cf. M. Jacquin, "A quelle date parut le terme 'semi-pélagien?'" Revue de Science philosophique et théologique, I (1907), pp. 506-508. It is to be noted here that historically speaking the term "semi-Pelagianism" is inaccurate, for the leaders of the anti-Augustinian movement at this time e.g. Cassian, Vincent of Lerins, wished to have nothing to do with the Pelagian heresy. They openly condemned it as faithful members of the Church. cf. Prosper of Aquitaine, The Call of All Nations, translated, annotated and with an introduction by P. De Letter (Ancient Christian Writers; Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, Lorgmans, Green and Company, 1952), XIV, p. 158. The reference is to a footnote discussion by P. De Letter. Henceforth, references to the introduction to, or footnotes on The Call of All Nations will be written as follows: De Letter, Call of All Nations, etc.

⁴Augustine died on August 30, 430. cf. M. Jacquin, "La question de la prédestination au ve et VI e siècles," Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, VII (1906), pp. 269-300.

⁵Cassian died either in 435 or 436. cf. Bardenhewer, Patrology, p. 511.

⁶According to Henry Phillott there is a note to one of the Colbertine Manuscripts suggesting that Prosper arose in Toulon. No source of authority, however, is presented. cf. Phillott, "Prosper," Dict. of Christ. Bio., IV, p. 492.

⁷A text of Bernard Gui dating from the fourteenth century states that Prosper was born in Limoges. Normally a single text is hardly worth considering, but since Bernard Gui is a highly reliable source, it is at least worth mentioning. cf. Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I, p. 34.

a thorough education not only in the arts—in history, poetry, eloquence—but in philosophy, scripture, and theology.⁸ The events of the life of Prosper from the time of his birth until his first published work in the semi-Pelagian controversy—The Letter to Rufinus—are uncertain. It seems probable however, that he underwent some form of moral conversion similar to that of Augustine.⁹ If we regard the poem Ad Uxorem as authentically that of Prosper, then we must affirm that Prosper was married for at least a few years, probably in his early youth.¹⁰ At the time of

⁸Georges de Plinval writes: "Sa culture littéraire et sa documentation scripturaire et théologique nous étonnent." cf. Georges de Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète de saint Augustin," Recherches Augustiniennes, I (1958), pp. 339-355. Quoting Gennadius, J. Tixeront says: "Prosper's was a truly cultured, active, and accurate mind—'sermone scholasticus et adsertionibus nervosus'" cf. J. Tixeront, A Handbook of Patrology, authorized translation based on the fourth French edition (London: Herder, 1927) p. 271. Fulgence Cayré affirms: "St. Prosper was above all a theologian. For him, rhetoric, dialectics, history, poetry, eloquence are the servants of theology . . . He was well read, extremely well read . . ." cf. Cayré, Patrology (1940), II p. 187. Yet, Edward Motley Pickman dares to say, ". . . Prosper was not so trained that he could follow Augustine's intricate speculations in all their details." cf. Edward Motley Pickman, The Mind of Latin Christendom (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 422.

⁹The Confessions of Prosper have not been regarded highly by most scholars. cf. S. Prosperi Aquitani, Opera Omnia, Edited by J. P. Migne (Patrologia Latina; Paris: Bibliothecae Cleri Universae, 1861), LI, cols. 607-610. J. J. Ampère, however, regards them as authentic. He sees in Prosper's description of his Egyptian captivity a moral conversion and writes: "Evidemment, il veut peindre l'état de son âme livrée et vendue aux passions avant d'être affranchie par la grâce: ce qui le prouve, c'est qu'il ajoute: J'ai été esclave non par la subjection du corps, mais par les sueurs de l'âme." cf. J. J. Ampère, Histoire Littéraire de la France (3e édition, Paris: Librairie académique, 1870), II, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰Léonce Couture interprets Valentin as taking a

the semi-Pelagian controversy he was associated with the monasteries at Marseilles,¹¹ but it is not clear exactly what his status was, whether he was a priest,¹² a monk,¹³

positive stand on the Prosperian authorship of the Ad Uxorem. cf. Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I, p. 34. He adds that such would indicate that "le poète a vécu dans le mariage peu d'années sans doute et à une époque peu avancée de sa vie." For the Latin text cf. Migne, P. L., LI cols. 611-616.

¹¹Apparently this association was quite intimate. Albert Hauck writes: "He seems to have lived in the closest association with the monastic circles of Marseilles, of which phraseology clearly shows that he regarded himself as a member." cf. Hauck, "Prosper of Aquitaine," Schaff-Herzog Encycl., IX, pp. 282-283.

¹²There is a statement in Prosper's letter to Augustine that might suggest he was a priest (cf. Migne, LI cols. 63-74). Prosper writes: ". . . Quia multum nos et vitae meritis antecellunt, et aliqui eorum adepto nuper summo sacerdotii honore supererminent." Epistola ad Augustinum, col. 72. The text suggests that the reason some are of higher dignity is because they have become bishops; they were not of a higher dignity before they became bishops, i.e., when they were still priests. Hence, it might seem that the one speaking (namely Prosper) is a priest himself. —Although Prosper was never addressed as a priest during his lifetime, the expressions such as vir sanctus, vir religiosissimus, vir venerabilis do not necessarily indicate the opposite. "Et de fait, il est appelé 'Prosper presbyter' en tête du Paschale campanum du sixième siècle . . ." cf. D. Germain Morin, "Saint Prosper de Reggio," Revue Bénédictine, XII (1895), pp. 241-257. Some authors, however, deny the mere possibility of his being a priest. J. H. Worman writes: "He was no priest . . ." cf. J. H. Worman, "Prosper," Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, VIII (1879), pp. 664-665.

¹³Prosper is referred to by many different titles, among them scholasticus, vir eruditus, eruditissimus. Most commonly, however, he is referred to by such titles as vir religiosus, vir venerabilis, vir religiosissimus. "On sait de très bonne heure ces appellations furent employées pour désigner les personnes faisant profession de la vie monastique: l'insistance que les contemporains de saint Prosper mettent à lui décerner donne quelque probabilité à l'opinion . . . que le célèbre écrivain fut réellement religieux dans le sens strict du mot." cf. Morin, "Saint Prosper de Reggio" Revue Bénédictine, XII, p. 245.

or a simple layman.¹⁴ Most probably he was a monk with the usual vows.¹⁵ The probability is that he never rose from such a state, although he has been confused with the bishop of Reggio or Riez.¹⁶ When Cassian died, and the

¹⁴The great majority of scholars affirm that Prosper was a layman. Among others, Joseph Young, Phillott, Pickman, Altaner, P. de Labriolle, G. de Plinval, Worman. Whether most of these authors are using the word "layman" in the technical sense of noncleric, or in the common usage of the term is not clear. G. de Plinval uses the word "laïque" in italics; this might suggest that he is using it in the technical sense. Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète," Rech. Aug., I, p. 341. Phillott, "Prosper," Dict. of Christ. Bio., IV, p. 492. Edward Motley Pickman, however, takes the word obviously in the common usage. But it is to his detriment, for, basing himself on the mere supposition of Prosper's lay state, he accuses Prosper of "resisting renunciation and persisting in his temporal life." He suggests that these are reasons why Cassian and Vincent of Lerins so vehemently oppose Prosper's views. All of these statements are historically unfounded. cf. Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 420.

¹⁵About seventy-five years ago, a fresco discovered in the basilica of Saint Clement of Rome, would seem to shed some light on Prosper's true status, or, at least, on the status given him in the ninth century. The fresco bears the name of S. Prosperius. Now, since it is in this basilica that Pelagius and Celestius were condemned, the Prosper referred to is clearly Prosper of Aquitaine. This figure is that of "un simple clerc, très probablement un moine . . ." cf. Morin, "Prosper of Reggio," Revue Bénédictine, XII, p. 246.

¹⁶In the late nineteenth century there was found throughout the entire northern part of Italy a veneration for Prosper of Reggio. According to tradition this Prosper was identified with Prosper of Aquitaine. Prosper of Reggio, however, was supposedly a Bishop; if, therefore, the two Prosper's are identical, then Prosper of Aquitaine was not a layman but a bishop. D. Germain Morin investigates this historical problem and concludes that the confusion arose in part from a twelfth century legend in which Prosper of Aquitaine is regarded as the bishop of Reggio. He rejects the idea of Prosper's episcopal dignity with these arguments: (1) neither Prosper himself nor the ancient writers who generally give everyone their due title suggest that Prosper was a bishop; (2) there were other bishops at Reggio and Riez at the only time Prosper could possibly

semi-Pelagian controversy began to simmer down, he accompanied Pope Leo to Rome where he served as his secretary of sorts.¹⁷ There he resided until about 455. The date of his death is uncertain, although it seems he was alive until 463.¹⁸

Prosper was a poet,¹⁹ an historian, and a theologian. His historical writings seem limited to his Chronicon;²⁰ his poetic to his De Ingratis and a few epigramms.²¹ His

have held such a dignity. cf. Morin, "Prosper of Reggio," Revue Bénédictine, XXII, pp. 245-246.

¹⁷Cf. Cappuyns, "Premier représentant," Rech. de Théo. Anc. et Méd., I, p. 326.

¹⁸The chronicle of Marcellinus shows that he was alive in 463, but in what year he died is not known . . ." cf. Phillott, "Prosper," Dict. of Christ. Bio., IV, p. 492.

¹⁹Prosper's poetic value is subject to debate. Frederick James Raby holds a very poor opinion of his poetry. "In him the 'medievalization' of letters which showed itself in the absence of care for form, and the extreme of emphasis on dogma and morals, holds full sway." Frederick James Raby, A History of Christian-Latin Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 85. Léonce Couture is probably a bit too optimistic when he writes about the De Ingratis: ". . . L'oeuvre brille par la force et l'élégance." cf. Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I, p. 41. A more moderate view is found in Cayré. "He wrote with elegance and ease . . . But he was too much of a theologian to be an eminent poet." Cayré, Patrology, II, p. 187. Phillott and Tixeront express similar views.

²⁰Cf. Prosper of Aquitaine, Defense of St. Augustine, translated, annotated and with an introduction by P. De Letter (Ancient Christian Writers; Westminster, Md: The Newman Press, Longmans, Green and Co. 1963), XXXII, p. 3. (Further references to the introduction, as well as references to footnotes will be as follows: De Letter, Defense of Augustine, etc.). For the text cf. Migne, LI, cols. 535-608.

²¹Cf. Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I,

theological writings, however, are more abundant; generally they center on the problem of grace. The thesis will be limited to a consideration of Prosper's prose writings on grace in defense of Augustine.²²

In the sustained battle that Augustine waged against the Pelagians,²³ he was forced to insist on the absolute gratuity of salvation, the mercy of God that elects certain souls from the mass of perdition, and his justice that permits others to remain in the plight of sin.²⁴ The writings stirred much opposition not only with the Hadrumetan monks

p. 42; Migne, LI, cols. 91-148.

²²The poems of Prosper are essentially theological. In fact the form is simply intended as "a snare by which an indifferent reader might be captured." Raby, History of Christian-Latin Poetry, p. 85. They will not be considered in this thesis for three reasons: (1) the most important poems of Prosper, save the De Ingratis are doubtfully ascribed to Prosper, (2) it is difficult at times to discern poetic expression from doctrine, (3) the De Ingratis is nothing other than the Letter to Ruffinus in verse. cf. L. Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine - Etude sur la litterature latine ecclésiastique au cinquième siècle en Gaule (Toulouse and Paris: 1900) p. 229. Sharing this opinion are Bardy, Cappuyns, and Young; the works that interest us are all found in the Opera Omnia of Prosper (Migne, LI). They include: (a) the Epistola ad Ruffinum cols. 77-88, (b) the Pro Augustino Responsiones ad capitula Objectionum Gallorum calumniantium cols. 115-174. (c) the Pro Augustino Responsiones ad excerpta Genuensium cols. 197-203, (d) the De Gratia Dei et libero arbitrio contra collatorem cols. 213-276, (e) the Responsiones ad capitula objectionum Vincentianarum, cols. 177-186, (f) the De Vocatione Omnium Gentium cols. 647-724. In references to any of these individual works in the future, the name "Prosper" will be omitted, and the work itself abbreviated.

²³For the list of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings cf. Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, pp. 272 ff.

²⁴For a background to Augustine's doctrine on pre-

but with those of Marseilles.²⁵ Among the latter, Augustine was being accused of the worst heresies - fatalism, Manicheism, predestinationism.²⁶ It is here that was published the Letter to Ruffinus²⁷ in defense of Augustine.

If Prosper gives the impression of having fully grasped Augustine's doctrine in his exposé of Augustine's positions on grace and predestination in this letter, he seems to have lost some of his self assurance in his next letter - his Epistola ad Augustinum. Prosper finds himself being crushed by the keen wits and vehemence of his adversaries.²⁸

destination cf. Henri Rondet, "Anthropologie Religieuse de Saint Augustin," Recherches de Sciences Religieuses, XXIX, (1939), pp. 163-196.

²⁵The Hadrumetan monks, however, were willing to listen to Augustine and sent representatives to him for instruction. The two tracts - De Gratia et libero arbitrio and De Correptione et Gratia - were friendly letters by Augustine to these monks. cf. Saint Augustin, Aux Moines d'Adrumète et de Provence, translated and annotated by Jean Chéné and Jacques Pintard (Oeuvre de Saint Augustin; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962), XXIV, pp. 42-44. The Gauls do not seem to have been quite as willing. Georges de Plinval explains: "D'une manière générale en Gaule, les Catholiques repoussent le naturalisme radical des pélagiens . . . mais ils gardent le sentiment très vif de la valeur de leurs efforts; tout cela explique leur répugnance à l'égard d'une théorie qui accorde tout à la grâce . . ." cf. Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète," Rech. Aug., I, p. 341.

²⁶At least that is what Prosper explains in his Epistola ad Rufinum, cf. Migne, LI, cols. 77-88.

²⁷Who Rufinus (or Ruffinus) actually is we do not know. But M. Jacquin writes: "De la lettre elle-même on peut conclure qu'il était lié d'une intime amitié avec Prosper. Il s'inquiétait des bruits répandus sur le compte de ce dernier . . ." cf. Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 270.

²⁸Cf. De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 5.

Together with a friend of his called Hilary he writes Augustine exposing the doctrines of his enemies and petitioning for new enlightenment.²⁹

While awaiting an answer from Augustine, Prosper translated his Epistola ad Rufinum into hexameter verse — the Carmen de Ingratis.³⁰ Finally, Augustine's answer arrived in the form of the De Dono perseverantiae and the De Prædestinatione sanctorum.³¹ The works stressed the fact that, though man truly merits, through God's grace, heaven itself is a gratuitous gift, and predestination is independent of the foreknowledge of merits. Although the efforts of Augustine had been intended to help calm the controversy, they added new fuel to the fire. Friends of

²⁹Hilary was a close friend to Augustine but no intellectual. He felt that his exposition of the semi-Pelagian positions would not be satisfactory, so he begged Prosper to write a similar letter to the Doctor of Grace. cf. Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, pp. 223-224. Prosper, at this time was a disciple of Augustine but only through correspondence. He had never seen the Doctor. Cf. Jacquin, "Question de la predestination," Rev. d' his. eccl., VII, p. 299. The full name of Hilary is unknown. Through his association with Prosper, however, he is sometimes referred to as Hilarius Prosperianus Cf. Worman, "Prosper," Encl. of Bib. Theol. and Eccl. Lit., VIII, p. 664. Authors disagree as to the exact date of the letter. Apparently, it is somewhere between 426-429. cf. Young, Studies on the Style, p. 2; cf. also Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Theo. Cat., XIII, col. 847.

³⁰Young, Studies on the Style, p. 2.

³¹For the Latin text and a French translation cf. Augustin, Aux Moines, pp. 464-765. Although the two works are now separate, at one time they constituted but one tract. cf. Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Theo. Cat., XIII :1, p. 847.

Augustine and Prosper, two priests of Genoa,³² Camillus and Theodore, were so troubled by the two new tracts, that they answered the petitions in his Pro Augustino responsiones ad excerpta Genuensium.³³

Not long afterward, Augustine died. And the weight of the controversy fell upon Prosper's shoulders.³⁴ An anonymous work contorting the teachings of Augustine was soon published. When Prosper replied with his Pro Augustino responsiones ad capitula objectionum Gallorum calumniantium, he had plunged headlong into the controversy. But, finding his own defense of Augustine inadequate, he sought Papal support.³⁵ With Hilary, he visited Pope Celestine and had him write a letter to the bishops of Gaul in favor of Augustine's doctrines.³⁶ Unfortunately the letter was too

³²"Some have thought, but on insufficient grounds, Geneva to have been the home of these priests." Phillott, "Prosper," Dict. of Christ. Bio., IV, p. 495.

³³On the name of this work, G. dePlinval suggests a possible correction. A genuensium (the men of Agen) instead of Genuensium. cf. G. de Plinval, Pélagé, ses écrits, sa vie et sa réforme (Lausanne: Payot, 1943), p. 367.

³⁴"... L'évêque d'hippone . . . s'éteignait le 30 août 430 . . . Il ne pourra plus fournir d'explications sur sa doctrine, il ne pourra plus la défendre. S. Prosper assumera désormais cette double tâche." cf. Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. de sci. phil. et théo., I, p. 276. It is estimated that Prosper was about forty years old at this time. cf. Tixeront, Patrology, p. 382.

³⁵D. M. Cappuyns, "L'origine des Capitula pseudo-célestines," Revue Bénédicte, XLI (1929), pp. 156-170.

³⁶The letter is addressed to Venerius of Marseilles, Marinius, Leontius of Frejus, Auxonius, Arcadius, and

general and vague to be very successful.³⁷ It did succeed, however, to bring about some peace and silence and a little more reverence for the name of Augustine.

After Pope Celestine's death and Prosper's return to Gaul, the defender of Augustine was overwhelmed with new and vehement anti-Augustinian pamphlets — the Praedestinatus of anonymous authorship, the Collationes of Cassian,³⁸ the Commonitorium and the Objectiones of Vincent of

Fillancius. cf. Jacquin, "Question de la Prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 288.

³⁷The text of Celestine's letter which gives praise to Augustine reads as follows: "Augustinum, sanctae recordationis virum, pro vita sua atque meritis in nostra communione semper habuimus, nec unquam hunc sinistrae suspicionis saltem rumor aspersit: quem tantae scientiae olim fuisse meminimus, ut inter magistros optimos etiam ante a meis semper decessoribus haberetur. Bene ergo omnes in commune senserunt, utpote qui utique cunctis et amori fuerit et honori. Unde resistatur talibus quos male crescere videmus . . ." cf. E. Portalié, "Saint Augustin," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, I:2 (1923), cols. 2,268-2,472. Pickman interprets these words as an affirmation that the views of Augustine were identical to those of the Church. Such is not the case. cf. Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 426. In the manuscripts dating back later than the sixth century a collection of Church decisions on grace are included as part of the letter of Celestine and are known as the Capitula Coelestini; scholarly studies have definitively established, however, that "les Capitula ne font point partie de la Lettre de Célestin . . ." cf. E. Portalié, "Célestin Ier. "Lettre contre les semipélagiens et les capitula annexés," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, II:2 (1923), cols. 2051-2061.

³⁸Cf. Joannis Cassiani, Opera Omnia, edited by J. P. Migne (Patrologia Latina; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer et Cie, 1874), XLIX cols. 477-1328. cf. especially Collatio XIII - De Protectione Dei, cols. 897-954. For a study in the doctrine of Cassian with regards to grace and free will especially as it is found in the 13th conference, cf. Owen Chadwick, John Cassian - a Study in Primitive Monasticism (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1950), pp. 126-134. cf. also Joseph Tixeront, Histoire des

Lerins.³⁹ Prosper immediately published the Pro Augustino responsiones ad capitula objectionum Vincentianarum and the Liber Contra collatorem. The combat was in full swing when suddenly Abbot Cassian passed away. With him died the controversy for at least twenty-five years.

Dogmes dans l'antiquité chrétienne (Histoire des Dogmes; Paris, 1912), III pp. 278-283; cf. also P. Godet, "Cassien," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique II:2 (1923) cols. 1823-1829. His doctrine can be summarized as follows: sometimes the beginnings of good will and faith are pure gifts of God; other times they have their beginnings in man's will for there exists in the soul of man the germs of natural virtue; grace is often given according to merit; and man without grace is sick not dead. One reason Cassian's doctrine seems to jive with that of Augustine is this: the former was a moralist and the latter a metaphysician. cf. Georges de Plinval, et al., De La Mort de Théodose à l'élection de Grégoire le Grand (Histoire de l'Eglise: depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours; publiée sous la direction de Augustin Fliche et Victor Martin: Paris Bloud et Gay, 1937), IV p. 399. That Cassian's intentions were honorable is beyond question. cf. Godet, "Cassien," Dict. de Théo. Cat. col. 1826. The great prestige of Cassian would seem to attest to this (Ibid., col. 1825) and so would his sanctity. cf. Bardenhewer, Patrology, p. 516. "In many places, especially at Marseilles, he is honored as a saint," and Tixeront, Patrology, p. 273. "In several churches of Provence he is honored as a saint."

³⁹Cf. Migne, LXIX, cols. 637-686 for the Commonitorium of Vincent. This work, in which Augustine's name is never mentioned, is decidedly a very subtle yet very powerful attack against the Doctor of Grace. cf. G. Bardy, "Vincent of Lerins (Saint)," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, XV:2 (1950), cols. 3045-3055; cf. also Adméhar d'Alès, "La Fortune du Commonitorium," Recherches de Sciences Religieuses, XXVI (1936), pp. 334-356. At one point Vincent seems dishonest. He twists the words of Celestine (see footnote 36) in such a way as to suggest a condemnation of Augustine. "Vincent réussit de faire dire de la lettre du pape Célestin très exactement le contraire de ce qu'elle dit." cf. Amann, "Semi-Pélagiens," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIV:2 (1941), cols. 1796-1850. "La manoeuvre était habile, mais on ne peut plus malhonnête, et l'on ne saurait y voir autre chose qu' un impudent mensonge." Alès, "Fortune," Rech. de Sci. Rel., XXVI, p. 354. The Objectiones Vincentianae, which contain a more open attack

When in 440, Prosper's friend the deacon Leo was crowned Pope, Prosper accompanied him to Rome and served as a secretary. In this situation Prosper composed his Expositio psalmodum, his sententiarum ex opinionibus sancti Augustini, as well as his Chronicon.⁴⁰ These are obviously works of peace and not of controversy. They do not center on the problems of grace and predestination. But, Prosper could not shake himself totally away from his Augustinian influence. Somewhere between 450 and 460 he produced his masterpiece on grace — the De Vocatione Omnium Gentium — clearly an effort to make Augustinianism acceptable even to his adversaries.⁴¹ It is probable that he died soon after completing the work — around 463.

Prosper's great prestige during his lifetime, as well

against Augustine, have been lost. cf. Altaner, Patrology, p. 540. That the Vincentian Articles were actually written by Vincent of Lerins was at one time subject to scholarly dispute. cf. Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 290. But most scholars now agree with Amann who writes about attributing the work to Vincent of Lerins. "Il nous paraît extrêmement probable, pour ne pas dire certain." If Vincent attacked Augustine on grace he respected him highly in other studies. cf. José Madoz, "Un tratado desconocido de san Vincent de Lerins," Gregorianum, XXI (1940), pp. 75-94. cf. also J. Lebreton, "Saint Vincent de Lerins et saint Augustin," Recherches de science religieuse, XXX (1940), pp. 368-369. ". . . Il faut reconnaître que le moine de Lerins professait pour l'évêque d'Hippone une grande admiration; il la prouve non seulement par le soin qu'il a pris de composer ce florilège, mais aussi par les éloges qu'il décerne à saint Augustin, dans sa préface et surtout dans sa conclusion."

⁴⁰Cf. Young, Studies on the Style, pp. 4-5.

⁴¹Cf. Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Theo. Cat., XIII:1, col. 840.

as the considerable influence he has exerted over the Church in later centuries are reasons enough for the investigation of his thought. During his life, Prosper exercised a considerable influence in ecclesiastical thought,⁴² drawing to the views of Augustine some of the greatest intellectuals in Gaul and Southern France. During the Carolingian age he was honored as one of the most eminent of the Fathers of the Church;⁴³ only during the golden age of scholasticism does his influence seem to have dwindled.⁴⁴ Further, his mature doctrine on grace and predestination has become, in great part, the present teaching of the Church,⁴⁵ and his general attitude "was consecrated by the

⁴²"Son influence en son temps a été considérable" cf. Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète," Rech. Aug., I, p. 354. "Il a exercé une influence considérable sur la pensée ecclésiastique vers le milieu du Ve siècle." P. de Labriolle, Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne, Revue et augmentée par G. Bardy (Paris: Société d'Édition, Les Belles Lettres, 1947), p. 665.

⁴³"... L'influence de Prosper a été grande sur les théologiens de l'époque carolingienne, qui lui accorde une place de choix parmi les autorités patristiques." Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIII: 1, pp. 849-850. cf. also Young, Studies on the Style, p. 6.

⁴⁴H. Bouillard points out that Thomas Aquinas knew most probably only of Prosper's sententiarum ex operibus Sancti Augustini delibatarum liber. In general the scholars of the time were ignorant both of the semi-Pelagian controversies and of the figures involved, and of its condemnation. One of the reasons for this was that the Council Collections used did not contain the decrees of the Council of Orange. cf. H. Bouillard. Conversion et grâce chez St. Thomas d'Aquin — Etude historique (Paris: Aubier, 1944), pp. 92-122.

⁴⁵"Le livre du de Vocatione gentium représentait, en effet, avec quelques spéculations de plus, l'enseignement de l'Eglise romaine." cf. J. Turmel, "Histoire de

Council of Orange in 529, a part of the canons of which, were borrowed from the sententiae of extracts of St. Augustine by Saint Prosper."⁴⁶ Consequently, Prosper presently enjoys a seat of honor in the history of the predestination problem, a place that he will forever hold.⁴⁷

On the grounds alone of his influence in the predestination problem Prosper deserves serious study. Yet, there is possibly an even more important reason for investigating his doctrine.

That Augustine is the most important single figure in the history of the problem of predestination is a statement that requires no support. Equally certain is it that the Doctor of grace is difficult to interpret. J. Liébaert says on this subject that Augustine's doctrine, despite its historical setting is difficult to swallow at present, just as it was difficult to accept at the time it was first presented. It lends itself to serious objections. Consequently, he asks: "What was the true thought of the great Doctor? How should we interpret it, what judgment should we bring to it?" He answers that the theologians are splint in their opinions.⁴⁸ Indeed, they are. Odilo Rottmanner interprets

l'Interprétation de I Tim. 2:4, Revue d'Histoire et de littérature religieuses, V (1900), pp. 385-415; cf. also Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Theo. Cat., XIII: 1, col. 849.

⁴⁶Ibid. Personal translation.

⁴⁷Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VIII, 298.

⁴⁸"Qu'elle fut la pensée véritable du grand Docteur?"

Augustine as preaching "gratia irresistibilis."⁴⁹ So too Kolb and the Protestant theologians Harnack⁵⁰ and Dr. Mozley⁵¹ as well as the Christian historian Pickman.⁵² L. Valentin sees in the fifteen objections of the Gauls against Augustine (in which Augustine's doctrine is ridiculed) a fairly accurate presentation of the thought of the bishop of Hippo,⁵³ even though Prosper refers to the same presentation as "calumnies."⁵⁴ On the other hand most modern Augustinian

Quelle interprétation en donner, et quelle jugement porter sur elle? . . . Les théologiens sont divisés." cf. J. Liébaert, "L'Augustinisme" de O. Rottmanner, Mélanges de Sciences Religieuses, VI (1949), pp. 29-30).

⁴⁹Cf. Odilo Rottmanner, "L'Augustinisme," Mélanges de Sciences Religieuses, VI (1949), pp. 31-48).

⁵⁰Pohle, "Predestinarianism," The Cat. Encycl., XII, pp. 376-378.

⁵¹Edmund Salusbury Faulkes, "Predestination," Dictionary of Christian Biography, IV, pp. 453-467.

⁵²Pickman interprets Augustine as affirming that God is the "cause of every event; with nature, and, all the rest so much putty in His hands" cf. Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 424.

⁵³Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 294; later speaking about the Vincentian articles, in which God is accused of being the author of crimes such as rape and murder, he writes: "Je ne sais si l'auteur des Capitula Vincentiana qui après tout exprime la même doctrine que celui des Capitula Gallorum, quoique en des termes d'une violence inacceptable, n'est pas plus rapproché de saint Augustin que l'auteur des Réponses." namely Prosper. Ibid, p. 303.

⁵⁴Pro Augustino Responsiones ad Capitula objectionum Gallorum Calumniantium.

scholars interpret him in a more optimistic light.⁵⁵ These scholars include Henri Rondet⁵⁶ Garrigou-Lagrange,⁵⁷ Cayré,⁵⁸ Portalié,⁵⁹ Charles Boyer,⁶⁰ and J. Besse.⁶¹ All of these authors, however, object to and see dangers in the language of Augustine. Further, the Church has always had a high regard for the teachings of Augustine, including those on predestination and grace, and yet she has had to condemn a whole list of heretics who "have taken refuge behind the stout shield"⁶² of Augustine. Among those who regarded Augustine as their master include Luther and Calvin,⁶³

⁵⁵Pohle, "Predestinarianism," The Cat. Encycl., XII, p. 376.

⁵⁶Cf. Rondet, "Anthropologie Religieuse," Rech. de Sci. Rel., XXIX, pp. 163-196.

⁵⁷R. Garrigou - Lagrange, "La Prédestination d'après les Pères Latins, particulièrement d'après saint Augustin," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, XIII:2 (1935), cols. 2832-2901.

⁵⁸Cayré, Patrology, pp. 688-695.

⁵⁹Portalié "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1, cols. 2501-2561.

⁶⁰Charles Boyer, "Le Système de Saint Augustin sur la grâce," Recherches de Sciences Religieuses, XX (1930), pp. 481-505.

⁶¹Besse, "Augustin," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:2, cols. 2268-2483.

⁶²Pohle, "Predestinarianism," The Cat. Encycl., XI, p. 376.

⁶³Cayré, Patrology, I, p. 695.

Zwingli, Melancton⁶⁴ and Erasmus.⁶⁵ And in the seventeenth century the Jansenists regarded themselves as the faithful supporters of Augustine's doctrine.⁶⁶

Hence, it would seem that it is no easy task to interpret Augustine properly. And yet it is so important to understand the mind of the great Doctor of Grace. Here, then, is a second valuable motive for studying Prosper. One can surely obtain valuable insight into the thought of Augustine through the study of this contemporary disciple who has openly declared himself to be nothing other than an echo to the thought of his master.⁶⁷

Bossuet, in trying to prove that Augustine held the doctrine of God's universal salvific will, finds it appropriate to analyze the writings of Prosper on this question— for, to him, a knowledge of the doctrine of a faithful disciple is knowledge of the master.⁶⁸ As far as the abil-

⁶⁴Pohle, "Predestinarianism," The Cat. Encycl., I:2, p. 378.

⁶⁵Martin, "Predestination," Encycl. of Rel. and Ethics, X, pp. 225-235.

⁶⁶Ampère, Histoire Littéraire, p. 48. "Au dix-septième siècle, le jansénisme s'est constitué L'héritier et le représentant des doctrines de saint Augustin."

⁶⁷Cayré writes: "Prosper . . . desired to be no more than an echo of saint Augustine . . ." cf. Cayré, Patrology, I, p. 188. Prosper tells us as much when he explains: "I shall faithfully keep to the points of doctrine which the saintly man has expounded in his tracts." Prosper, Defense of Augustine, p. 139. (Found in the Answers to the Gauls).

⁶⁸Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition

ity of Prosper to present an accurate portrait of Augustine's doctrine, Portalié explains that no one was more qualified.⁶⁹ Writes Cappuyns on this same point: "Who will, therefore, teach us of the first changes in Augustine's thought if not Prosper himself?"⁷⁰ It is quite possible that no one has ever penetrated Augustine's mind like Prosper,⁷¹ that only Prosper thoroughly understood him.⁷² But, would all this not be in vain if Prosper could not communicate in intelligible language the intricacies of Augustine's thoughts. Plinval answers our difficulty by pointing out that Prosper had a gift for clarity, precision and simplification.⁷³ These gifts were recognized by his contemporaries, and that is why the priests of Genoa addressed him for interpretations

et des Saints Pères, edited by F. Lachat (Oeuvres complètes de Bossuet; Paris: Librairie de Louis Vivès, 1862), iv, p. 521.

⁶⁹"Il semble que nul, plus que Prosper, n'était en mesure de saisir la vraie pensée de celui dont il demandait à Célestin I^{er} de prendre la défense." cf. Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., 1:1, col. 2,256.

⁷⁰Cappuyns, "Premier représentant," Rech. de Théo. anc. et méd., I (1929), pp. 309-337.

⁷¹"St. Prosper . . . was given a thorough literary and philosophical education which enabled him . . . to acquire a deep and perhaps unrivalled understanding of St. Augustine's ideas." cf. Cayré, Patrology, II, p. 184.

⁷²"Prosper thoroughly understood St. Augustin." cf. Tixeront, Patrology, p. 271.

⁷³Prosper had a mind "remarquablement doué, d'une grande vivacité d'intelligence, aimant la précision, la clarté, possédant, par-dessus tout le don de simplifier et d'expliquer les problèmes difficiles." Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète," Rech. Aug., I, p. 341.

of Augustine's doctrine even during the lifetime of the master.⁷⁴

Only one question remains: was Prosper as faithful an echo as he claimed to be. Most authorities agree that Prosper taken as a whole was quite faithful.⁷⁵ Concerning individual teachings, however, there is disagreement. Some authors as Pelland refuse to see in Prosper any deviation whatsoever from the master;⁷⁶ others see a real contradiction in certain key passages as Valentin;⁷⁷ others as E. Amann see an advance upon the thought of Augustine;⁷⁸ most, however, see only a moderate deviation as Garrigou - Langrange.⁷⁹ But, as P. de Letter so well points out,

⁷⁴"Aux yeux de ses compatriotes, Prosper semble l'interprète le mieux qualifié de la véritable doctrine d'Augustin; c'est à lui que les prêtres d'Agen (ou de Genes?) exposent leurs embarras." Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine interprète," Rech. Aug., I, p. 342.

⁷⁵In the introduction to the Opera Omnia of Prosper, J. P. Migne writes: "Novam editionem Operum omnium sancti Prosperi Aquitani, fidelissimi quondam sancti Augustini discipuli," cf. Migne, LI; for further references on this point. cf. Alès, "Prédestination," Dict. Apol. de la Foi Cat., IV, cols. 195-270; Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 269; Tixeront, Histoire des dogmes, p. 285; "Dans l'ensemble . . . il est bien resté le disciple fidèle du maître . . ."

⁷⁶Lionel Pelland, S. Prosperi Aquitani doctrina de praedestinatione et voluntate Dei salvifica (Montreal: Collegii maximi Immaculatae Conceptionis, 1936), pp. 86-93.

⁷⁷cf. Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, pp. 222-337.

⁷⁸Amann, "Semi-Pélagiens," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIV:2, col. 1827.

⁷⁹Garrigou - Lagrange, "La Prédestination d'après les Pères Latins, particulièrement d'après saint Augustin."

"these differences in interpretation arise, partly from the different interpretations of Augustine's doctrine and of Augustinism."⁸⁰ So that one's judgment on the extent that Prosper deviates from Augustine depends ultimately on one's interpretation of Augustine.

One of the two motives, then, for choosing Prosper as the source of our predestination study is that he offers a possible avenue to a deeper penetration into the Doctor of Grace on this very delicate and difficult issue. There were other disciples of Augustine, as Saint Fulgentius; but he seems to have inherited more the letter of Augustine than the spirit. Besides he is just as obscure as Augustine.⁸¹ Prosper, on the other hand, presents Augustine's thoughts in a manner more acceptable to the average Christian,⁸² and in a clearer fashion. This thesis, therefore, is presented as a possible source of greater insight into the profound and intricate thought of the Doctor of Grace on the problem of predestination.

Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIII:2 (1935) cols. 2832-2901.

⁸⁰De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 164.

⁸¹cf. E. Portalié, "Augustinisme (développement Historique de)," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1 (1903), cols. 2501-2561.

⁸²"Sans rien abandonner de la doctrine du maître, il la présente dans un jour meilleur." cf. also De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 168. "No one denies that St. Prosper softens down Augustine's excessively rigid expressions . . ."

CHAPTER I

AUTHORSHIP OF THE DE VOCATIONE OMNIUM GENTIUM

If in general, Prosper can be accurately characterized by faithfulness, on the one hand, and an intentional effort on the other to modify the harshness of Augustine in order to make the most profound elements of the doctrine of this Doctor acceptable, it is especially in the De Vocatione that he is successful in this effort.¹ It may very well be that Augustine was both fully aware of an "adequate" or "sufficient" grace given all men by God² and on occasion made his thought known.³ It may also be that Augustine believed in God's universal salvific will as Bossuet points out.⁴ Yet, it is certain that these truths remained essen-

¹"Il suffit d'entendre revendiquer ainsi les droits souverains de Dieu, pour se convaincre que le De Vocatione Omnium Gentium se rattache à la doctrine augustinienne. Mais les formules excessives ont disparu." cf. Capéran, Problème du Salut, pp. 142-143. In the entire two books, for example, which center on the problem of the compatibility between God's universal salvific will and predestination, Prosper never once uses the term "Predestination," save when it is found in a passage from Saint Paul in Eph. 1:3-6. cf. Prosper, Call of All Nations, p. 147.

²K. Rahner, "Augustin und semipelagianismus," Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, LXII (1938), pp. 171-196.

³Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1, col. 2519.

⁴Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition, pp. 445-565.

tially hidden in Augustine.⁵ It took the author of the De Vocatione to bring these Augustinian truths into the lime-light.⁶ It is in the form that Augustine's doctrines appear in the De Vocatione, that his theory of predestination has really triumphed. It is in this form that Augustinianism has become the doctrine of the Roman Church.⁷

It is consequently of utmost importance that the De Vocatione be included in a study of Prosper, not only because the work is Prosper's masterpiece, but because it is one of the most valuable single sources for a "humanized" interpretation of the Doctor of Grace. The only problem is: did Prosper actually write the De Vocatione.

Many respectable authors have openly rejected the idea of Prosperian authorship. Otto Bardenhewer explains that many "works were erroneously attributed to him, among them the De Vocatione Omnium gentium."⁸ Cayré asserts that there is a whole list "of works wrongly ascribed to Saint

⁵"...Augustin en était arrivé à laisser dans l'ombre, voire dans l'oubli un aspect du problème," cf. Capéran, Problème du Salut, p. 143.

⁶Turmel, "Histoire de l'Interprétation," Rev. d'hist. et de lit. rel., V, pp. 385-415.

⁷"Ce fut sous cette forme adoucie que la doctrine de saint Augustin triompha. Et il n'en pouvait être autrement. Le livre du de Vocatione Gentium représentait, en effet, avec quelques spéculations de plus, l'enseignement de l'Eglise romaine." Ibid., p. 399. "Prosper aboutit à des conclusions modérées qui sont celles de l'Eglise romaine elle-même," Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Theo. Cat., XIII:1, col. 849.

⁸Bardenhewer, Patrology, p. 513.

Prosper." In this list he includes the De Vocatione.⁹ Tixeront finds that the work is not the production of Prosper but "the production of a moderate follower of St. Augustine."¹⁰ For Léonce Couture, it has been virtually proven that Prosper cannot be the author of this tract.¹¹ Hawk tells us that the work was "composed by a less cumbrous Augustinian than Prosper..."¹²

Other authors, as Plinval, without denying point-blank Prosperian authorship do hold a contrary opinion.¹³ The majority of the authors in this century, however, have regarded the work as anonymous. Among them are Capéran,¹⁴ Portalié,¹⁵ Pickman,¹⁶ Adméhar d'Alès,¹⁷ Phillott,¹⁸ and

⁹Cayré, Patrology, II, p. 187.

¹⁰Tixeront, Patrology, p. 272.

¹¹For him the De Vocatione has long been "attribué à saint Prosper, à tort sans doute (cela nous semble prouvé)." Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I, p. 45.

¹²Hawk, "Prosper of Aquitaine," Schaff-Herzog Encycl. LX, p. 282.

¹³"En dépit des arguments qui ont été avancés, nous ne croyons pas que Prosper soit l'auteur du De vocatione omnium gentium." Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète," Rech. Aug., I, p. 351.

¹⁴Capéran, Problème du Salut, p. 137.

¹⁵Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1, col. 2524.

¹⁶Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 427.

¹⁷Alès, "Predestination," Dict. Apol. de la Foi Cat., IV, col. 216.

¹⁸Phillott, "Prosper," Dict. of Christ. Bio., IV, p. 495.

Garrigou-Lagrange.¹⁹

The denial of and the doubts concerning the Prosperian authorship of this work date back to the seventeenth century. Before this time it was almost universally agreed that Prosper was the author. The manuscripts affirmed this. Only a few manuscripts had inscribed the name of Ambrose,²⁰ obviously by mistake, since Ambrose had died before the Pelagian or semi-Pelagian controversies had arisen.²¹ But, Quesnel, who, while editing the works of Pope Leo the Great,²² pleaded for the Leonine authorship of this tract, succeeded in shaking the traditional views, so much so in fact that he swerved many intellectuals to his point of view.²³ A few years later the Abbot Anthelmi presented a dissertation²⁴

¹⁹Garrigou-Lagrange, "La Prédestination," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIII:2, col. 2898.

²⁰For a list of manuscripts carrying the name Ambrose cf. Cappuyns, "L'auteur," Revue Benedictine, XLI, p. 199.

²¹St. Ambrose died in 397 cf. Websters New World Dictionary of the American Language, college edition. (New York: the World Publishing Company, 1962) p.46; Pelagius began to spread his doctrine in the year 397. cf. Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 406.

²²cf. Migne, LV, cols. 339-372 for a reprint of the Dissertatio secunda de auctore librorum de vocatione omnium gentium cf. P. Quesnel, originally published in 1675 at Paris in the second volume of the Opera Omnia of Saint Leo.

²³L. Ellies du Pin, "St. Prosper," Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclésiastiques, III:2 (1690) pp. 181-204. "Il semblait avoir assez bien prouvé ces...points et plusieurs personnes donnaient dans son sentiment..." (Personally adopted from old French; all further passages from Du Pin will equally be translated into modern French). De Letter would seem to deny du Pin's position when he writes: "Quesnel's own opinion found little favour with others..." De Letter, Call of All Nations, p.7.

²⁴J. Antelmi's work entitled De veris operibus Ss.

combatting Quesnel's views and reaffirming Prosperian authorship.²⁵ The result—an almost universal uncertainty as to the authorship of the De Vocatione. The fate of this work seemed to be doomed to anonymity when, in 1900, Valentin's dissertation revived the whole problem.²⁶ Father Cappuyns followed through on this work with a study published in 1927.²⁷ Finally, in 1952, a doctoral thesis by Joseph James Young was published on the topic.²⁸ Since then the books of the De Vocatione have generally been regarded as authentically those of Prosper.

Under examination therefore are the arguments of Quesnel, Anthelmi, Valentin, Cappuyns, and Young. The question is that of deciding whether or not sufficient proof has been presented to ascribe the tracts to Prosper. Quesnel in pleading for Leonine authorship divides his arguments into three groups: (a) historic arguments, (b) theological arguments, (c) literary arguments.

The main theological argument that Quesnel presents

Patrum Leonis Magni et Prosperi Aquitani dissertationes criticae was originally published at Paris in 1869. cf. De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 161.

²⁵"Monfieur l'Abbé Anthelmi est venu à la traverse, qui a fait une longue dissertation pour combattre cette opinion, dans laquelle il revient à l'opinion commune et soutient que ces livres sont de saint Prosper." cf. Du Pin, "St. Prosper," Nouv. Bibl. des Auteurs Eccl., III:2, p. 190.

²⁶Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, pp. 687-713.

²⁷Cappuyns, L'auteur; Revue Bénédictine, XLI, pp. 198-226.

²⁸Young, Studies on the Style of the De Vocatione omnium gentium.

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in favor of St. Leo is the similarity that the two authors have in the presentation of their doctrine on grace.²⁹ Both recognize a general grace offered all men, and both speak metaphorically about the elements and creatures calling them pages and volumes upon which God has written his eternal law.³⁰ Both authors, also handle scripture quotes in a like fashion, often, in fact, using the same passages in parallel contexts. Both use the version of St. Jerome.³¹

Historically, Quesnel argues that the author of the De Vocatione is either from the Church of Africa, the Church of Gaul or that of Italy. But he cannot be from the Church of Africa (a) because he never once mentions the name of Augustine, (b) because he speaks with great eloquence, and this is impossible for one educated in a province invaded by barbarians.³² He cannot be from Gaul for Gennadius the historian would have mentioned him. Hence he must be from Italy. Specifically, he must be from Rome for the author

²⁹In the exposition of the arguments of Quesnel and Anthelmi reference is being made to a "popularized" study of their arguments by Du Pin who is their contemporary. cf. L. Ellies du Pin, "De l'Auteur des Livres de la Vocation des Gentils et de l'Épître à Démétride," Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques, III:2 (1690) pp. 190-204.

³⁰"Ils reconnaissent tous deux la grâce générale et appellent les éléments et les créatures des pages et des volumes où la Loi éternelle est écrite." cf. Du Pin, "De l'auteur des Livres," Nouv. Bibl. des Auteurs Eccl., III:2, p. 195.

³¹This last point is noteworthy enough because at this time the version of St. Jerome was not in common usage. cf. Valentin, St. Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 692.

³²Du Pin omits argument B; it is found, however, in Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 691.

of ^{the} De Vocatione mentions this city to be his home in the second book.³³ Further, the approximate time when these books were written make it plausible to ascribe them to Leo. Would it not then be Leo that Pope Gelasius refers to with the words "a master and doctor?"³⁴

But Quesnel does not place the weight of the proof either on the theological or the historical arguments. Rather, he places it on a comparative study of the style of the authors in question.³⁵ He finds similarities in expressions, in figures of speech, in transitional structures, rythm, rhyme, parenthetical comments, and paragraph form. He sees common references between the two authors. Both speak, for example, of the foundation of the Church of Rome, of how God selected Rome to be the first real establishment of his kingdom, of how God used the Roman empire to spread the faith and how this faith has spread to regions unattainable by arms and warfare. When discussing the temptations and fall of St. Peter they do so in a similar fashion; so too, when they discuss his repentance. Not only is there similarity of style but there is often identity in the choice

³³"...Cela se trouve confirmé par un témoignage du chap. 33 du second livre, où il dit: 'Les Barbares venant au secours des Romains, ont appris dans notre pays la Religion dont ils ne pouvaient avoir connaissance dans le leur; ce qui désigne la ville de Rome comme le pays de cet Auteur,' Du Pin, "De l'auteur des Livres," Nouv. Bibl. des Auteurs Eccl., p. 195.

³⁴Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 691.

³⁵"Son principal, ou plutôt son unique argument est la conformité de style, qu'il a cru trouver entre cet Ouvrage

of words.³⁶ Consequently, concludes Quesnel, on internal grounds, it must be affirmed that Pope Leo the Great is the author of the De Vocatione.

Quesnel's triumph in favor of Pope Leo remained unchallenged only for a short while. Anthelmi came to the rescue of Prosper. He presented the following arguments against ^{Leontine} authorship. 1. Leo was the close friend of Cassian. He had urged him to write a thesis against the Nestorians in the name of the Roman Church. Clearly he would not have asked him to write against the heretical Nestorians if he had judged him to hold certain false and at least semi-heretical ideas himself. And if he had judged Cassian to have altered his ideas on grace, he certainly would not have written a tract — the De Vocatione — against him.³⁷ 2. It cannot be a friend of Cassian's writing the De Vocatione for the author is in nowise sparing of him or his disciples. "He would not have labeled their disputes, "calumniosa certamina;" he would not have accused them of presenting objections laden with calumnies."³⁸ Nor would he have accused them of several other scandalous deeds.³⁹ Surely a friend would be a little

et les Ecrits de Saint Léon." Du Pin, "De l'auteur des Livres," Nouv. Bibl. des Auteurs Eccl., p. 195.

³⁶"Non seulement le tour est tout-à-fait semblable, ils se servent aussi souvent des mêmes mots, et de mots singuliers." Ibid., p. 196.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., personal translation.

³⁹"...Il ne les aurait pas accusez...de nier des choses avec impiété, d'être des présomptueux, et des ignorants,

more considerate! 3. Lastly, it is suggested that Leo would have written the De Vocatione before becoming Pope, while still a deacon. If this were true then surely Leo as a Pope would have continued his attack against Cassian and the semi-Pelagians, making fruitful use of his Papal power.⁴⁰ In fact, however, Pope Leo never wrote a thing against Cassian or his disciples. Hence, concludes Anthelmi, Leo could not have written the De Vocatione.

The author is rather St. Prosper of Aquitaine. Not only do several manuscripts attest to this fact but Hincmar, in his work on predestination, cites it under the name of Prosper. The author of the De Vocatione has a style similar to that of Prosper; his ideas, his doctrine are equally similar. Certain references point to identity in authorship. For example, both the De Ingratis and the De Vocatione point out that Rome became through religion, through faith, the far reaching power she failed to become through physical force. The idea that God chooses a world out of the entire world is expressed in the Answers to the Gauls as well as in the De Vocatione. In the Answers to the Gauls we read: "Ex toto mundo totus eligitur" (Chapter 8). In the De Vocatione "De toto mundo totus mundus liberatur" (I-9).⁴¹ Also, both Prosper and the Author of the De Vocatione use the

de tendre des laqs pour tromper, de faire des plaintes effrontées, et d'avoir une malignité trompeuse." Ibid., p.196.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 197.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 191.

examples of children dying without Baptism and infidels converted on their death bed. The last argument that Anthelmi presents is the testimony of Photius. It is a rather solid argument. Photius, in one of his works on Pelagianism, speaks about two books written by Prosper against the Pelagians under Pope Leo. Now, all the works of Prosper that relate to Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism other than the two books of the De Vocatione were composed before Leo became Pontif. Hence, Photius, an early and respected scholar, is saying that Prosper wrote the De Vocatione.⁴² On the grounds of the testimony of Photius, and on the basis of the other arguments presented, Anthelmi affirms Prosperian authorship for the De Vocatione.

Quesnel and Anthelmi are therefore completely at odds with one another; the one affirms that Pope Leo is the author; the other that Prosper is author. One point, however, finds them in agreement. Both, it would seem, agree that the author made himself intentionally anonymous in order to conceal his intent to reconcile Augustinism with semi-Pelagianism. This, Father de Letter points out very well.⁴³

⁴²"...Il ajoute un témoignage de Photius, qui en parlant dans le vol. 54 de la Bibliothèque des Actes des Evêques d'Occident contre les Pélagiens, dit que Saint Prosper fit des livres à Rome contre quelques Pélagiens sous le Pontificat de S. Léon...Ce que dit Photius en cet endroit, ne peut convenir aux autres Ouvrages de Saint Prosper, qui étaient écrits avant le Pontificat de Saint Léon. C'est donc des livres de la Vocation des Gentils, dont Photius a voulu parler." Ibid. p. 191.

⁴³De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 7.

But he adds that Du Pin was to spread to future generations the idea of intentional anonymity.⁴⁴ This is not true. De Letter refers us to the conclusion of Du Pin's study of the authorship of the De Vocatione in order to support his statement. There Du Pin does in fact conclude: "that the book at first appeared without the name of the author."⁴⁵ At first glance it might appear that Du Pin postulates intentional anonymity, but in fact he does not. He is simply restating (as is his style) a previous comment made at the beginning of his discussion. "The authority of the Manuscripts... establishes that since the time of St. Prosper the work was anonymous..."⁴⁶ The idea of intentional anonymity for Du Pin appears as something unfounded, something to be ridiculed in the face of a want in evidence rather than something to be accepted. He thus scoffs at Monfieur Anthelmi's suggestion that Prosper may have desired his work to be anonymous. He writes: "Who told Monfieur the Abbot Anthelmi that St. Prosper wished to disguise himself in this work."⁴⁷ He then asks :

⁴⁴"...His opponent in the matter, J. Antelmi, while defending St. Prosper's authorship, supported the opinion which Quesnel had put forward and which Du Pin was later to spread with considerable success—that the author, in order to cover up his attempt at reconciling Augustinism and semi-Pelagianism, purposely remained anonymous." Ibid.

⁴⁵Du Pin, "De l'auteur des Livres" Nouv. Bibl. des Auteurs Eccl. III;2, p. 199. "Que ce livre a d'abord paru sans nom d'auteur".

⁴⁶Ibid. P. 193. L'autorité des Manuscrits...constate que du temps de saint Prosper l'Ouvrage était anonyme..."

⁴⁷Ibid. "Qui a dit a Monfieur l'Abbé Anthelmi que Prosper a voulu se déguiser dans cet Ouvrage..."

"How does he know that Prosper did not attach his name?"⁴⁸
 These are the only two places in all of Du Pin's study that we find any mention of intentional anonymity. Hence, he certainly cannot have spread the view if he never even held it.

Nonetheless the view was spread. And when Valentin wrote his dissertation on Prosper this idea was quite prevalent. Further, that the uncertainty of authorship was the only answer that scholarship could render seemed accepted. But Valentin decided to rehash a dormant problem.

He first proceeded to reject Quesnel's theological, historical and literary arguments in favor of Leonine authorship. An identity of doctrine between Pope Leo and the author of the De Vocatione proves nothing, he declared. Any book by Prosper might reflect Leo's views since the two were friends and lived together for many years. Besides it is doubtful that Leo's doctrine on grace is really similar to that of the De Vocatione. Leo had a purely exterior notion of universal grace; whereas the universal grace in the De Vocatione appears to be interior as well as exterior. Further, the use of St. Jerome's bible was not exclusive; there is evidence that Prosper also made use of it.⁴⁹

Quesnel's historic arguments, Valentin did not regard with great esteem either. That the author of the De Vocatione

⁴⁸"D'où sait-il qu'il n'y avait point mis son nom?"
Ibid., 193.

⁴⁹Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, pp. 665-697.

does not mention Augustine does not suggest that the work is not of Prosper. The fact is much of Augustine's doctrine is expressed in this work; sometimes even his approach, his style, is apparent. Further, the barbaric invasions did not necessarily produce such a stifling of intellectual life that no one was any longer capable of composing the De Vocatione. If Gennadius forgets to mention Prosper, he also forgets several other authors.⁵⁰ That Pope Gelasius refers to the author as "a master and doctor" is nothing. Rather, what is significant is that he refers to him as "Quidam magister Ecclesiae"—this only 30 years after the death of his illustrious predecessor. He would rather have written "praedecessor noster," "decessor noster" or such formula used in those days if he was actually referring to Pope Leo.⁵¹ Lastly, the expression nostris regionibus can refer to the whole roman empire.⁵²

Finally, Valentin rejects Quesnel's literary arguments. As far as similarity of words goes, he points out,

⁵⁰"Gennade ne nomme pas d'avantage Domnulus, Sylvius, Eusèbe, et Edésius." Ibid. p. 694.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²"Cette expression nostris regionibus pouvait désigner, comme le remarque Erasme, toute contrée de l'empire, l'Espagne, par exemple, tout aussi bien que le territoire de la capitale." Ibid., p. 644; what no author seems to mention and what might be a better explanation yet of this passage is that if Prosper actually wrote the De Vocatione somewhere between 450-460, and if he had been living in Rome since Pope Leo's election in 440, he could very easily refer to Rome as "nostris regionibus"— since it actually was his home for ten years or more.

if Quesnel succeeded in establishing a pattern between the author of the De Vocatione and Pope Leo, Anthelmi did likewise with Prosper and our author.⁵³ True, there are some similarities in style with Pope Leo, but the dissimilarities are more glaring.⁵⁴ Among other things, there are ambiguous passages in the De Vocatione; these are extremely rare with St. Leo. Similarly, prolonged allegories are found in the De Vocatione and never in Leo.⁵⁵

In establishing his own position in favor of Prosperian authorship Valentin puts little faith in the fact that several manuscripts ascribe the work to Prosper. He regards as most valuable a comparison of style and language, but he does not disregard a comparative study of theologic content. From a literary point of view three common points stand out between the two authors: (1) improper organization and repetition (2) a summary in point form at the end of the works constituting both summary and conclusion (3) especially is there strong similarity in the style strictly speaking. Valentin compares excerpts to prove this last point. For

⁵³"...Il dresse des tables de mots communs aux deux écrivains. Mais voilà qu'aux tables de Quesnel, Anthelmi oppose d'autres tables de mots communs aux ouvrages de saint Prosper et au de Vocatione." Ibid., p. 697.

⁵⁴On the value of comparing styles, it is curious to note that for Bossuet this method is futile. The reason is that: "les locutions et les tours qu'on y observe marquent plutôt le style du siècle où il est écrit, que celui d'aucun écrivain particulier que nous connaissions." Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition. p. 521.

⁵⁵Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 697.

example, in book I chapter one of the De Vocatione we read "Quantum dominus adjuvent." The same formula in the same place and in an identical context is found in the preface to the Responsiones ad Capitula objectionum Vincentianarum.⁵⁶ Again, in discussing the unfathomable ways of God and the mysterious reasons why God selects only certain souls for salvation both authors quote the same passage from the Acts of the Apostles: "Vetiti sunt a spiritu sancto."⁵⁷ The author goes on to list a whole string of comparable passages. In short, Valentin explains, the only way to take from Prosper the credit for composing the De Vocatione is to conjure up useless historic, psychologic and theologic arguments.

"Must we conclude that the De Vocatione is from St. Prosper. Let us simply say that the contrary has not been established, that we are inclined toward the affirmative..."⁵⁸

For Valentin, there is strong probability that Prosper wrote the two books of the De Vocatione. But his arguments seem to have been only mildly convincing. It is certain that many anti-Prosperian scholars became more open-minded after the publication of Valentin's dissertation. Still, authors such as Couture, who borrow enormously from Valentin and who agree with him on almost all points, refuse to accept his

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 712.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Faut-il conclure que le de Vocatione est de saint Prosper? Nous contenterons de dire que l'opinion contraire n'est pas établie, que nous inclinerions plutôt vers l'affirmative..." Ibid., p. 713.

viewpoint on this issue.⁵⁹ Hence, even after Valentin's thesis, the problem of the authorship of the De Vocatione remained unsolved.

But, in 1927, Cappuyns published a further study on the problem, again supporting Prosperian authorship. His arguments are reducible to four:

1. All manuscripts agree that Prosper is author of the works in question —all, that is, except a few which, due to an anachronism, ascribe them to Ambrose. This statement is attested to by all existing manuscripts from the ninth century to the fifteenth.⁶⁰ Both Rotramus of Corbia who wrote in favor of Augustine's theory of predestination and Hincmar of Rheims who opposed it — agree on Prosperian authorship.⁶¹ Now, if one combines the facts of the unanimous testimony of tradition on the one hand, with the historic truth that only one of Prosper's works was found in manuscripts before the ninth century, one would conclude that the De Vocatione was not intentionally anonymous as has been suggested.⁶²

⁵⁹Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I, p. 45.

⁶⁰For a list of the ten manuscripts cf. Cappuyns, "L'auteur" Revue Bénédictine, XXXIX, p. 200.

⁶¹"Dès 852 Ratramne de Corbie cite le De Vocatione sous le nom de Prosper, à l'appui de son augustinisme... Et quelque années après, vers 859, son adversaire Hincmar l'utilise abondamment pour combattre les doctrines rigides." Ibid.

⁶²"Le fait est ruineux pour l'hypothèse de l'anonymat primitif, et il faudra des raisons bien sérieuses pour en contester la déposition." Ibid. p. 201.

2. The theological doctrine expounded in the De Vocatione is virtually the same as that of Prosper. More important, both authors display a tendency to resolve all theologic problems by moderate views, and, at any cost, to hold on to the absolute gratuity of grace which is at the heart of Augustine's doctrine.⁶³ Some have tried to introduce a dichotomy between Prosper's doctrine on God's universal salvific will and that of the author of the De Vocatione. Such is unfounded. Both authors hold on to Augustine's restricted interpretation but suggest there is validity to a truly universal interpretation.⁶⁴ Similarity of doctrine is also found in such ideas as prescience, predestination, and general grace accorded all men.⁶⁵

3. From a literary point of view the similarities are equally clear. There are both identical expressions and identical ways of developing ideas.⁶⁶

4. A study of Scripture quotes suggests Prosper to be the author, for he uses the same versions of the Bible as the anonymous author of the De Vocatione. And what is more, he often combines the Vulgate text with older versions in parallel contexts, and for creating similar effects.⁶⁷

⁶³Ibid., p. 206.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 202-207.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 203-212.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 213-220.

⁶⁷"L'on sait qu'au second tiers du Ve s. l'usage des versions hiéronymiennes de la bible n'était plus un phénomène isolé. Rien d'étonnant donc qu'on les trouve

Cappuyns, therefore, concludes that the author of the De Vocatione can be no one else but Prosper.

Who then is this author who thinks, reasons, writes like Prosper if not Prosper himself? For the simultaneous coming together of similar expressions and thoughts in a concept that is sometimes highly personal and obscure... admits of no other explanation. ⁶⁸

Cappuyns completes his proof by refuting Quesnel. He points out that Quesnel's arguments were purely internal. They neglect the external evidence of the manuscripts—their unanimous attribution to Prosper. Further, the similarities in doctrine between the author of the De Vocatione and Pope Leo, in the light of the fact that Prosper and this author also have similar doctrines, only suggests that one author borrows from the other. The probability is that Leo borrows from Prosper for Prosper is the authority on grace and predestination. Leo is a moralist. Cappuyns goes on to prove that, though Leo often uses a language similar to that of the anonymous author, his meaning is totally different. Prosper and the author of the De Vocatione interpret Scriptural passages as relating to predestination or God's universal salvific will. For Leo, on the contrary, the same Scriptural passages seldom if ever relate to the problem of salvation. More often they have a moral

souvent sous la plume de Prosper et de l'auteur du De Vocatione. Plus significative est la rencontre dans le choix des anciennes leçons maintenues." Ibid., p. 214; pp. 214 ff contain examples of the combination of old and new versions in one passage.

⁶⁸ Ibid., personal translation. p. 220.

tinge.⁶⁹

Soon after the publication of this excellent study by Cappuyns, Bardy could confidently write: "It is now proven that St. Prosper is still the author of the De Vocatione omnium gentium."⁷⁰ And L. S. Pelland could write in a similar fashion that the work could be ascribed to Prosper with considerable probability.⁷¹

Nonetheless, not all authors were convinced. As Joseph Young points out in the preface to his dissertation on this topic, a scholar as renowned as Father de Ghellinck, S. J. could write in 1948 that the De Vocatione was anonymous. Hence, Doctor Young goes on to investigate the problem. He does not concern himself with theological or historical arguments. He concerns himself rather with the vocabulary and clausulae.

The first half of his study consists of a minute comparison between the vocabulary of the De Vocatione and the vocabulary of several works of Prosper known to be authentic. There is also a comparison between the vocabulary of select works of Pope Leo and that of the De Vocatione. Young even compares the vocabulary of the De Vocatione with that of Augustine in order to determine to what extent the

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 22-225.

⁷⁰Labriolle, Histoire de la littérature, p. 666; personal translation.

⁷¹"...Datis argumentis externis, solida cum probabilitate posse hos libros De Voc. omn. gent. Prospero Aquitano attribui." cf. Pelland, S. Prosperi, p. 154.

Doctor of Grace influenced the anonymous author in this respect. The second half consists of a study of the final and interior clausulae of the De Vocatione as compared to those in the Liber Contra Collatorem.

The author concludes his investigation by suggesting that the vocabulary in itself cannot be used as definitive evidence in support of Prosperian authorship. "The study of clausulae on the other hand furnishes strong evidence that the author of the De Vocatione omnium gentium was the author of the Contra Collatorem — Prosper of Aquitaine."⁷²

To my knowledge, no scholar has challenged this conclusion.⁷³ Rather scholars of distinction, as P. de Letter, basing themselves on the conclusions of Doctor Young, have affirmed unqualifiedly that Prosper is the author of the De Vocatione.⁷⁴ In the company, therefore, of Father De Letter, Young, Cappuyns and many other modern scholars, basing ourselves on the evidence presented in favor of

⁷²Young, Studies on the Style, p. 179.

⁷³Altaner refers to Prosper's work as anonymous but adds that it can "very probably be attributed to him." Altaner, Patrology, p. 536; Altaner's hesitation is probably due to the fact that he has not read Young's dissertation. In the rather long bibliography he lists after his discussion of the pupils and friends of Augustine he omits this book. Georges de Plinval writes in 1958: "En dépit des arguments qui ont été avancés, nous ne croyons pas que Prosper soit l'auteur du De Vocatione omnium gentium... encore qu'il en ait sans doute inspiré certains passages..." The arguments in favor of Prosperian authorship that he refers to, however, are those of Cappuyns. This is evident from the footnote to his statement. cf. Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine Interprète" Rech Aug., I., p. 351.

⁷⁴"St. Prosper of Aquitaine, the author of the De Vocatione omnium gentium, was the chief opponent of the

Prosperian authorship, we regard the De Vocatione not as an anonymous or spurious work, but as the work of Prosper of Aquitaine. Consequently, this work must be regarded on an equal footing with the other works of Prosper in the investigation of the thought of this Father of the Church.

anti-Augustinian reaction..." cf. De Letter, Defense of St. Augustine, p. 3.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF GOD'S UNIVERSAL SAVING WILL

The problem that confronts us in this chapter is whether or not Prosper expresses clearly Augustine's doctrine of God's universal saving will in such a fashion that the doctrine is rendered palatable. The procedure will be to examine various passages in the works of Prosper that have been interpreted by some authors as speaking of a true universalistic intent on God's part to save all men. The interpretations of the authors themselves will be analyzed and, where necessary, the inaccuracy of their judgment pointed out. The fact is that the majority of the patristic scholars who have studied Prosper on this point have tended to isolate specific passages from their contexts, even their extremely immediate contexts such as the termination of a given sentence. As a consequence many of the judgments passed on Prosper have been inaccurate.

At the beginning of the previous chapter it was pointed out that what makes Prosper's doctrine of predestination so valuable is not only his fidelity to the thought of Augustine but his "humanizing" of that doctrine in order to make it more acceptable. Further, it was suggested elsewhere that one of the elements in

Prosper that makes him an excellent interpret of the Doctor of Grace is his lucidity of expression. The problem under investigation in this chapter, therefore, is the following: Does Prosper succeed in expressing in a clear and unambiguous fashion Augustine's doctrine on God's universal salvific will in a way that such a doctrine is rendered acceptable.

Joseph Tixeront answers this question in the negative. He points out that if Augustine's answer to the question of whether or not God wills the salvation of all men was complicated, artificial and ambiguous, Prosper's is no clearer.¹ On this point the disciple was no more capable than the master of producing a clear and consistent doctrine.² M. Jacquin agrees with Tixeront's point of view but furthers it by arguing that even in those passages where Prosper seems to be affirming of God a true universal salvific will, his intent is only to express Augustine's doctrine of a restricted interpretation of God's universal will to save all men.³ Portalié, on the other hand, holds an opposite view. Even without considering the De Voca-

¹" . . . La réponse de saint Augustin à cette question est embarrassée. Celle de saint Prosper ne l'est guère moins." Tixeront, Histoire des dogmes, p. 288.

²" . . . Prosper s'est trouvé incapable lui aussi de formuler sur la volonté salvifique de Dieu une doctrine claire et s'y tenir fermement." Ibid.

³Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, pp. 282-286. It is to be noted, however, that Jacquin does not consider the De Vocatione in his study.

tion among the works of Prosper, he affirms that for this Father the intent of God to save all men must be judged universal in the most literal sense; he adds that, for Prosper, theologians holding a contrary view are blameworthy.⁴ Similarly, D. M. Cappuyns sees in Prosper a true, universal view of God's saving will⁵ and this again without considering the De Vocatione.

Before examining Prosper's writings, it would be wise to consider Augustine's solution to the question: Does God will the salvation of all men. The question revolves around the words of St. Paul: "Who wills all men to be saved . . ." (I Tim. 2:4). Augustine, in his later works, gives three interpretations to these words. To say that God wills the salvation of all men, he points out, means that God wills the salvation of all the predestined, for within the predestined all of humanity is contained. Such is the only explanation that can be given to the words: "You pay tithes on mint and rue and every herb" (Luke: 11: 42). Obviously a tenth part of all existing herbs is not expected; rather a tenth part of what is owned is expected.

⁴"La volonté du salut universel: Prosper ne l'affirme pas seulement, il blâme ceux qui la nient." cf. Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1, col. 2525.

⁵Speaking about Prosper, Cappuyns writes: "Il transigea en premier lieu — grâce, peut-être, à l'éloquence de Cassien, sur la question de la volonté salvifique. Il serait vraiment trop dur, avoue-t-il, de restreindre la volonté de salut et le bienfait de la rédemption." cf. Cappuyns, Premier représentant, Rech. de Théo. anc. et. méd., I, p. 323.

In both places, all is understood in a restricted meaning.⁶
 A second interpretation given by Augustine is the following:
 God wills the salvation of all men, i.e. every man who is
 saved has been so willed by God.⁷ Lastly, Augustine ex-
 plains, the words can be interpreted as meaning that God
 commands us to will their salvation; in fact, not only does
 he wish that Christians pray and supplicate for the salva-
 tion of all men, but he inspires them with the very desire
 to do so.⁸

As Louis Capéran observes, these interpretations are
 decidedly strained; they are contortions of words obviously
 intended by St. Paul to speak a literal universal intent on
 God's part to save all men.⁹ Nevertheless, they fit logi-

⁶"Ita dictum est: 'Omnes homines vult salvos fieri, ut intelligantur omnes praedestinati; quia omne genus hominum in eis est. Sicut dictum est Pharisaeis: 'Decimatis omne olus: ubi non est intelligendum nisi omne quod habebant; neque enim omne olus quod erat in toto terrarum orbe decimabant.'" Augustin, Aux Moines d'Adrumète, from the De Correptione et Gratia, XIV, 44, p. 368. (Since all further references to Augustine, unless otherwise indicated, will be from Aux Moines d'Adrumète, this title will be omitted; given will be the name of the Augustinian tract, the chapter, the number, and the page reference).

⁷Ibid., The Enchiridion, Translated by J. F. Shaw (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, George St., 1873), Chap. 103, p. 274.

⁸"Quia ergo nos qui salvi futuri sint nescientes, omnes quibus praedicamus hanc pacem salvos fieri velle Deus iubet, et ipse in nobis hoc operatur, diffundendo istam charitatem in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis, potest etiam sic intelligi quod omnes homines Deus vult salvos fieri, quoniam nos facit velle." Augustin, De Correptione et Gratia, XIV, 47, p. 376.

⁹" . . . Il violente par les interprétations parti-

cally within the Augustinian framework, within the Augustinian point of view. For Augustine's point of view is not philosophic, but "historical." His view point is based upon and grounded in the data of revelation. His volition takes into consideration the truth that for all eternity there will be both the saved and the damned.¹⁰ In other words, Augustine's point of view is that of the absolute will of God,¹¹ or, as some theologians prefer, that of the consequent will.¹² Within this viewpoint, Augustine logically and necessarily upheld the belief in a restricted salvific will of God.¹³ Consequently, Augustine correctly denied that God's intent to save all men was universal in the strictest sense.¹⁴ Therefore, "in this context Augustine's restricted interpretations of I Tim. 2:4 were inevitable, and they were correct as far as they go."¹⁵

cularistes les plus forcées, le texte si clairement universaliste de l'Épître à Timothée," Capéran, Problème du Salut, p. 128.

¹⁰cf. Cayré, Patrology, I, pp. 690-691.

¹¹"On le voit, Augustin ne pense qu'à cette volonté absolue." Boyer, "Système de Saint Augustin," Rech. de Sci. Rel., XX, p. 502.

¹²CF. Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit eccl., I, p. 44.

¹³Cf. Alès, "Prédestination," Dict. Apol. de la Foi Cat., IV, cols. 215-216.

¹⁴Rahner, "Augustin," Zeits. für kath., XII, pp. 171-196.

¹⁵De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 17.

The reason why Augustine adopted his particular point of view is explained in part by the Pelagian controversy. The Pelagians tried to interpret the words of Saint Paul in such a way as to deny the fact that God is ultimately responsible for the salvation of souls which he guides contingently but infallibly to heaven. They affirmed rather that God wills in an equal way the salvation of all men. To oppose this falsehood Augustine found it most convenient to adopt a restricted interpretation of the passage in Timothy.¹⁶

Nevertheless, Augustine never revoked his earlier statements where "he unhesitatingly affirms that God wills the salvation of all men."¹⁷ But, there is not only evidence of this way of thinking in Augustine's earlier works. In the De Correptione et Gratia, which is one of Augustine's latest works, there is evidence in this direction. In chapter seven Augustine seems to distinguish between those called to salvation, who, in fact, will not necessarily be saved; and the saved who are both called and predestined. "All those who are elect are certainly called; but all those who are called are not for that reason elect."¹⁸ Bossuet, in trying to prove that Augustine has always held

¹⁶Capéran, Problème du Salut, pp. 128-129.

¹⁷Cayré, Patrology, I, p. 692. Augustine never revoked his earlier statements on this point of doctrine. cf. Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition, p. 563.

¹⁸Augustin, De Correptione et Gratia, VII, 14, p. 298. Personal translation.

on to the universal salvific will of God in the strict sense (when of course there is reference to God's antecedent or conditional will) argues from the authority of the scholarly Père Deschamps who, he points out, has supported his position with at least a hundred extracts from the works of Augustine and his followers.¹⁹ Further, Karl Rahner has proved that Augustine admitted what is now called "sufficient" grace — that this grace was granted all men.²⁰

Consequently, if it is true that Augustine stressed the absolute or consequent will of God — no doubt to his detriment as P. De Letter suggests²¹ — still he does not totally overlook the truth that in a very real way God does desire each and every man to be saved and provides him with the adequate means. The only problem is that Augustine never stressed this important truth. He never adequately distinguished in God a general will from a specific, the "antecedent" from the "consequent."²² Because of

¹⁹"Le docte P. Deschamps, dans son livre de l'Hérésie jansénienne, attaque Jansenius qui rejette la volonté générale et la grâce donnée à tous . . . il lui oppose . . . cent passages de saint Augustin et de ses disciples . . ." Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition, p. 514.

²⁰Rahner, "Augustin," Zeits. für. kath., XII, pp. 181 and 185.

²¹De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 196.

²²Bossuet sees in Augustine such a distinction. "Il faut donc, selon ce Père, distinguer en Dieu deux sortes de volontés: l'absolue, par laquelle il veut déterminément et distinctment telle et telle chose, par exemple sauver les élus; et la conditionnelle, par laquelle il veut telle chose, supposé que telle autre soit . . ." Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition, pp. 558-559. But this distinction

this lack of distinction in vocabulary, possibly nothing more than a semantic problem,²³ and because of his over-emphasis on only one meaning of volition in God, Augustine tended to make his doctrine on God's saving will not only obscure but extremely difficult to accept. The question is, then: does Prosper render this doctrine clearer and more acceptable.

In the works of Prosper, the first mention of the problem of God's saving will is found in the Letter to Ruffinus. The semi-pelagians opposed the idea of Augustinian predestination and had presented a Scripture text to prove its falsehood. "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4)."²⁴ But Prosper is not perturbed by the text. Rather, he regards the objection as trite, and points out that only a false interpretation of the text could be held against the doctrine of Augustine. The reason. Simply that thousands of men have died in the ignorance of God and they cannot be regarded as among the

is certainly not clear. Léonce Couture writes: "On ne peut guère contester que saint Augustin, dans les écrits publiés à la fin de sa vie contre les semi-pélagiens, n'ait jeté quelque obscurité sur ce point essentiel. Encore doit-on au moins excuser chez le grand docteur l'évidente préoccupation de distinguer la volonté simplement dite, la volonté absolue de Dieu, de ce que la théologie a nommé volonté antécédente, conditionnelle etc." Couture, "Saint Prosper," Bul. de lit. eccl., I, p. 44.

²³"Au fond encore ici, c'est affaire de dictionnaire . . ." Besse, "Augustin," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:2, col. 2401.

²⁴Epistola ad Rufinum, XIII, 14, col. 85.

saved.²⁵ If it is an historic truth that many men are damned, how then can it be true to say that God wills the salvation of all men. How, then, can St. Paul be interpreted in a truly universal sense.

Obviously here Prosper uses "will" in an historic sense.²⁶ The will of God is infinitely powerful hence it cannot but infallibly produce what it intends. But not all men are saved. Consequently, the will of God did not intend all men to be saved. Prosper's interpretation of I Tim. 2:4 is restrictive as Augustine's was because he shares Augustine's historic and not philosophic point of view.

In his turn Prosper quotes Scripture to prove that God does not, with an absolute will, desire the salvation of all peoples. "However, when they had passed through Phrygia and the land of Galatia, the Holy Spirit forbad them to preach the gospel in Asia. Again when they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to do so (Acts XVI, 14)."²⁷ At the very time that the Lord sent out his disciples to preach his gospel to all nations he deliberately restricted them in their efforts

²⁵"Numquid non sunt de omnibus hominibus qui a praeteritis generationibus usque in hoc tempus sine Dei cognitione perierunt?" Ibid.

²⁶De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 201.

²⁷"Transeuntes autem, Phrygiam et Galatiae regionem, vetiti sunt a sancto spiritu loqui verbum in Asia. Cum venissent autem in Mysiam, tentabant ire in Bithyniam, et non permisit illos spiritus Jesus (Act. XVI, 14) Epist. ad Ruf., XIV, 15, col. 85. Personal translation.

by forbidding them to penetrate into certain regions thereby postponing the advent of grace in the form of Baptism and allowing many souls to perish in the ignorance of his message.²⁸ But he who so deliberately restricted the evangelization by the Apostles is none other than the Lord himself "who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Hence, would affirm Prosper, the passage of Timothy must be interpreted in a restricted sense; consequently, there is no opposition between God's universal salvific will and Augustine's concept of predestination.

If, therefore, Prosper keeps very clearly to Augustine's particularism in the Letter to Rufinus, his position in the Answers to the Gauls is less certain. This work is a systematic refutation of the objections that the anonymous author of the Objectiones Gallorum has posed against Augustine's doctrine of predestination. Prosper has divided his tract into two parts: first a lengthy refutation of each objection considered separately and then a summary of these refutations. In article 8 Prosper states an objection: "God will not have all men to be saved . . . but only the certain number of the predestined."²⁹ He answers that the problem of predestination is a mystery. To try to answer why God selects certain souls for salvation and not others would be to go beyond

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, VIII, 211, col. 162. Personal translation.

our human capacities into a region of dangerous speculations.³⁰ All we can say is that God somehow calls all men, and if they refuse to believe in the Word it is their own fault. Many he calls by the normal means of the gospel message: others are called through the law; others through nature. But, regardless of the means, all are called.³¹

There are indications here that Prosper's interpretation of I Tim. 2:4 is beginning to expand. P. De Letter studies chapter 8 and concludes that the passage is unclear for or against a break with Augustine's particularism. For him Prosper is rather undecided in his "wooly position."³² Valentin, however, takes a more positive stand declaring that Prosper exchanges Augustine's restricted interpretation of Timothy for a more literal interpretation. Unfortunately, however, Valentin does not regard this move by Prosper as a valid attempt to defend Augustine's doctrine; he sees in it not simply a change in point of view intended to make of Augustine's doctrine something more acceptable without altering it fundamentally but

³⁰" . . . Impossible est comprehendere, et periculosae curiositatis est quaerere . . ." Ibid.

³¹"Omnium ergo hominum cura est Deo: et nemo est quem non aut Evangelica praedicatio, aut Legis testificatio, aut ipsa etiam natura conveniat. Sed infidelitatem hominum ipsis ascribamus hominibus: fidem autem hominum donum Dei esse fateamur." Ibid., VIII, 213, col. 164.

³²"God's salvific will is universal in a sense: He calls all men either through nature or through the law or grace; but in another sense this universalism is a restricted one: He does not, in fact, save all. This rather woolly position leaves it unclear whether or not Prosper keeps to Augustine's particularism." De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 11.

a downright infidelity.³³ Jacquin on the other hand takes a somewhat opposing stand. He sees Prosper as couching particularism in a rather universalistic language.³⁴ Actually, Prosper is taking a small but first step in the direction of distinguishing two concepts of will in God, a distinction that never became really explicit in Augustine.

In the second half of Prosper's tract against the Gauls there is another passage that has been disputed. It is in the summary that corresponds to chapter eight of the prima pars. Prosper writes: "He who says that God does not will all men to be saved, but rather, only that certain number of the predestined, speaks more harshly than he should of the depths of the unfathomable grace of God . . ." ³⁵ De Letter interprets the words as an effort on Prosper's part to avoid the pessimistic outlook of the rigorist who insists on the limited, immutable number of the elect. One should be more optimistic says Prosper. Insist rather on the fact that God does will all men to be saved, even though he does not will every man to be saved. In other words, Prosper affirms that it is healthier to insist on a restricted universalism than

³³"Saint Prosper est lui aussi un calomniateur à sa manière; car, enfin, au particularisme augustinien il substitue la doctrine de l'universalité de la volonté salvifique . . . Il serait difficile de trouver, à partir de 418, une maxime pareille dans saint Augustin. L'auteur des Responsiones change la doctrine augustinienne pour la mieux défendre." Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 296.

³⁴Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 282.

³⁵Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, VIII, 221 of secunda pars, col. 172. Personal Translation.

on the fact that the number of the predestined is determined.³⁶ De Letter, therefore, interprets this passage as one of particularism.

Portalié, on the other hand, argues that Prosper not only intends to affirm by these words a true universalism but he wishes to reprimand those who do not hold such a view. Portalié writes: "A universal salvific will: Prosper not only affirms it, he blames those who deny it." He supports his position. "He who says God does not will the salvation of all men, but only that of the fixed number of the predestined, speaks more harshly, etc . . ." ³⁷ Note the "etc." Note where Portalié ends his quote. He has avoided the end of the comparison: "than should be spoken of the depths of the inscrutable grace of God."³⁸ Prosper is not affirming universalism; he is simply reverting to what he previously said, in his discussion in the answer to the eighth objection in the prima pars. The ways of God are unfathomable, inscrutable. Do not try to solve the mystery of God; it is beyond your comprehension. You are approaching dangerous ground; you will inevitably enter into anthropomorphism and the judgment of God you will thus form will inevitably appear harsh and cruel to you.

But, if Portalié's view that Prosper affirms universalism is inaccurate so is the view of Jacquin who, agreeing to

³⁶"God's salvific will is restricted to the fixed number of the elect: rigorist expression; rather insist on universalism (restricted through) of the election." cf. De Letter, Defense of St. Augustine, p. 228.

³⁷Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1, col. 2525. Personal translation.

³⁸Resp. ad Cap. Gal., VIII, 221 of secunda pars col. 172.

some extent with De Letter, affirms that in the passage Prosper is simply rehashing Augustine's view.³⁹ He argues from the context pointing out that the following sentence decidedly suggests restricted universalism. The sentence, in fact, which states that God fulfills his will to save all men by saving the predestined,⁴⁰ does clearly posit a restricted interpretation to the words of St. Paul in his letter to Timothy. However, from the previous statement, there appears to be a break in thought—a break so clear in fact that De Letter who interprets the original passage in a restricted way, places the second statement in a new paragraph when translating it. No one denies that Prosper has particularist tendencies in this work. The question is: has he made any effort in the opposite direction in this particular passage. By all evidence, it would seem that the passage does not speak particularism.

Valentin, agreeing to some extent with Portalié, affirms that the passage contains a peremptory argument in favor of a universalistic outlook. He argues from a passage which follows rather closely the passage under discussion. The text from Prosper reads: "Out of the entire world the whole world (of the predestined) is chosen; out of all men, the totality

³⁹"C'est encore une fois le particularisme de S. Augustin." Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination" Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 283.

⁴⁰"Qui et omnes vult salvos fieri, atque in agnitionem veritatis venire (I Tim. II:4); et voluntatis suae propositum in eis emplet quos praecitos praedestinavit, praedestinos vocavit, vocatos justificavit, justificatos glorificavit." Resp. ad Cap. Gal., VII, 22 of secunda pars, col. 172.

of (predestined) men are adopted."⁴¹ The translation he renders is obviously universalistic: "For in the world, it is the entire world that God chooses, for in the totality of men, it is the totality of men that he adopts."⁴² This translation in itself is no doubt perfectly valid, but it does not communicate the thought of Prosper. If the context in which it is found is not enough to affirm its particularistic intent no other interpretation can be given to a similar sentence appearing in the De Vocatione.⁴³ The sentence then would have been more accurately translated: "Out of the entire world the world of the elect is chosen; out of the totality of men the totality of the elect are adopted." Hence, Valentin's argument in favor of a universalistic interpretation of the passage under discussion is worth little.

But if the passage speaks neither universalism nor particularism, how is it to be interpreted. As has been suggested in the discussion of Portalié's position, Prosper is reaffirming in this passage the point that he had made in the

⁴¹Ibid. "Ex toto enim mundo totus mundus eligitur et ex omnibus hominibus omnes homines adoptantur." Personal translation.

⁴²"Car dans le monde, c'est le monde entier que Dieu choisit, car dans la totalité des hommes c'est la totalité des hommes qu'il adopte." Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, pp. 283-284.

⁴³"Habet ergo populus Dei plenitudinem suam: et quamvis magna pars hominum salvantis gratiam aut repellat aut negligat, in electis tamen et praescitis, atque omnium generaliter discretis specialis quaedam censetur universitas, ut de toto mundo totus mundus liberatus, et de omnibus hominibus omnes homines videantur assumpti." De Vocatione Omnium Gentium Liber I, IX, 860, col. 661. cf. De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 228; Call of All Nations, p. 182.

eighth chapter of the prima pars and which he would later insist upon as one of the three pivotal points of certitude in the problem of man's salvation, namely that the ways of God are infinitely beyond human comprehension and consequently should always be regarded as such.⁴⁴ Prosper then is saying that it is certainly true that not all men will be saved; such is a position that must be admitted by both universalists and particularists alike. But to say such a thing is to speak as though God were a man when in fact he is not—he is an infinite Being. What Prosper is actually doing is prescinding from either particularist or universalist affirmations; he is admitting the limitations of language; he is apologizing for the caricature that the minds of men form of God and that their language transmits of him.

In the first text considered in this book, therefore, Prosper does manifest some attempt to distinguish two concepts of will in God; in so doing he suggests that a possible universalistic interpretation be given to the words of St. Paul in Timothy. As such he is moving in the direction of making of Augustine's doctrine something clearer and more humanly acceptable. But in the second text, which has been interpreted both in a universalistic and restricted sense, he is simply humbly admitting the limitations of man's ability to learn of and to communicate truths about God. In human language men cannot but affirm that God wills only the salvation of some

⁴⁴" . . . Quo confitendum est altitudinem judiciorum Dei humanae intelligentiae penetrabilem esse non posse; et cur non omnes homines salvet, qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri, non oportere disquiri . . ." De Vocatione Liber II, I, 887, col. 687.

since only some are saved; yet he who speaks in such a manner "speaks more harshly than we should speak of the depth of the unsearchable grace of God."⁴⁵

In the Vincentian articles one passage seems, at first glance, to require the reader to see in Prosper a true universalism. Prosper condemns the idea that God could possibly refuse salvation to someone willing to be saved. For if men are kind to their own children, how can the Father not be kind to his children. How can he refuse this kindness especially when they ask it of him. Surely it is ridiculous to affirm that God, who saves millions of infants incapable of positing a positive act of will, should refuse to save men who beg for his help. He then adds: ". . . Sincerely it must be believed and proclaimed that God wills the salvation of men."⁴⁶ As a proof that God does will the salvation of all, Prosper adds that St. Paul who first spoke the words in question commanded prayer, throughout the Church, for the salvation of every man. If, therefore, some men are damned says Prosper it is solely through their own fault.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Resp. ad Cap. Gal., VIII, secunda pars, 221, col. 172. Translation by De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 159.

⁴⁶". . . Qui fieri potest ut Deus, qui etiam illos salvat, de quibus dici non potest quod salvari velint, nolit aliquos salvare etiam si salvari velint . . . sincerissime credendum atque profitendum est 'Deum velle ut homines salvi fiant.'" Responsiones ad Capitula Objectionum Vincentianarum, II, 231. col. 179.

⁴⁷"Apostolus, cujus ista sententia est (I Tim. II, 4), sollicitissime praecipit, quod in omnibus Ecclesiis piissime custoditur, ut Deo pro omnibus hominibus supplicetur: ex quibus quod multi pereunt, pereuntium est meritum." Ibid.

In all appearances Prosper is truly affirming a literal universal intent on God's part to save all men. But some theologians have argued that this is mere illusion. De Letter claims that Prosper's stand is "universalist in appearance and words, particularist in fact."⁴⁸ He does not however support his position. Jacquin makes a similar statement but bases his particularistic interpretation on the fact that Prosper appears to allow of exceptions to God's universal will.⁴⁹ He refers especially to the vague words: "Leaving aside, therefore, the reason which divine science contains in the secrets of his justice, sincerely . . ." etc.⁵⁰ Apparently, Jacquin sees in "discretione" a separation—the separation between the saved and the damned. This is accurate. But all Prosper is trying to say is that despite the truth of God's universal salvific intent, some men are not saved. Why? The answer lies in the mystery of God. If God is infinitely powerful and can bend the will of the sinner toward righteousness in such a way that the sinner acts freely, why does he not do so, if it is true that God wills his salvation. The solution seems to lie in the previous sentence⁵¹ which Father De Letter

⁴⁸De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 12.

⁴⁹"Et en effet dans le passage en question s. Prosper admet l'universalité mais réserve faite de certains cas particuliers . . ." Jacquin, "Question de la predestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 293.

⁵⁰Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Vinc., II, 231, col. 179. "Remota ergo hac discretione, quam divina scientiam secretum justitiae suae continet, sincerissime . . ."

⁵¹" . . . Nisi aliquae causae existant de quibus, quamvis sint nobis ingnoscibiles, ille tamen bene judicat, de quo dici non potest, aliter eum quidquam facere debuisse quam fecerit?" Ibid.

interprets rightly as an admission on Prosper's part that not all men are saved, not because God does not truly will their salvation but because, for some ultimately mysterious reason lying hidden in God, he allows some to be damned.⁵² God could have saved the sinner says Prosper. Why he did not is his mystery. There is no denial here of a true universal will.

Along with Jacquin, Tixeront⁵³ and Cayré⁵⁴ after him hold a similar position using the same argument as Jacquin. Bardy⁵⁵ and Portalié⁵⁶ both hold a true universalistic interpretation, but neither supports his position. Similarly, Valentin discusses the question for a while but does not present any motive for his universalist interpretation.⁵⁷

Nonetheless, these three authors are correct in their affirmation. They are even correct in not supporting their position, for one can only deny the obvious meaning of a statement by presenting solid arguments against it. But the obvious meaning of the words "sincerely it must be believed and professed that God wills all men to be saved"⁵⁸ is that

⁵²De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 229.

⁵³Tixeront, Histoire des Dogmes, p. 288.

⁵⁴Cayré just repeats Tixeront. In fact he quotes him for his only argument. cf. Cayré, Patrology, II, pp. 188-189.

⁵⁵Bardy, "Prosper d'Aquitaine," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIII:1, col. 849.

⁵⁶Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:1, col. 2525.

⁵⁷Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 302.

⁵⁸Res. ad Cap. Obj. Vinc., II, 231. col. 179.

Prosper holds a belief that God, in a very true sense, desires all men, every man, to be saved, despite the fact that not all men do attain salvation. Since no really valid argument can be presented against it, it need not be defended. The words speak universalism of themselves.

Still, if this passage has been subject to debate, there is another that appears beyond debate. Prosper explains that the value of the Redemption is so great that it cannot be referred to simply as the redemption of a few but as the redemption of the whole human race. Besides, since all men share in the humanity of Christ all men are redeemed. However, adds Prosper, this does not mean that all men have been saved, that all men have been released from the slavery of sin. To share in the effects of Redemption one must willfully partake of the sacrament of regeneration, one must be baptized.⁵⁹ Prosper is beginning to make himself really clear; he is beginning to distinguish. God wills the salvation of all men in a true sense; He redeems them all in his Son. Still he does not will the salvation of all men effectively, because he does not make it come to pass that all men are saved; he does not redeem them all in the same way.

This distinction sheds a spark of light on the often unclear, somewhat ambiguous doctrine of Augustine as well as

⁵⁹"Quod ergo ad magnitudinem et potentiam pretii, et quod ad unam pertinet causam, sanguis Christi redemptio est totius mundi. Sed qui hoc saeculum sine fide Christi et sine regenerationis sacramento pertranseunt, redemptionis alieni sunt. Cum itaque propter unam omnium naturam, et unam omnium causam a Domino nostro in veritate susceptam, recte omnes dicantur redempti, et tamen non omnes a captivitate sint eruti." Ibid., I, 229, col. 177.

on Prosper's own somewhat vague statements. But this effort at clarity is just the first step for Prosper in the direction of greater precision. It is especially in the De Vocatione that Prosper takes noticeable steps in the direction of precision and distinction.

On this point Father De Letter disagrees. He writes: "Even today scholars do not agree in their way of interpreting the De Vocatione. Does it hold universalism or particularism of God's salvific will?"⁶⁰ He explains that Adméhar d'Alès and E. Portalié see in the De Vocatione a clear effort on Prosper's part to affirm universalism. On the other hand, he says, Jacquin in his article "La question de la prédestination au Ve et VI e siècles" refuses to see universalism. Father De Letter has therefore set up a problem by pointing out diversity of opinion. The solution he presents is that possibly Prosper was inconsistent.⁶¹

At first glance the problem set up by De Letter looks real. But in fact there is no problem because the needed premise, the diversity of opinion does not exist. True, it is that Portalié and d'Alès see a universalistic interpretation of I Tim. 2:4 in the De Vocatione. But it is false that Jacquin refuses to see universalism in the De Vocatione. Jacquin wrote his essay in 1906 when the De Vocatione was considered anonymous. A quick glance at Jacquin's essay will show that Jacquin never refers to the De Vocatione as the work of Prosper, much less

⁶⁰De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 166.

⁶¹Ibid.

study it as such. De Letter refers to page 293 and there we do discover a particularist interpretation of Prosper. Jacquin writes: "In order to affirm that St. Prosper holds a belief in the universal salvific will, it is necessary here again to quote only a part of the text, a way to destroy its real meaning." He then adds: "In fact, in the passage in question (c. II), St. Prosper admits the universality of this will, with a reservation made for certain particular cases (*remota ergo hac discretione*)."⁶² The reference is to chapter two of the Vincentian articles. "Leaving aside, therefore, the reason which divine science . . ." etc.⁶³ Jacquin is totally disregarding Prosper's latest work. His judgment that Prosper does not affirm on God's part a true universal will to save all men is made only in the light of Prosper's earlier works. It is not a judgment passed on Prosper's mature work—the De Vocatione. Consequently, De Letter has invalidly used Jacquin in support of his statement that some scholars see a particularistic interpretation of God's universal will in the De Vocatione. Therefore, the problem that Jacquin has set up is invalid.

Hence, no real objection has been posed against the statement that Prosper's great effort in this tract is toward clarity and ever increasing distinction. One of the first efforts at clarity in the De Vocatione concerns such expressions

⁶²Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination," Rev. d'his. eccl., VII, p. 293. Personal translation.

⁶³Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Vinc., II, 231, col. 179.

as "all men," "all Israel." Prosper points out that Scripture can be confusing when it uses such expressions. Most men naturally think of "all" in a strictly literal sense, but this is not the way it always appears in Scripture. Sometimes "all" does not refer to a strict totality but to a part only.⁶⁴ To prove this point Prosper quotes many examples from Scripture. For instance, he quotes St. Paul who is discoursing on the blindness of the Jews while at the same time claiming that some Jews are saved through grace. "I say then: Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which He foreknew."⁶⁵ Prosper points out that this people that has not been cast away are those justified in Christ. But, to examine the rest of the Pauline text, says Prosper, is to see that what appeared to refer to the totality of Israel in fact applies only to those called by grace.⁶⁶ It applies only, as Paul indicates, to "a remnant saved according to the election of grace."⁶⁷

⁶⁴De Vocatione Liber I, X, 862, col. 663. ". . . Ut unam genus in duas species intelligeremus esse divisum, et omnem hominem, omnem plenitudinem, omnem Israelem non semper ad universitatem, sed plerumque ad partem esse referendum."

⁶⁵De Vocatione Liber I, 10, 862, col. 662. from Rom. 11:1 ff. Translation by De Letter, Call of All Nations, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁶"Plebs ergo prescita, plebs non repulsa, hi sunt qui Christo justificati sunt. Et quod omni Israele dici videtur, in his tamen quos sibi gratiae electio reliquos fecit, ostenditur sicut sequentia apostolici sermonis enarrant." Ibid. Cf. Rom. 11:5. Trans. by De Letter, Call of All Nations, Ibid., p. 49, cf. De Vocatione Liber I, 10, 862, col. 662. "Si ergo, inquit et in hoc tempore reliquiae secundum electionem gratiae facta sunt . . ."

⁶⁷"Quam particulam verborum Apostoli, ita nos integre

Prosper has therefore distinguished in Scripture two meanings to "all," the literal meaning on the one hand, and the special meaning on the other, where part is regarded as the whole. Prosper will later on use this established fact to show that the most exact interpretation that can be rendered to the words of St. Paul in I Tim. 2:4 is a particularistic one. In fact this is the only conclusion that can be arrived at if the passage is carefully weighed in its specific context. The interpretation that Prosper gives is almost identically the third one given by Augustine, previously discussed,⁶⁸ namely, that the Lord insists that Christians pray for the salvation of all men.⁶⁹ Hence, what Prosper is saying is that, it is perfectly valid to interpret the text in particularistic terms as Augustine had done.

Nevertheless, he goes on to affirm that it is equally valid to speak in universalistic terminology, to affirm unqualifiedly that God wills the salvation of all men. Again he bases himself on Scripture for Scripture is the soundest support available for real certitude.⁷⁰ If the truth of Scripture is

pleneque suscipimus, ut nihil ei de praecedentibus sive subjectis quae ad ipsam pertinent subtrahamus." Ibid., 121, 863, col. 664.

⁶⁸Cf. footnote 8.

⁶⁹"Praecepit itaque Apostolus, immo per Apostolum Dominus qui loquebatur in Apostolo, fieri obsecrationes, postulationes, gratiarum actiones pro omnibus hominibus, pro regibus, ac pro his qui in sublimitate sunt." Ibid.

⁷⁰"Magna enim fortitudo est consensionis, cui ad sequendam veritatem auctoritas sufficit etiam latente ratione." Ibid., Liber II, II, 888, col. 687.

difficult to accept, as it can be, but is still accepted, all the more credit to the strength of the believer's faith.⁷¹

He, therefore, proceeds to examine with the minutest of attentions and without bias what the Lord revealed in his gospel. Through the words of the Apostle Mark, the Lord commands: "Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."⁷²

Prosper interprets these words as a call made to every single man regardless of his dignity or the status of his birth,⁷³ a call therefore that is most clearly and most literally universal. And to support his universalistic view he adds that even the persecutors of the faith, even those who oppress and hate the ministers of God are included in this "all;" even such evil men are called to salvation. God wills their salvation in the truest of senses even if in all likelihood they will ultimately be damned.⁷⁴

⁷¹"Ut quanto hoc ipsum difficiliore intellectu capitur, tanto fide landabiliore credatur." Ibid.

⁷²De Vocatione, Liber II, II, 388, col. 687. From Mark 16:15. Trans. De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 91.

⁷³Numquid in hac praeceptione ullarum nationum ullorumque hominum facta discretio est? Neminem merito exceptit, neminem genere separavit, neminem conditione distinxit. Ad omnes prorsus homines missum est evangelium crucis Christi." Ibid.

⁷⁴" . . . Tamen ministri gratiae odio erant omnibus hominibus. Et cum alii essent qui oderant, alii qui odiis persequentium premebantur, neutra tamen pars nuncupatione omnium hominum privabatur: habente quidem salutis suae damnum rebellium portione . . ." Ibid., 889, col. 688.

Prosper, therefore, has argued that Scripture uses "all men" ambiguously. The meaning of the words "all men" must be studied within a given context if one expects to arrive at their true meaning or at least at a valid interpretation. Prosper has applied this rule to two different texts. The first one was I Tim. 2:4 and the second was Mark 16. In both cases he has tried to regard the texts objectively. His results were opposed. He judged Timothy to render a restricted meaning to God's universal saving will. But he judged Mark to communicate the most literal interpretation to this saving intent. In short, Prosper has clearly shown that it is valid to say that God does not will the salvation of all men if "all men" is understood in the most literal sense for, the fact is, not every single man is actually saved. But, it is equally valid, and possibly better, to say that God wills the salvation of every man, taking "every man" literally, for God has truly called every rational creature to salvation. Stated differently, Prosper has distinguished in God two ways of willing, or two ways of looking upon God's act of volition. The first act infallibly produces its end in an absolute way. The second produces it conditionally. Both are valid ways of speaking of God. But the second is preferable inasmuch as it seems to respect to a greater degree the mystery which is God; it does not tend so much to conjure up the idea of a harsh "anthropomorphized" Lord.

Consequently, if Prosper does not state clearly, explicitly, unqualifiedly that God wills all men to be saved in his earlier works even though some authors might have us

believe the contrary, he does do so in the De Vocatione. And, despite the statement by P. De Letter that Jacquin challenges this affirmation, in fact, no author who has regarded the De Vocatione as authentically that of Prosper, sees in Prosper's mature work anything other than an effort at distinction in wills of God, and a positive affirmation that God does intend in a true sense that all his creatures reach their heavenly beatitude.

Therefore, while remaining faithful to Augustine, Prosper has clarified his doctrine. He has pointed out explicitly those distinctions which Augustine is said to have made but which tended to remain hidden and implicit rather than clearly stated especially in his later works. Hence, on this point at least, Prosper proves his worth as an interpret of Augustine, if not so much in his earlier writings, at least in the De Vocatione, by combining true fidelity to the doctor of grace and by interpreting him in a way that made his doctrine more acceptable to most Christians. Only in one point of sheer speculation does Prosper deviate from his master—and in this deviation makes his own view of God's salvific will most acceptable. Augustine surmised that many men would be saved but that this number was small in comparison to those damned. "If then the number of the delivered is small in comparison with those damned, the number is in itself very large . . ." ⁷⁵ Prosper, on the other hand, affirms that, since God truly wills all men to be saved, He

⁷⁵Augustin, De Correptione et Gratia X, 28, p. 332. Personal translation.

will, in fact, effectively save the greater number.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Prosper, Call of All Nations, Book I, Chap. 9, p. 41. This text is not found in Mangeant's edition which appears in the Patrologia Latina. It is however found in most of the other manuscripts including the text of Ballerini which is highly regarded. Cf. De Letter, Call of All Nations, pp. 19 and 179.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF PREDESTINATION STRICTLY
SPEAKING FOR ST. PROSPER

As the chapter title indicates, the purpose of this chapter is to draw out from the various works of Prosper his concept of predestination strictly speaking. The constant reference to Augustine will constitute a framework, a background, a point of reference which will serve to make the doctrine of Prosper stand out more clearly through contrast with the doctrine of the Master. The procedure will be to isolate the individual ideas that seem to enter into the overall structure of the concept of predestination as they appear in the doctrine of Augustine, and to apply these individual concepts to Prosper's doctrine. In other words, if in Augustine, the concept of predestination includes the idea of the fixed number of the elect, Prosper's works will be analyzed to see what his ideas are on this given point. In this effort, therefore, the following questions will be raised: (a) Does Prosper make use of the word "predestination." (b) Is there a difference between predestination and foreknowledge in Prosper. (c) Does predestination mean a gratuitous guidance to salvation by means of a constant showering of grace. (d) Is all advance toward God a grace; is heaven a grace. (e) Does God cause sin and damnation.

(f) Is the number of the predestined immutably fixed.

It has been shown in the previous chapter that, for Prosper, God wills unqualifiedly the salvation of all men. While making this affirmation, Prosper, nevertheless, points out the truth that God does not in fact render eternal glory to each of his creatures. Some he draws without fail to salvation; others he allows to merit their damnation. Prosper, and Augustine too affirmed this. If these affirmations at first glance seem unfounded, a short survey of Augustine's theory of fallen humanity upon which they are based, will show them to be logical conclusions of a first premise.

For Augustine, all of humanity has revolted against God in the person of Adam. If then before the Fall men were naturally good and naturally capable of virtue, naturally capable of earning salvation, all that has now been changed. All of humanity has been reduced in justice to a "mass of perdition." All men have become enemies of God and deserving of eternal damnation. They have merited their plight and so have no right to complain. But, if God were to exercise only justice no one would be saved. Therefore God exercises enormous mercy. Gratuitously God selects certain souls for glory, guiding them without fail to his bosom. The others he allows to wallow freely in corruption and so toward them he manifests his justice.¹

This nut-shell presentation of Augustine's theory of

¹Rottmanner, "L' 'Augustinisme,'" Mel. de Sci. Rel., VI, pp. 31-48.

fallen humanity actually tends toward moderation and presents a more favorable view of his doctrine than a quick review of his later works would convey. In the De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio Augustine states that God can control men's minds, and actually does control them to the extent of directing them into evil.² He even speaks of God as seducing a prophet into sin.³ In the De Dono Perseverantiae, Augustine declares that the following statement is accurate though harshly stated: "And you who presently obey, if you have been predestined to be of the number of the reprobate, the strength that renders you obedient will be some day withdrawn and you will cease to obey."⁴

The number of these "difficult passages" abound in Augustine, so much so in fact that Georges de Plinval finds it necessary to rescue the Doctor of grace on historical grounds. He points out that the semitic mentality of Carthage at the time of Augustine was less hostile to such ideas as mass damnation, eternal and arbitrary punishment and even fatalism than the hellenic or Italian mind of the

²"His et talibus testimoniis divinatorum eloquiorum... satis, quantum existimo, manifestatur, operari Deum in cordibus hominum ad inclinandas eorum voluntates quocumque voluerit, sive ad bona pro misericordia, sive ad mala pro meritis eorum..." De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio, XXI, 43, p. 196.

³In this affirmation, however, he is actually quoting Scripture. "Per Ezechielem prophetam dicit Deus: Et propheta si erraverit et locutus fuerit, ego Dominus seduxi prophetam illum (Ezech XIV, 9)." Ibid., 42, p. 192.

⁴Ibid., De Dono Perseverantiae, XXII, 61, p. 746.

time. He suggests that this attitude with which Augustine was imbued in his youth was returning to haunt him in his old age; returning also was the influence of early contacts especially of Tertullien, Aurelius and Alypius.⁵

This effort to rescue Augustine, though no doubt well intentioned, might seem more of a condemnation than a rescue. It seems to imply that Augustine was tainted with fatalism, that for the Doctor of grace man's will is relatively insignificant in relation to his ultimate outcome. At any rate it is certainly a dramatic, an ultimate effort to justify the Bishop of Hippo—especially when to many authorities, including Augustine, the saintly bishop was simply attempting to expose the doctrine of the Church.⁶

Nonetheless, it can hardly be doubted that Augustine's

⁵"Il y a aussi l'ambiance du christianisme africain, confirmée sans doute par la lecture de Tertullien et par l'intimité d' Alypius et d' Aurelius. Le jeune docteur avait pu échapper à cette influence; l'évêque vieillissant s'y montra plus sensible. Le sémitisme carthaginois acceptait plus facilement qu'on ne l'eut fait en Italie ou dans le monde hellénique l'idée de supplices éternels et arbitraires, de damnations massives; les théories fatalistes ne le revoltaient pas." cf. Plinval, Pélage, p. 401.

⁶Augustine explains that his doctrine of predestination is really just the position of the Church. "Ille itaque dicat Ecclesiam aliquando in fide sua non habuisse veritatem praedestinationis huius et gratiae...ille, inquam, hoc dicat, qui dicere audet aliquando eam non orasse, vel non veraciter orasse, sive ut crederent infideles, sive ut perseverarent fideles." Augustine, De Dono Perseverantiae, XXIII, 65, p. 756; Prosper presents his doctrine as that of the Church also. Speaking about the semi-Pelagians in relation to Augustine, Prosper writes: "...Atque ignoverint, immo noverint, non solum Romanum Africanumque Ecclesiam, et per omnes mundi partes universos promissionis filios cum doctrina hujus viri, sicut in tota fide, ita in gratiae confessione congruere..." Epistola ad Rufinum, III, 90, col. 79; Bossuet holds the same view as Prosper about

presentation of this problem is harsh. It is so, possibly because, in attempting to probe too deeply into the problem of God's providence, Augustine leans in the direction of eliminating the mystery involved,⁷ so much so that Jacques - Francois Thomas accuses him of anthropomorphising,⁸ even though Rondet condemns the idea.⁹

Still, if Augustine sometimes gives the impression of forgetting that predestination is a mystery, it is never his intention to do so. That is why he constantly reaffirms that the ways of God are ineffable.¹⁰ Prosper too, following in the footsteps of the Master, affirms that predestination is a mystery. In the Answers to the Extracts of the Genoeese, Prosper bows down in humility before the question: why does God save some men and does not save others. He

Augustine's doctrine. cf. Bossuet, Defense de la Tradition, p. 444; Tixeront interprets Prosper as identifying Augustine's view with that of faith. cf. Tixeront, Histoire des dogmes, p. 290.

⁷Such is the view of Nourisson. cf. Jean Félix Nourisson, Philosophie de Saint Augustin (Paris: Didier, 1865), II, pp. 258-259. Writing about Bossuet he says: "et en effet, jamais n'a autant qu'Augustin...dogmatisé sur la grâce avec cette aisance de raison qui finit par affecter saint Augustin. La grâce lui a toujours été un grand, un impénétrable mystère."

⁸"Pour saint Augustin, je trouve qu'il s'est surtout trompé, en voulant donner une justification de l'élection heureuse de l'un et de l'abandon de l'autre par des raisons d'un droit humain, anthropomorphique quoi qu'on fasse." cf. Jacques-Francois Thomas, Saint Augustin s'est il trompé? (Paris: A. G. Mizet, 1959), p. 93.

⁹Cf. Rondet, "Anthropologie Religieuse," Rech. de Sci. Rel., XXIX, pp. 163-196.

¹⁰Augustine, De Praedestinatione Sanctorum, VIII, 16, p. 514. "Cur autem istum potius quam illum liberet, inscrutabilia sunt iudicia eius et investigabiles viae eius." VIII, 16, p. 514.

agrees with Augustine that speculation in such hidden matters is invalid; speech is but boldness. To affirm otherwise results in an effort to take credit for salvation—credit for something gratuitously bestowed by God.¹¹ In the De Vocatione book I he speaks in a similar vein. He declares that the mystery of predestination is not something that can be penetrated in this life. The proper attitude to bring to it is one of insufficiency as St. Paul has shown.¹²

Prosper's attitude, therefore, in face of the problem of predestination is one of insufficiency before an awesome mystery. Such an attitude was Augustine's in theory, but in practice it seemed to have slipped his mind and that is probably one of the fundamental reasons why he fell into harsh expressions. But Prosper has no intention of allowing such a key idea to slip from his consciousness. That is why, in the second book of the De Vocatione, Prosper presents this attitude as one of three guideposts to a sound investigation of the problem of God's ways with men. Another guidepost is the certitude that God wills the salvation of all men. A third is that God deserves full credit for man's sanctification and salvation.¹³

The entire investigation of the concept of predestination in Prosper must, consequently, be focused within this three-sided framework. Especially, must one keep in mind

¹¹Resp. ad Exc. Gen., VI, 248, col. 194.

¹²De Vocatione Liber I, XIII, 865, col. 665.

¹³Ibid., XXX, 918, col. 716.

that for Prosper, predestination is an awesome mystery.

The first question to be asked is: does Prosper, like Augustine, use the word "predestination" freely. The answer in general is yes. He uses it with no qualms in his Letter to Rufinus, in the Answers to the Extracts of the Genoese, in his Answers to the Gauls, and in the Answers to the Vincentian Articles. Only in two books is the word, or derivatives of the word, missing--in the Contra Collatorem and in the De Vocatione. Cappuyns seems a little shocked that there is no mention of "predestination" in the Contra Collatorem. He writes: "Curiously enough, the Contra Collatorem, says not one word about predestination. And certainly the opportunity to speak about it was not wanting."¹⁴ True it is that Prosper could have used the term frequently. But he refrained from doing so for an obvious reason, as Father De Letter has astutely observed.¹⁵ The Contra Collatorem is written against Cassian; but never once has Cassian attempted to censure Augustinian predestination. Sticking closely to the De Protectione Dei of Cassian,¹⁶ Prosper simply refutes the arguments that Cassian raises. If Cassian had mentioned predestination Prosper would have done likewise. Since Cassian challenges the idea that grace always and necessarily precedes the movement of

¹⁴Cappuyns, "Premier représentant," Rech. de Theo. Anc. et Méd., I, p. 321. Personal translation.

¹⁵De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 9.

¹⁶This is the name Cassian gives to his thirteenth Conference; it appears in the Patrologia Latina series, vol. 49, cols. 897-954.

the soul toward good, Prosper seizes the opportunity to stress the idea of the absolute gratuity of grace. He knows that to stress this point is really to preach predestination, for as Cappuyns himself remarks, as far as Prosper is concerned, the two ideas are inseparable.¹⁷

In the De Vocatione, however, where the word "predestination" occurs but once in a quotation from St. Paul,¹⁸ it appears to have been deliberately avoided. The doctrine of the De Vocatione is obviously steeped in Augustinianism, nonetheless, as is evidenced by the fact that the author speaks of God as guiding the "summa praecognita" infallibly to heaven. He also refers to the "prae-electa," the "praeordinata," the "praescita." He uses any substitute he can find for "the predestined."¹⁹ And to express the abstract concept of predestination, he uses such words as "discretio," "praefinitio," "constitutio divina," "propositum" and many others, as if the word predestination had "some mysterious and horrifying power

¹⁷ Speaking about Prosper's Letter to Rufinus, Cappuyns writes: "La prédestination occupe à peine quelques phrases, et si elle est affirmée avec tant de force c'est que Prosper la croit indissolublement liée à sa conviction centrale. Il dit expressément d'ailleurs: quod quidem tam impium est negare quam ipsi gratiae contrarie; il est aussi impie de rejeter la prédestination que de nier la grâce." Cappuyns, "Premier représentant," Rech. de Théol. Anc. et Méd., I, p. 313.

¹⁸ "Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi ... qui praedestinavit nos in adoptionem filiorum per Jesum Christum secundum propositum voluntatis suae, in laudem gloriae gratiae suae (Ephes. 1:3 seqq.) cf. De Vocatione Liber II, XXXIII, 920, col. 718.

¹⁹ Ibid. Liber I, IX, 858, col. 658; Ibid. Liber II, XXIX, 917, col. 715.

for which it should be avoided."²⁰ Actually, the words derived from "praedestinare" are not repugnant to Prosper himself. This is not the reason he avoids them. He avoids such words because they are disliked by students of the semi-Pelagian school. Prosper wishes to make the essentials of Augustine's doctrine acceptable to most Christians and so he avoids anything that might stir prejudice. He even avoids the name of Augustine, says Anthelmi, for this purpose. In fact he even goes so far as to disguise his personal style, soften to the utmost the doctrine of the Master and pretend to be a tyro in the controversy on grace so that his doctrine will in nowise be associated to the name of Prosper.²¹

In the De Vocatione Prosper often times substitutes the idea of foreknowledge for that of predestination. This occurs so frequently that the question validly arises: Does Prosper establish a real distinction between predestination and prescience.

But it would be well first to examine this idea in Augustine. The semi-Pelagians from Gaul had accused Augustine of identifying predestination with foreknowledge.²²

²⁰Amann, "Semi-Pelagiens," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIV:2, col. 1831.

²¹Cf. Du Pin, "De l'auteur des Livres," Nouv. Bib. des Aut. Ecc., p. 193. "Il prétend qu'il s'est caché dans celui-ci; qu'il l'a fait paraître sans son nom; qu'il a déguisé ses sentiments; qu'il a tu le nom de son Maître S. Augustin, pour défendre plus adroitement sa doctrine; que c'est pour cela qu'il a fait semblant de n'avoir point encore écrit; qu'il a adouci les principes de S. Augustin..."

²²"Quod idem sit praescientia quod praedestinatio." Resp. ad. Cap. Gal., XV, 218, col. 169.

Prosper regarded this as a horrid accusation. To him it was the same as saying that, for Augustine, God is as equally responsible for good as for evil.²³ Valentin, in writing about the accusation claims that the enemies of Augustine properly interpret the Master's thought. He writes: "When the enemies of St. Augustine accuse him of confusing predestination with foreknowledge, they express his actual thought."²⁴ To prove his point Valentin quotes the famous Augustinian definition of predestination: "This is predestination of saints, nothing other than foreknowledge evidently and the preparation of divine gifts by means of which are infallibly delivered all those who are delivered."²⁵ He concludes that if the enemies of Augustine defamed him, as argued Prosper, they did so by faithfully reproducing his doctrine.²⁶

Writing about Valentin's position, M. Jacquin argues that Valentin has deceived himself by isolating the passage of Augustine from its proper context.²⁷ He points out that

²³"Qui praescientiam Dei in nullo ab ipsius praedestinatione discernit, quod tribuendum est Deo bonis, hoc ei etiam de malis conatur ascribere." Ibid., col. 170.

²⁴Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 294.

²⁵Augustine, De Dono Perseverantiae, XIV, 35, p. 680. "Haec est praedestinatio sanctorum, nihil aliud: praescientia scilicet, et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur." Personal translation.

²⁶Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 295.

²⁷"Malheureusement cette exégèse facile ne supporte pas le rapprochement avec le contexte" cf. Jacquin, "Question de la predestination," Rev. d'his. Eccl., VII.

if there is some truth in saying that "predestination is prescience," it is false to say the opposite. Consequently, concludes Jacquin, the two terms are not regarded as interchangeable by Augustine. Therefore, when the Gauls accused Augustine of identifying the two concepts they were falsifying his doctrine.²⁸

What Jacquin says is true. Augustine would shudder at the idea of identifying prescience with predestination, though he might tolerate an opposite statement. Nevertheless, both Valentin and Jacquin seem to have missed the key point. If Augustine had simply said: "This is predestination of saints, nothing other than foreknowledge," then Augustine could literally be said to have held no distinction between predestination and prescience. But Augustine adds "obviously" (*scilicet*). Obviously, he says, predestination is prescience. But it is not prescience alone; it is prescience plus the preparation of those divine gifts, by which the elect infallibly attain their goal of eternal glory ("et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei quibus certissime liberantur quicumque liberantur.") The distinction that Augustine is establishing is the distinction between the man and the arm. Certainly, the man is the arm, but not the arm alone, the arm plus the rest of the body.

That Augustine establishes a true distinction between the concepts of predestination and prescience is obvious from several other texts. In the last part of the De Dono

²⁸Ibid.

Perseverantiae Augustine treats of the proper method of teaching and preaching the doctrine of predestination. He suggests that people will mock the efforts of those who explain the doctrine. But he adds: "Such things should not deter us from ... confessing a belief in the predestination of saints, no more than they deter us from confessing a belief in divine foreknowledge..."²⁹ The relationship that Augustine sets up between foreknowledge and predestination indicates that he considers the two quite distinct. In another passage he argues that predestination is more than simple foreknowledge. "Without any doubt to predestine, for God, is to have foreknowledge, but foreknowledge of what he-himself will some day accomplish."³⁰ Consequently, it is clear that for Augustine there is a real distinction between predestination and prescience.³¹

Prosper too seems to distinguish the two concepts.

²⁹Augustine, De Dono Perseverantiae, XV, 38, p. 692. "Ita cum dicuntur...a confitenda secundum eam praedestinatione sanctorum deterrere non debent, sicut non deterrermur a confitenda praescientia Dei..." Personal translation.

³⁰"Sine dubio enim praescivit, si praedestinavit; sed praedestinasse est hoc praecisse quod fuerat ipse facturus." Ibid., XVIII, 47, p. 718. Personal translation.

³¹This is the opinion of most scholars. Among others Nicolas Merlin (cf. Nicolas Merlin, Saint Augustin et les Dogmes du Péché Originel et de la Grâce (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1931), p. 414), Charles Boyer (Boyer, "Système de Saint Augustin," Rech. de Sci. Rel., XX, pp. 481-505), A. S. Martin (cf. Martin, "Predestination," Encycl. of Rel. and Ethics, X, p. 231-232). It is curious to note what Doctor Martin writes on this subject: "In the history of predestination, Augustine stands as a monumental figure, and precisely one of the reasons he is regarded as so important is his distinguishing of predestination from

In his explanation of a passage of Augustine in the Answers to the Extracts of the Genoese Prosper points out that God foreknew those precise gifts he was to render his elect in order to draw them without fail to salvation. But his predestination is not simply the prescience of these gifts, but the actual preparation of them.³² In the Answers to the Gauls, however, he argues that, for all practical purposes, the two concepts can be identified with relation to good works. This is so because good works are actually gifts of God. To affirm, therefore, that they are foreknown is really no different than to affirm that they were predestined. The identification, however, cannot be made for evil deeds; these God foreknows of course but neither commands that they be done, nor brings them to realization.³³ And in another passage he declares that prescience can exist separately from predestination; but that it is impossible for predestination to exist without prescience.³⁴ Hence, Prosper establishes the same real distinction between the two concepts that Augustine had insisted upon.

prescience.... He distinguishes prescience from predestination, and aids to a better analysis of the latter."; Cayré also holds that Augustine distinguished the concepts. cf. Cayré, Patrology, p. 188.

³²"...Hanc esse praedestinationem sanctorum, praescientiam scilicet et praeparationem gratiae Dei, qua certissime liberantur." Resp. ad Exc. Gen., VIII, 251, col. 197.

³³Ibid, Sententia super XV, 224, col. 174.

³⁴"Potest itaque sine praeparatione esse praescientia: praedestinatio autem sine praescientia esse non potest." Ibid., XV, 218, col. 170.

For Prosper, then, predestination can be defined as that infallible drawing of a soul to heaven by means of divine grace prepared for him from all eternity—grace forever known by God to be granted effectively. The entire journey of fallen man to heaven, in fact, is the result of a constant showering of gifts from the Lord. God is not only responsible for the first movements toward perfection, but for the total advancement toward this goal.³⁵ He is responsible for transforming the soul into the image of God; He is responsible for the free and virtuous acts of the Christian, responsible for inspiring him to be virtuous, responsible for a constant guidance and assistance.³⁶ In short, God is responsible for the totality of man's movement toward God; there is nothing good that he does or shares in that is not attributable to God.³⁷

Prosper becomes even more specific. Against the semi-Pelagians he declares that faith the foundation of all virtues, and the "sine qua non" for pleasing God is a gratuitous gift.³⁸ Augustine made this same affirmation,

³⁵ *Contra Collatorem* VIII, 327, col. 235.
³⁶ Speaking about the corrupt nature of man Prosper writes: "... Nec ullo modo ab aeternae mortis debito liberam, nisi eam ad imaginem Dei secundae creationis Christi gratia reformaverit, liberumque ejus arbitrium agendo aspirando, auxiliando, et usque in finem praeuendo servaverit." *Epistola ad Rufinum*, XVIII, 98, col. 88.

³⁷ "... Et sicut nihil sit quorum que negotiorum quod non scientia divina praeuenerit, ita nihil sit boni, quod in nostram participationem non Deo auctore defluxerit." *Ibid.*, 8, 7, col. 73.

³⁸ *Resp. ad Exc. Gen.*, V, 248, col. 194.

says Prosper, and not simply in his own name. He based himself on the words of St. Paul who speaks of Christ as the author and builder of our faith. Many texts of St. Paul as well as texts in other parts of the Bible prove this truth beyond a doubt; they prove it so well in fact that only a contortion of Scripture could render a different opinion. If in fact faith is not truly a gift of God then the Church is foolish in recommending prayer for the gift from God of the conversion of unbelievers. The wise thing to do would rather be to teach the law.³⁹

Similarly, it would be foolish to thank God for the conversion of a sinner.⁴⁰ But, of course, such is nonsense. Naturally it is valid, even necessary, to pray for the conversion of sinners; and it is only sensible to thank God for this great gift. Consequently, Augustine was perfectly correct to declare that "faith both in its beginning and in its perfection is a gift of God."⁴¹ The Lord himself, in fact, explains that this first movement of man toward his Creator is a divine gift when he says that all those who turn toward him do so as a result of a gift from the Father.⁴²

³⁹"Si ergo fides donum Dei non est, frustra Ecclesia pro credentibus orat, ut credant, et sufficit impiis magisterium legis adhiberi." Ibid., 247, col. 193.

⁴⁰This is what St. Paul did. "Frustra etiam Apostolus (II Thess. II, 12) gratias agit Deo pro his qui Evangelium receperunt." Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 248, col. 193 Personal Translation.

⁴²"Hanc regulam firmat Dominus dicens, 'Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi datum fuerit ei a Patre meo (Joan VI, 66) Contra Collatorem, VIII, 326, col. 231.

If then the virtue of faith is a gratuitous gift from the Almighty so is every other virtue including the virtue of continence, of charity, wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, and godliness and fear of the Lord. None of these virtues is merited; they are all given from the infinitely generous Lord.⁴³ No one grows in virtue, no one strives toward perfection, and toward the sources of salvation by his strength alone; it is God who works this striving in him through his powerful grace.⁴⁴ If therefore men become as vines bearing much fruit, if they grow in perfection, they should not praise themselves but the Lord without whose help they could have done nothing.⁴⁵ It is therefore wise of the Christian to recognize his limitations and frailties, and to accept the fact that all good things, i.e. those things conducive to eternal life, are given him from God; they are obtained through his favor, increased and preserved through his generosity.⁴⁶ Even from a negative point of view, even from the point of

⁴³Resp. ad Exc. Gen., III, 245, cols. 190-191.

⁴⁴"... Nec propria virtute ad principia salutis enitur: sed agit haec occulta et potens gratia Dei." Contra Collatorem, XIII, 338, col. 246.

⁴⁵"Si ergo in sanctitate vivitur, si in virtute proficitur, si in bonis studiis permanetur, manifestum munus est Dei, sine quo nullus boni operis fructus acquiritur." Ibid., XIV, 237, col. 185.

⁴⁶"Fixa ergo hac fide in cordibus nostris, immobiliterque fundata, qua saluberrime credimus omnia bona, ac maxime ea quae ad vitam aeternam provehant, Dei munere haberi, Dei munere augeri, Dei numere custodiri." De Vocatione, Liber I, IX, 857, col. 657.

view of not falling into sin must the Christian ascribe his success to the help of God, for the Lord protects his children guiding them away from tribulation, from temptation and from the snares of the sinners.⁴⁷ However, if it should happen that a Christian use his free will against God and reject momentarily this source of goodness, his return to God will take place through God's mercy alone. Through his grace the Lord will inspire repentance in this sinner so that he can be freed from the chains of Satan.⁴⁸ Progress in perseverance, virtues, conversion and re-conversion, even perseverance itself are gifts of God.⁴⁹ This is not to deny that man merits, it is simply to affirm that even the merits of men are works of God gratuitously bestowed.⁵⁰

The only logical conclusion from the premise that all advance toward God, toward spiritual perfection comes as a result of freely given grace, is that salvation itself is a gift. Prosper clearly makes this logical affirmation. In the Contra Collatorem, Prosper points out that nothing earthly should frighten those who have been chosen by God

⁴⁷Contra Collatorem, XV, 349, col. 258.

⁴⁸Resp. ad Exc. Gen., XVI, 238, col. 185.

⁴⁹Speaking about St. Paul, Prosper writes: "Ad Corinthios quoque scribens, et omnium virtutum proficientem perseverantiam Dei donum esse commendans..." De Vocatione Liber I, XXIV, 384, col. 683.

⁵⁰"Quae tamen se recordationi offerunt, non omittentur: ut, quantum satis est, manifestetur, hominis bonum meritum, ab initio fidei usque ad perseverantiae consummationem donum atque opus esse divinum." Ibid., XXIII, 876, col. 676.

for glory, since all things are at the service of God leading them in that direction, that is, in the direction of salvation which is a gift of God.⁵¹ In another text he declares that glory over salvation should not be in men but in God, for salvation is gratuitous; man stood in need of God's help and he bestowed it upon him.⁵² In the Vincen-tian Articles, Prosper explains that the salvation of many results from the benevolence of the Savior.⁵³ In the first book of the De Vocatione Prosper explains that St. Paul, John, and Luke hold the unanimous opinion that perseverance and salvation are pure gifts.⁵⁴

What Prosper is driving at by this thesis that all movement toward God is gratuitous is that all efforts toward salvation that men make have been predestined them by God. This includes of course faith, works of charity and the result of all these which is eternal life.⁵⁵ Agreeing with Augustine Prosper admits that the election of grace

⁵¹"Ecclesiastica regula est: 'In nullo terreamini ab adversariis, quae est illis causa perditionis, vobis autem salutis, et hoc a Deo.'" Contra Collatorem, VIII, 326, col. 234.

⁵²"...Omnis ipsorum salus gratuita est; et ideo gloria Dei est, ut qui gloriatur, in illo cujus gloria eguit glori-etur (Rom. XI, 35)" Ibid., X, 332, col. 240.

⁵³"... Quod multi salvantur, salvantis est donum." Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Vinc., II, 231., 179.

⁵⁴De Vocatione, Liber II, XXIV, cols. 684-685.

⁵⁵"Fides autem et charitatis opera, atque in eis usque in finem perseverantia, quia homini per Dei gratiam conferentur, recte et ipsa, et quae eis retribuenda sunt, praedestinata dicuntur, ex auctoritate Apostoli." Resp. ad Cap. Gal., XIV, 218, col. 169.

precedes meriting, and that even if meriting advances one toward salvation, it is not the ultimate answer why one man is saved and the other not.⁵⁶ If one man listens to the word of God, is converted and moves in the direction of righteousness this is the result of predestination even though his free will has certainly cooperated. It is truly man who believes and wills to believe, but it is God who operates this willing in him; it is God who opens his heart.⁵⁷ In other words, if two men find themselves in an identical situation and if one responds in a way that is advantageous to his salvation, and the other does not, the question is posed: why did one act one way and the other in the opposite manner. The answer of course is that they each freely chose a path that suited them. But the question remains: why did the one freely choose to act one way and the other to act in an opposite manner. Why did one choose God and the other hell. The answer ultimately is that God opened the heart of the one through his grace; he made it come to pass that he would choose the road to victory. For the other he allowed him to

⁵⁶"Et omnibus ratiocinandi viribus hac indubitanter agnovisse, quod electionem gratiae nulla merita humana praecedant, et quod fides, unde incipiunt omnia merita, donum sit Dei; ne gratia sit gratia (Rom. XI, 6) si aliquid eam propter quod tribuatur antevenit." Resp. ad Exc. Gen., III, 244, col. 189-190.

⁵⁷"Numquid dubium est, cum verbum veritatis praedicatur, alios voluntate credere, alios voluntate non credere? Sed cum illorum cor Deus aperuerit illorum autem non aperuerit discernendum est quid veniat de misericordia, quid de iudicio." Ibid., IV, 246, col. 192.

follow a course of action which would be to his detriment. For Prosper then, the ultimate answer to salvation or non-election, is predestination or non-predestination.

The semi-Pelagians were highly upset at such a way of speaking. They concluded that if God does not predestine some to heaven he is inevitably predestining them to hell. They therefore spread the falsehood that Prosper and Augustine with him preached a predestination to evil, and so to hell. Prosper retorted vehemently. He argues first of all that God does not drive men to sin. The man who makes such a statement deserves to be chastised for his irreverence toward God. The very thought that God whose nature cries out against sin, God who is justice and goodness, could compel anyone to sin or hurl him from innocence into such a miserable plight is blasphemous and so Christians are forbidden to speak or think in such a manner. If some men deliberately resist the many means available for repentance and continue to sin, then, because they have first abandoned God, they deserve to be abandoned by him. If they continue to sin, and fall into even greater sins then this is a punishment they have deserved. But their punishment is not that God will make them sin but that he will abandon them to their corrupt natures by which they will sin.⁵⁸

In another text, Prosper argues that God's predesti-

⁵⁸Resp. ad. Cap. Obj. Vinc., sententia super XI, 221, col. 173.

nation can only be productive of what is good.⁵⁹ If some are unbelievers their lack of belief is not due to predestination, but to the evil of their own free will. The fact is, God can only be the author of what is good. If God in his foreknowledge foresees the evil of men, he does not cause it; this is true despite the fact that God's foreknowledge is infallible.⁶⁰ And if anyone dare speak otherwise, if anyone dare regard predestination as a sort of fatal necessity driving men to sin, then this person is not a Catholic, but a heretic.⁶¹ Since, therefore, God produces only what is good, is responsible only for what is salvific never for what is wrong or conducive to evil, it cannot be affirmed that God predestines anyone for the purpose of reprobation. God creates the nature and person of the reprobate but this does not mean he causes his perdition. The cause of this is man alone.⁶² In short then, for Prosper, God cannot and does not predestine anyone to evil, much less to damnation. The total blame for sin and perdition belongs to man. Nonetheless,

⁵⁹"Praedestinatio quoque Dei semper in bono est..." Ibid., sententia super VI, 220, col. 171.

⁶⁰Ibid., XIV, 218, col. 169.

⁶¹"Quisquis igitur ex praedestinatione Dei, velut fatali necessitate homines in peccata compulsos cogi dicit in mortem, non est Catholicus." Ibid., sent. super I, 219, col. 169.

⁶²"Omnium quidem hominum creator est Deus, sed nemo ab eo ideo creatus est, ut periret: quia alia est causa nascendi, et alia est causa pereundi." Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Vinc., III, 231, col. 179.

the fact remains that God could have saved those who are in fact damned. Christ himself declares this, explains Prosper, when he says of the people of Tyre and Sidon that they would have believed had they been privileged to witness the miracles that took place in other towns. Why the Lord chose not to let them witness these miracles is beyond human comprehension. Why he chose to allow the residents of other towns to witness miracles that would prove valueless to them, this too is beyond human knowledge. What is known, however, is that Christ spoke the truth. What is known is that the people of Tyre, Sidon, Corozain, and Bethsaida would have accepted the faith had they been so favored. The fact is simply that God, for some unfathomable but just motive did not please to transform the hearts of these people.⁶³ Hence, it is not inaccurate to say that the Lord does withhold from some the message of the gospel, lest hearing it they accept it and find salvation. It is best, however, not to make such a statement in isolation, but to support it by the authority of the words of Christ. In this way some of the odium of the statement will be lost.⁶⁴

The conclusion to be drawn here is that not all men fall under the predestination of God. Obviously, those

⁶³Resp. ad Exc. Gen., IX, 252, col. 198.

⁶⁴"Item qui dicit quod quibusdam Evangelii praedicatione a Domino subtrahatur, ne percepta Evangelii praedicatione salventur; potest objectionis invidiam declinare patrocinio ipsius Salvatoris..." Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Vinc., Sent. super X, 220, col. 172.

for whom God has withheld the gospel message are not to be counted among the elect, nor those whose hearts have not been opened so that they might accept and respond favorably to the good news. But there are also many others who have at one time accepted the faith and have lived righteously, but have later on fallen away from their holiness into impurity, or from faith to disbelief, or justice to iniquity. These too, are not to be regarded as among the elect--among the heirs of eternal glory in the Son of God.⁶⁵ Neither the infidel nor the corrupt Christian fall under God's predestination since predestination is geared only to what is salvific; rather, both are left to their free will, allowed to commit evil and to be damned.

Pickman is unhappy with Prosper's doctrine. He accuses Prosper of injuring the doctrine of Augustine by affirming that damnation is simply permitted by God. By so doing, he says, Prosper is denying of God an absolute control over man's destiny. God is restricted to imposing salvation; he cannot equally impose damnation. On the other hand declares Pickman, in Augustine's doctrine God is omnipotent; he arbitrarily decides not only the fate of the elect but of the damned as well.⁶⁶ What Pickman

⁶⁵"A sanctitate ad immunditiam, a justitia ad iniquitatem, a fide ad impietatem plerosque transire non dubium est: et ad tales praedestinationem filiorum Dei et cohaerendum Christi non pertinere certissimum est." Resp. ad Cap. Gal., III, 207, col. 158.

⁶⁶Prosper...may quite legitimately insist on the distinction between a salvation imposed by God and a damnation merely permitted by God. But here again Prosper is

fails to see is that in Prosper God is truly responsible for damnation in the sense that he punishes a life of crime with eternal pain. Hence, he obviously maintains full control over the human situation. He simply does not oblige man to sin. In this he is agreeing exactly with Augustine.⁶⁷

If then, Pickman is inaccurate in his interpretations both of Augustine and of Prosper, he is accurate in pointing out that Augustine was "jealous" of the omnipotence of God. One way the Doctor of grace stresses this point is in his insistence that all of the elect are infallibly saved.⁶⁸ God simply makes it certain that the

doing his master no service, for the suggestion is that man may be the victim, not only of God's justice, but of Nature or Fate. Augustine was more jealous of God's omnipotence." cf. Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 422.

⁶⁷Augustine, who explains that the sinner first abandons God and not vice versa, points out that the non-elect have simply been abandoned to their free choice. "...Deserunt et deseruntur. Dimissi enim sunt libero arbitrio, non accepto perseverantiae dono iudicio Dei iusto et occulto." Augustine, De Correptione et Gratia, XIII, 42, p. 366; Pickman may have misunderstood certain expressions of Augustine taken out of context which could suggest that God forces man to sin. As we have pointed out already, Augustine does speak of God as controlling the mind of man even to the extent of guiding it toward sin. But what Augustine means to say is that God allows man to fall into temptation and sin. A clue to Augustine's thought is found in the following sentence where the great Doctor has just finished mentioning that God has "conducted," "guided" (*inclinare*) the son of Jerimiah into sin. Augustine writes: "*Nec causa tacita est, cur... Dominus...cor ejus malum in hoc peccatum miserit vel dimiserit.*" Augustine, De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio, XX, 41 p. 188. What is meant is that God let's men fall into sin, rather than drags or directly "conducts" them into evil.

⁶⁸"Haec est praedestinatio sanctorum, nihil aliud: praescientia scilicet, et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur. Ibid. De Dono Perseverantiae, XIV, 35, col. 680.

soul he has selected for eternal glory infallibly follows in His footsteps. With his grace God touches the predestined soul in such a way that he simply cannot do otherwise but follow his Master. As a consequence not one individual among the elect can fail to attain his goal,⁷⁰ while not one of the non-elect can attain salvation. The reason : the number of the elect is immutably fixed.⁷¹

On the idea of the immutable number of the elect Prosper agrees with the Doctor of Grace. In his letter to Augustine Prosper diligently exposes the errors of the semi-Pelagians among which he lists their refusal to accept the truth that the number of the elect does not fluctuate neither up nor down.⁷² In his letter to Rufinus, Prosper points out the same truth. Here, however, he argues that to believe in God's grace is necessarily to draw this conclusion. And so to deny the immutable number of the elect is as heretical as to deny the existence of grace.⁷³ However, in pointing out that history records

⁷⁰Cf. Nicolas Merlin, Saint Augustine, p. 408. "Pas un seul de ces prédestinés ne saurait être effacé du livre de vie."

⁷¹"Haec de his loquor, qui praedestinati sunt in regnum Dei, quorum ita certus est numerus, ut nec addatur eis quisquam, nec minuatur ex eis..." Augustine, De Correctione et Gratia, XIII, 39, col. 358.

⁷²"... Nec acquiescunt praedestinatum electorum numerum nec augeri posse, nec minui..." Epistola ad Augustinum, VI, 6, col. 72.

⁷³Epistola ad Rufinum, X, 94, col. 84.

the death of many men who have never left their impieties and errors to follow the ways of the Lord,⁷⁴ Prosper indicates that his judgment of the immutable number of the elect is post factum. God always knew those whom he would bring to a knowledge of him and would guide to glory; now, since the number of men so guided was eternally known to God, for him, in his eternity, the number has always been immutable.

Later, in his Answers to the Gauls, Prosper seems to explain that it is cruel to discuss the idea of the immutable number of the elect when the implication arises that only a given number of men can attain salvation, that the rest of men are excluded from life eternal.⁷⁵ In the De Vocatione book I, Prosper refers to the immutable number but only from a positive point of view. All of those are saved, says he, concerning whom the promises of Scripture were written.⁷⁶ All without exception are guided out of the darkness of error into life and light.⁷⁷ In the second

⁷⁴"Neque enim remotum est ab inspectione communi quot saeculis quam innumera hominum millia erroribus suis impietatibusque dimissa, sine ulla veri Dei cognitione defecerint." Ibid.

⁷⁵"Item qui dicit quod non omnes homines velit Deus salvos fieri, sed certum numerum praedestinatorum, durius loquitur quam loquendum est de altitudine inscrutabilis gratiae Dei..." Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Gal., sententia super VIII, 220-221, col. 172.

⁷⁶"Si ergo impossibile est ista non fieri...nec mutabile consilium, nec inefficax voluntas, nec falsa promissio, omnes isti de quibus haec praedicta sunt, sine cujusquam exceptione salvantur." De Vocatione Liber I, IX, 858, col. 659.

⁷⁷"...Omnes educti ab errore, diriguntur in viam vitae..." Ibid., p. 859.

book of the De Vocatione, Prosper continues to stress the positive aspect of this tenet. He writes that according to St. Paul, God had eternally selected those who would share in his kingdom.⁷⁸ But even in this his most mature work he holds on to the historical point of view of Augustine.

For Prosper, then, the ultimate solution why a man is saved and not damned lies in the gratuitous choice that God makes to save certain souls from reprobation. And God being eternally present to all things knows from eternity whom he will save, or, if you will, whom he has saved since his gifts have eternally been rendered.⁷⁹ But this number which is present to him is limited, obviously, and known to be immutably so. Hence, the number of the elect is fixed and limited as far as God is concerned.

On this point, Prosper may have stressed a little more than Augustine the positive aspect of the idea of the fixed number of the elect. Nonetheless, since he never broke away from Augustine's historical point of view in this consideration, he retained the disagreeable phrasing of the Master. In fact, in his entire presentation of the

⁷⁸"...Docens donum atque opus gratiae in aeterno semper Dei mansisse consilio, omnesque adoptionis filios non solum in eo tempore quo jam existentes vocati sunt, sed etiam priusquam mundus constitueretur, electos." Ibid., Liber II, XXIII, 921, col. 718.

⁷⁹"Quoniam non est in Deo accidens motus, aut nova voluntas, aut temporale consilium, nec cogitatio ejus cum rerum mutabilium inaequalitate variatur, sed cuncta pariter tempora et temporalia, sempiterno ac stabili comprehendit intuitu, et omnibus omnia jam retribuit, qui quae sunt futura, jam fecit." Ibid., 920, col. 718.

problem of predestination, strictly-speaking, Prosper scarcely ever speaks in categories that are essentially more acceptable than those of Augustine. He does, however, avoid the use of "predestinare" derivatives in the two books of the De Vocatione and so avoids the pejorative connotations stirred up by such words. He also stresses to a great extent, possibly even more than had done Augustine, the fact that God cannot be responsible for sin.

Essentially, what Prosper is trying to communicate in all of his treatises on predestination is this: the salvation of man is a pure gift. Every movement of man's soul toward perfection is produced by God; such movements are not produced with ^uman's free cooperation, surely, but they are produced by God just the same. This guidance of man by God toward heaven has been known eternally. This eternal knowledge residing in God of what he will gratuitously accomplish in the elect, plus the actual accomplishment of man's salvation—an action eternally present to God—is called predestination.

Through predestination each and every elected soul is drawn infallibly but freely to victory. But no non-elected soul is drawn away from God. No non-elected soul is drawn by predestination toward eternal fire. Such a concept is a contradiction in terms for predestination is essentially the operation of grace in the soul and grace cannot guide one toward evil. Man sins of his own free will, and is damned as a result of free sins. This is

true despite the fact that God in his omnipotence could have saved the sinner by transforming his heart if he had so desired. God therefore positively causes the salvation of the elect through that constant showering of grace called predestination. But he does not and cannot cause those sins of men that will merit for them eternal chastisement. He knows them eternally but that is all.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN'S FREE
WILL AND GRACE IN PROSPER

To study the problem of predestination, strictly-speaking, either in Augustine or in Prosper is to focus attention on the fact of the absolute gratuity of grace and of salvation. It is to make man more keenly aware of his status of total dependence upon God. Since the truth of man's total dependence upon the Almighty is a key to humility—for humility is essentially the recognition of one's true status—a study of predestination in Prosper or Augustine is a valuable means of growth in humility. Yet, there is a danger. An overemphasis upon God's role in man's salvation can be detrimental; it can throw the mystery out of balance; it can even go so far as to create a monstrosity. Prosper and Augustine both recognize this. The attention they gave to predestination, therefore, was not an attempt to detract from the true worth of man's cooperation with grace. Consequently, an accurate presentation of the problem of predestination in Prosper necessitates a study of his theory of the relationship of man's free will to predestination, to grace.

The first question to be asked is: does Prosper recog-

nize free will in man. Prosper explains that even after the fall of man in Adam, human nature was not destroyed. It retained its basic constituents: its substance, form, life, senses, reason. All of the creatures of God, therefore, who partake of human nature, share to a lesser or greater degree of these goods; even the vicious share in these natural goods.¹ But, among the constituents of human nature is a power to regulate earthly things, to order and regulate one's life called human will. If human nature were deprived of this power it would not be vitiated but extinct. Hence, all men have a will.²

Prosper distinguishes in man two possible wills. To be human, he points out, one must have at least an operative animal will. This will, which can be called the carnal will, deals strictly in impulses. It is found in infants and in adults who are deprived of the use of reason. But, neither infants, nor the insane are truly human, in the strictest sense for they lack an operative natural will. With this will man can raise himself up from mere impulses and occupy himself in an ordering of human possessions, material goods etc. At this level, human hearts are liberated from a slavery to bodily appetites. Men can therefore regulate

¹"Naturae quippe humanae, . . . etiam post praevaricationem manet substantia, manet forma, manet vita, et sensus et ratio, caeteraque corporis atque animi bona, quae etiam malis vitiosisque non desunt." Contra Collatorem, XII, 337, col. 246.

²"Si enim nec ad ista terrena ordinanda rationalis animi vigeret ingenium, non vitiata esset, sed extincta natura." Ibid., X, 333, col. 241.

their lives according to the laws of justice and probity.³ They can even attain, says Prosper, a semblance of supernatural virtues—justice, temperance, continence, benevolence. And, they can possess these virtues to great profit, since, from them will flow respect and honor, in other words, natural happiness. However, these so-called virtues are not pleasing to God, and do not draw closer the one who practices them to the Truth who is Sanctity Himself.⁴ Even if man uses his natural will to perfect himself intellectually in philosophy and science as well as to practice natural virtues, he cannot attain justification. The reason is that without faith and worship, one cannot use his will for what is truly good. And, consequently, even the virtuous philosopher, who has not embraced the worship of the true God, will be ultimately punished for uncleanness and impiety.⁵ In short, the pagan philosopher can attain merits for this life through the sole power of his natural will, but he cannot, through

³De Vocatione Liber I, III - IV, 849-850, cols. 650-651.

⁴"...Ideo scilicet, quia multi eorum sint justitiae, temperantiae, continentiae, et benevolentiae sectores; quae omnia non frustra quidem, neque inutiliter habent, multumque ex eis in hac vita honoris et gloriae consequuntur: sed quia in iis studiis non Deo...serviunt, licet habeant temporalem de vana laude mercedem, ad illam tamen beatarum virtutem non pertinent veritatem," Contra Collatorem, XIII, 340, col. 248.

⁵"quae tamen etiamsi excellentissimis artibus, et cunctis mortalium eruditionum polleat disciplinis, justificari ex se non potest: quia bonis suis male utitur, in quibus sine cultu veri Dei impietatis immunditiaeque vincitur..." Ibid., X, 333, col. 241.

this will alone, merit an eternal life. Even if he succeeds in leading a naturally good life he cannot be awarded salvation at the end of his days.⁶

To prove this last point Prosper argues that if the children of Adam could perform those virtuous acts that Adam was capable of during his life, and do so simply by the power of their natural will, then these sons of Adam would not be by nature "children of wrath." They would have no need of the grace of Christ; their actions would be spiritually-valuable; and the reward of these actions, eternal life.⁷ Since this is obviously false it must be affirmed that by the power of free will alone they cannot merit toward heaven. Such was the heresy of Pelagius who was condemned.

Nevertheless, since free will unaided by grace is capable of attaining natural virtues, such as justice, temperance and even a kind of wisdom, it would be wrong to despise free will, to deny its existence and to minimize its worth.⁸ Yet, to refuse to believe that this will is injured in the present fallen state, injured to the point of being incapable of raising itself from the "darkness and shadow of death," would possibly be a worse denial still. For the truth is

⁶"...Nihil supra mercedem gloriae temporalis acquirunt; et cum praesentem vitam decenter exornent, aeternae tamen beatitudinis praemium non habent..." De Vocatione Liber I, IV, 850, col. 651.

⁷Contra Collatorem, IX, 329 col. 237.

⁸"Liberum arbitrium nihil esse, vel non esse, perperam dicitur..." Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, VI, 209, col. 161.

that before man is released from the bonds of Satan he finds himself lying in the abyss he dug for himself by revolting against God in his forefather Adam.⁹

In short, it is natural for man to possess free will even in his present situation. But, for him to exercise this will profitably is a different question altogether. Prosper argues that it is only through grace that the free will of man gains liberty. In his Letter to Rufinus Prosper explains that justification first begins when grace transforms man's will not from good to better, but rather from evil to good. Later, grace will help man to continue his progress in virtue and will transform his will from good to still better. In this the will is not being destroyed but perfected, given new liberty. Without grace free will exists only for sin. It is free, but free from God and slave of the devil. But, with grace it is rescued from the captivity of Satan and becomes the dwelling place of the Lord.¹⁰ In the same letter, Prosper tells us that true freedom is unattainable apart from the One Mediator between God and men,

⁹"Sed ante illuminationem fidei in tenebris illud et in umbra mortis agere, non recte negatur. Quoniam priusquam a dominatione diaboli per Dei gratiam liberetur, in illo profundo jacet in quod se sua liberate demersit." Ibid.

¹⁰"Gratia igitur Dei quoscumque justificat, non ex bonis meliores, sed ex malis bonos facit; postea per profectum, ex bonis factura meliores; non adempto libero arbitrio, sed liberato: quod donec sine Deo solum fuit, mortuum fuit justitiae, vixitque peccato: ubi autem ipsum illuminavit misericordia Christi, eratum est a regno diaboli, et factum est regnum Dei..." Epistola ad Rufinum, IX, 93, col. 83.

Christ, the Lord and Savior of mankind.¹¹

In the Contra Collatorem Prosper identifies grace with the Eucharist and affirms that before eating the Flesh of Christ and drinking his blood, men find themselves helpless to desire to choose, much less, to choose in fact, that supernatural good that human nature was capable of desiring before original sin. If human nature had the capacity to sin before the Fall, it has retained the capacity. But it has yet to attain the ability to raise itself up without the assistance of grace.¹²

In the same tract Prosper points out that grace is never destructive of free will. Rather, the function of grace is to make good of what was bad, faithfulness out of infidelity, light out of darkness, life out of death. It is to raise the prostrate, and find what was lost. All of this it accomplishes with the power of the Lord.¹³ In the

¹¹"Naturam humanam non liberat extra unam mediator-
em Dei et hominum, hominem Christum Jesum (I. Tim. II, 5);
sine illo nemini salus est (Act. IV, 12). Ibid., XII, 94,
col. 84.

¹²"Inde priusquam edendo carnem Filii hominis, et
bibendo sanguinem ejus, lethalem digerat cruditatem, labat
memoria, errat iudicio, nutat incessu; neque ullo modo idoneus
est ad illud bonum eligendum et concupiscendum, quo se sponte
privavit: quia non sicut potuit Deo non impellente corruere,
ita potest Deo non erigenti consurgere." Contra Collatorem,
IX, 330, col. 238.

¹³"Hac regula nulli hominum aufertur voluntas; quia
virtus gratiae non hoc in voluntatibus operatur ut non sint,
sed ut ex malis bonae, et ex infidelibus sint fideles; et
quae ex semetipsis erant tenebrae, lux efficiantur in Domino;
quod mortuum erat vivificatur, quod jacebat erigitur, quod
perierat invenitur." Ibid., X, 326, col. 235.

Vincentian Articles, Prosper declares that the will of man as well as the rest of his nature is a slave to the devil. He points out, that this condition, though unnatural, will persist forever unless man is emersed in the waters of baptism by which he will die to sin and live to God. Without the grace of baptism, he insists, no change-over can take place, no liberation can occur. For the freedom lost through one's free will cannot be regained except through Christ.¹⁴

In book one of the De Vocatione, after explaining that the free will of man can be either animal or natural, he explains that if God's grace is added to the soul a new kind of will is discovered. It is a new spiritual will forged by the action of the spirit. Henceforth, the spiritual will governs its affections not in the light of natural virtues or wisdom, but under the illumination of divine wisdom.¹⁵ In this new state the will is not simply free but is endowed with the freedom of the Holy Spirit by whom it can merit toward eternal life.

¹⁴"Quae cum potestatem habuerit non delinquendi, sponte deliquit, et deceptoris suo propria voluntate se subdidit. Nec naturali, sed captivo motu versatur in vitio, donec moriatur peccato et vivat Deo: quod sine gratia Dei facere non potest; quia libertatem quam libertate pendidit, nisi Christo liberante non recipit." Responsiones ad Capitula Objectionum Vincentianarum, V, 233, col. 181.

¹⁵"Hujus voluntatis, quantum ad naturalem pertinet motum ex vitio primae praevaricationis infirmum, genera sunt duo, secundum quae voluntas hominis, aut sensualis, aut animalis est. Sed cum adest gratia Dei, accedit ei per donum spiritus tertium genus, ut possit fieri spiritualis, et per hunc excellentiorem motum omnes affectus undecumque nascentes supernae rationis lege dijudicet." De Vocatione liber I, II, 849, col. 650.

Consequently, since grace serves not to destroy already existing free will, but to grant it still greater liberty, predestination which is essentially that constant and timely showering of grace by which the elect are with certitude saved, cannot be destructive of free will either. Prosper declares this quite positively. In the Contra Collatorem, Prosper points out that fears concerning the grace of the predestined soul are unfounded. For this grace cannot be harmful; it can only be productive of a more powerful and efficient will.¹⁶ He adds, that he is not shaken by the complaints of the proud who insist that free will is inevitably lost when predestination is operative. If the beginnings, progress, and perseverance in an active Christian faith are all attributable to God, as is expressed in the doctrine of predestination, then, argue the proud, there is no room for the operation of man's free choice. Such is wrong, says Prosper. The grace of the elect is the foundation of true liberty.¹⁷

In denying the possibility of true freedom under predestination many semi-Pelagians looked upon predestination

¹⁶"Non est periculum liberi arbitrii ex gratia Dei, nec voluntas aufertur, cum in ipsa bene velle generatur." Contra Collatorem, VI, 321, col. 229.

¹⁷"Non enim conturbat nos superbientium inepta querimonia, qua liberum arbitrium causantur auferri, si et principia, et profectus, et perseverantia in bonis usque in finem Dei dona esse dicantur. Quoniam opitulationes divinae gratiae stabilimenta sunt voluntatis humanae." Ibid, XVIII, 356, cols. 264-265.

as a form of fatalism. Prosper replies to this complaint in the Answers to the Objections of the Gauls. He writes that predestination and fatalism are never to be confused. To preach the latter as though it were the former would be no less a crime, than to criticize the sacred doctrine of predestination on the grounds of its being fatalistic. Fatalism, is an absurd, unfounded doctrine. But predestination derives its authority from Sacred Scripture.¹⁸

In the De Vocatione book I, Prosper states that when God has converted a man's heart to his divine ways, He does not destroy the old will to replace it with a newly created one. Rather he remakes the old, corrupt will into an instrument of his service. There is, therefore, a transformation, but it is not for worse; it is for better. To speak of a loss would, therefore, be inaccurate, unless one specified that the only loss was that of an imperfection, a defect.¹⁹ In book II of the same work he insists that predestination does not even deprive the Christian of the power of choosing evil. Even the elect have the option to

¹⁸"proinde qui praedestinationis nomine fatum praedicat, tam non est probandus quam qui fati nomine veritatem praedestinationis infamat. Fati enim opinio vana est, et de falsitate concepta: praedestinationis autem, multa sanctarum auctoritate Scripturarum munita est..." Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, I, 205, col. 157.

¹⁹"In homine, cum ad pietatem redit, non aliam in eo creari substantiam, sed eandem quae fuerat labefacta reparari; nec aliud ab eo auferri nisi vitium, priore voluntate correctum...nec aliud ab eo aufertur, nisi vitium quod natura non habuit." De Vocatione Liber I, VII, 853, cols. 653-654.

turn their backs on God; the reason is that the fickleness that plagued the soul of the pagan has not been destroyed by his conversion.²⁰ The proof lies in the fact that so many Christians willfully reject the gift of faith, surrender to the desires of the flesh, let themselves be aroused in anger and fall into periods of depression and sadness.²¹ There is consequently no absolute certitude of salvation, not even for the Christian living a life of faith. Life is a struggle and a trial aimed at victory; but its combatants are ever in danger of the waylayer's pride. If it is true, therefore, that God grants the strength of final perseverance to his elect, the freedom to sin is never taken away from them, for their natures retain many of the weaknesses of fallen humanity.²²

In short, the objection of the semi-Pelagians that predestination destroys free will is false. The grace of

²⁰"Posse eos qui gratia Dei in Christum credunt, non credere, et eos qui perseverant, a Deo recedere...Qui ad obediendum sibi ipsum velle sic donat, ut etiam a perseveraturis illam mutabilitatem quae potest nolle non auferat." De Vocatione Liber II, XXVIII, 915, col. 713.

²¹"Alloquin nemo umquam fidelium recessisset a fide, neminem concupiscentia vinceret, neminem tristitia elideret, neminem iracundia de bellaret, nullius charitas refrigesceret, nullius patientia frangeretur..." Ibid.

²²"...In presentis autem agonis incerto ubi tota vita tentatio est (Job VII, I) et ab insidiantis superbia nec ipsa est tota victoria, mutabilitatis periculo non caretur. Et licet innumeris sanctis suis donet virtutem perseverandi usque in finem divina protectio, a nullis tamen aufert quod ipsis repugnat ex ipsis; ut in omnibus studiis atque conatibus semper inter se velle et nolle decertent." Ibid., 916, col. 714.

predestination transforms an imperfect will, into a will capable of true advance toward God, while at the same time giving man the option to spurn the Lord. But, the question arises: what is the condition of the non-predestined soul. Does the non-elect possess the power to use free will. Is the non-elect truly responsible for his evil ways.

Prosper suggests an answer to this question when he discusses the last judgment. He argues that since God is an absolutely just judge he cannot punish anyone who is not truly guilty. No one, he says, can suffer the pains of hell if he is guiltless.²³ Further, it is impossible that God be responsible for the evil actions committed by the non-predestined. For it is certain that God would ^{not} judge and condemn a man if the man were actually accomplishing God's will in sinning. But, since Scripture declares there will be a last judgment, and a sifting of the evil from the good so that the evil will be placed on the left hand of God and condemned, it is clear that in sinning the sinners were not fulfilling God's decrees but following their own inclinations.²⁴ Thus in arguing to the true guilt of sinners, Prosper insinuates at least, that the non-elect has sinned freely.

²³"Non est enim iniquitas apud Deum (II Par. XIX, 7) neque quisquam sub iudicio ejus innocens perit." Responsiones ad Excerpta Genuensium, VIII, 252, col. 197.

²⁴"Quod iudicium futurum omnino non esset, si homines Dei voluntate peccarent. Erit autem manifestissime: et omni homo quem discretio divinae scientiae in sinistra constituerit parte, damnabitur; quia non Dei, sed suam exsecutus est voluntatem." Ibid., X, 235, col. 183.

But, Prosper does not only insinuate that the non-predestined has the power to use his free will, has the power to revolt against God freely. He states it pointblank. In the Letter to Rufinus, he says that, although the believer is led by the Spirit of God, the unbeliever turns away by his own free will.²⁵ In the Vincentian Articles, Prosper declares that many sinners for whom the Church offers prayers regularly will perish. This is not because God willed their damnation but because they willed it. They are damned through their own fault. Consequently, God's justice should not be blamed.²⁶ In this same work Prosper insists that he who lapses from Justice and piety is he who alone has freely cast himself into the abyss of sin. It is his own passion that drags him from his life's goal, his own judgment which deceives him.²⁷ He also states that free will is not only operative when a man rejects faith and holiness; it is again operative when he refuses to rise up from his fallen state, and when he wollows in the slavery of his

²⁵"Sed qui credunt, Dei aguntur Spiritu; qui non credunt, libero avertuntur arbitrio." Epistola ad Rufinum, VI, 92, col. 81.

²⁶"Siquidem Apostolus, cujus ista sententia est... sollicitissime praecipit, quod in omnibus Ecclesiis piissime custoditur, ut Deo pro omnibus hominibus supplicetur: ex quibus quod multi pereunt, pereuntium est meritum... Ut enim reus damnetur, inculpabilis Dei justitia est; ut autem reus justificetur, ineffabilis gratia est." Responsiones ad Capitula Objectionum Vincentianarum, II, 231, col. 179.

²⁷"Si ergo a justitia et pietate quis deficit, suo in praeceptis fertur arbitrio, sua concupiscentia trahitur, sua persuasionem decipitur." Ibid., XIII, 237, col. 184.

concupiscence. Freely this man has stripped himself of his capacity to desire good and to perform it. None is to blame but he.²⁸ Consequently, if he should eventually be cast into the flames forever, he must admit that his wickedness and improperly used freedom have been the causes of his misfortune.²⁹

Hence, it is to be concluded that even the non-elect possesses freedom, not the freedom of the predestined soul aided by grace, but a freedom, nonetheless—a freedom sufficiently valid to make him fully responsible for his evil acts. For, even without grace, man's will is of itself capable of sinning freely.³⁰

It is thus clear that man can, and at times does merit his eternal damnation. It is also clear that the grace of predestination is responsible for man's willing good, performing it, advancing in perfection and one day receiving eternal life. It is also true, however, that man can and does merit toward salvation. Yet, since grace grants him all things supernatural, his very merits are graces. A problem therefore arises: since man's merits are actually graces is there validity to speak of meriting

²⁸"Qui enim a fide et sanctitate exciderunt, sicut voluntate prolapsi sunt, ita voluntate non surgunt, et dominatum concupiscentiarum, quibus succubuerunt, sponte patiuntur...Quia qui se a Deo avertit, ipse et velle quod bonum est, et posse sibi sustulit." *Ibid.*, XV, 238, col. 185.

²⁹"...Ut cadant et ruant; ipsorum enim hoc nequitia, ipsorum est consummatura libertas." *Ibid.*, XVI, 239, col. 186.

³⁰"Quae voluntas in malis actionibus sola esse potest." *De Vocatione LiberII*, XII, 898, col. 697.

toward heaven. Is not such meriting mere illusion. Does meriting have a true causal value in obtaining beatitude. Does not God's grace eliminate any real need for action on the part of man's will?

The semi-Pelagians argued that Prosper's theory of predestination must necessarily be false for should it be factual it would eliminate the need for action on the part of man's will. Prosper explains that such reasoning is both absurd and thoughtless.³¹ To prove that action on the part of the will is truly important, he argues from the example of St. Paul. The Apostle, he says, has received the knowledge of willing righteously. But the power to accomplish what he desires to accomplish will always be wanting in him unless he merit freely, through that good will bestowed upon him, the strength needed to practice the virtues.³² God will refuse him this strength unless he uses the graces already given him to merit it. And obviously^{without} the ability to practice the virtues, it is impossible to attain salvation. Hence, the action of the will is extremely valuable and necessary. Prosper also argues from the parable of the talents, pointing out that if Christians do not make

³¹"Nimium vero enepte, nimiumque inconsiderate ab adversantibus dicitur quod per hanc Dei gratiam libero nihil relinquatur arbitrio." Epistola ad Rufinum, XVII, 97, col. 87.

³²"...Et quamvis acceperit scientiam recte volendi, virtutem tamen in se non invenit ea quae optat operandi; donec pro bona voluntate quam sumpsit, mereatur virtutem facultatem invenire quam quaerit." Contra Collatorem, IV, 317, col. 225.

use of their free will in order to multiply those gifts granted them, in order to strengthen their virtues, the blessings they have received of God will be taken away from them and given elsewhere. Consequently, the elect cannot live passively. They must use their free will in an active pursuit of God for this is precisely the reason they were chosen.³³

God may well command his children to use their free will in order to merit toward salvation, and indeed he does, might retort the semi-Pelagians. But, if Prosper's theory of predestination is true, then all the credit for advancement in perfection goes to God and free will is worthy of no praise. Consequently, the value of using one's free will properly is essentially illusion. To such an argument Prosper would reply that to give God full credit for the Christian's movement toward him does not strip the human being of his due credit. He points out that true Christians do not see any problem in ascribing in a very real sense to man what they also ascribe totally to God. Christians admit that they are what they are through God's help, but they do not conclude from this that no praise is due to man.³⁴

³³"Et frustra dicitur quod ratio operandi non sit in electis, cum etiam ad hoc operentur electi sint. Virtutem quippe munera otiosa esse non possunt. Quoniam, sicut Veritas ait, 'Omni habenti dabitur, non habenti autem etiam quod habet auferetur ab eo' (Matt. XXV, 29)." De Vocatione Liber II, XXXV, 922, col. 720.

³⁴"Nullo igitur modo christiana corda suscipiunt quod persuadere conatus es, eos qui gratia Dei sunt quod sunt, nec laudem ullam habere, nec meritum..." Contra Collatorem, XVII, 356, col. 264.

To know where the ultimate source of all meriting lies does not deprive the knower of his own valid merit or praise.³⁵ Even in the case of faith which is a pure gift of God is man worthy of some praise, for he has freely accepted faith.³⁶

To prove this last point, Prosper argues from the words of St. Paul. This Apostle, in both his letters to the Romans and to the Corinthians, praises God for the faith of the Christians in his fold. But, in so doing, he is not depriving the believers of praise. At other times he praises the Christians themselves, but this does not mean he is robbing God of credit. The fact is both must be praised because both have due credit.³⁷

Man's faith as well as his advance toward perfection is the result of a close cooperation between grace and free will. If man is subject to grace and lets grace operate fruitfully through him, he does so willingly; he is not bound to do so; he is not obliged. For grace operates in man to make him desirous of subjection. Consequently, if perfection is first from God, it takes place only with the free cooperation of man.³⁸ In such a situation grace is the

³⁵"Nec merito ac laude privantur qui unde aeterna bona mereantur accipiunt..." Ibid.

³⁶"...Quasi fides, ubi ostenderetur laudata, non doceretur esse donata." Ibid., XVI, 351, col. 260

³⁷Ibid., 352.

³⁸"...Nec propria virtute ad principia salutis entitur: sed agit haec occulta et potens gratia Dei...non ut invitum hominem subigat, sed ut subjectionis cupidum faciat; nec ut ignorans trahat, sed ut intelligentem sequentem prae-

outstanding factor, but human will is also a valid secondary cause. Undoubtedly, grace is a powerful transforming agent, but it is not overpowering. It does not so control the will of man that only God can be credited with man's salvific strivings. In fact the action of grace in the soul exists precisely in order to enable man to take an active and true participation in God's work; it exists so as to allow man to merit truly toward his eternal reward. Truth and humility, therefore, require that we regard grace as the more prominent element in justification, but it requires likewise that we regard the action of free will as a valid secondary factor.³⁹

Consequently, the very perseverance of man, his initiation into faith, and his progress in faith are ascribable in a true sense not only to grace but to men. For any kind of perfection whatever, as well as eternal life, which can be regarded as the culmination of all perfections, requires of necessity an intimate union in cooperation between the

cedat...Quidquid in eo in melius reficitur, nec sine illo qui sanatur, nec nisi ab illo sit qui medetur..." Ibid., XII, 338, col. 246.

³⁹"Quod in omni justificatione gratia quidem principaliter praeemineat, sed voluntas ei subjungatur, quia gratia primo sibi, tamquam receptoricem et famulam donarum suorum, praeparat voluntatem...Hanc quippe abundantionem gratiam ita credimus atque experimur potentem, ut nullo medo arbitremur esse violentam, quod quidquid in salvandis hominibus agitur, ex sola Dei voluntate peragatur...Gratia quidem Dei illa in omni justificatione principaliter praeeminet, suadendo exhortationibus, movendo exemplis...sed etiam voluntas hominis subjungitur ei atque conjungitur, quae ad hoc praedictis est excitata praesidiis, ut divino in se cooperetur operi, et incipiat exercere ad meritum, quod de superno semine concepit ad studium..." De Vocatione Liber II, XXVI, 913, col. 711.

consent of man's will and the divine action of grace.⁴⁰ This is so because God has decreed to crown the good actions of men according to their merits as well as according to his predestination.⁴¹ Consequently, God, who is the bestower of the victory of eternal life, grants to men the credit for the victory. For it was man who was exposed to temptations and resisted; it was he who was capable of falling and stood firm. Nevertheless, his success took place only through God's unfailling assistance.⁴²

It would then seem to follow that the good man, the just man, living a life of active faith and of charity need not fear the judgment of God, need not fear that he is^m among the number of the elect. The semi-Pelagians would deny that such is the teaching of Augustine or of Prosper. For them, the Augustinian doctrine of predestination denies of man any

⁴⁰"Sive igitur initia, sive profectus fidelium, sive usque in finem perseverantiam cogitemus, nullum genus nulla species cujusquam virtutis occurret, quae vel sine dono divinae gratiae, vel sine consensu nostrae voluntatis habeatur...Nam virtus nolentium nulla est, nec potest asseri vel fidem, vel spem, vel charitatem eis inesse, quorum ab his bonis concensus alienus est." Ibid., 913-914, col. 712.

⁴¹"...Cum implendae voluntatis Dei ita sit praeordinatus effectus, ut per laborem operum, per instantiam supplicationum, per exercitia virtutem fiant, incrementa meritorum; et qui bona gesserint, non solum secundum propositum Dei, sed etiam secundum sua merita coronentur. Ob hoc enim in remotissimo ab humana cognitione secreto, praefinitio hujus electionis abscondita est." Ibid., XXXVI, 924, col. 721.

⁴²"Ipsamque gloriam iisdem quibus eam impertit, ascribit; ut quamvis auxilio Dei steterint, tamen, quia in se habebant unde caderent, ipsorum sit meritum quod steterunt." Ibid., XXVII, 916, col. 714.

right to confidence of salvation. But Prosper appears to declare just the opposite. For him all good men will enter into God's kingdom through the grace of the Saviour; they can have certitude of this. Likewise, the wicked can be sure of being cast into eternal flames as a result of their own sinfulness.⁴³ This last statement is to be noted. The wicked will be punished for their own sinfulness, not as a result of original sin, or as a result of those sins forgiven by God.⁴⁴

In short, then, if predestination is the ultimate answer to the why of man's salvation, it is by no means a guidance that relieves man of the need to work for his eternal reward. Man has been endowed with free will precisely for this purpose. If he cannot use this power to merit effectively toward his perfection without the help of grace, with grace, he can and must strive toward union with God. Should man refuse to do so and reject grace, he does not thereby loose his free choice but his objectively good actions no longer have a causal value toward life eternal. He can only exercise his freedom in sinning; and by so doing

⁴³"...Cum tamen constet regnum caelorum omnes ingressuros bonos, hoc eis donante Dei gratia, et nullos ingressuros malos, hoc ipsorum merente nequitia." Epistola ad Rufinum XVI, 97, col. 87.

⁴⁴"Qui enim recedit a Christo, et alienus a gratia finit hanc vitam, quid nisi in perditionem cedit? Sed non in id quod remissum est recidit, nec in originali peccato damnabitur...Quod quia Dei praescientiam nec latuit, nec fefellit, sine dubio talem numquam elegit, numquam praedestinavit, et perituum numquam ab aeterna perditione discrevit." Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, II, 206, col. 158.

he acquires guilt and merits the damnation that will be his, so that, every man who has lived an evil life, and has never intended to alter his ways, can with certitude await eternal punishment. Similarly, the Christian, who has held fast to charity and faith despite his capacity to do otherwise, can be assured of a heavenly reward; he can be assured of being counted among the elect of God.

CHAPTER V
THE IDEA OF NON-PREDESTINATION POST
PRAEVISA DEMERITA

The object of this chapter is to examine the very delicate problem of non-predestination, non-election as it appears in Prosper. If Augustine seems to answer the why of the non-election of certain human souls by reverting to God's inscrutable ways, it is not so clear that Prosper gives the same answer. The problem is to discover whether or not Prosper agrees with Augustine that the final answer as to why a man is not saved lies in God. And if there is agreement, why Prosper made use of terminology that might suggest that he held a view contrary to that of Augustine.

As has been shown in the previous chapter, according to Prosper, God both desires and requires that the elect work toward his salvation, that he cooperate with grace toward this end. Nevertheless, since salvation is a free gift of God and cannot be merited in any strict sense, it must ultimately depend not on man's merits or God's foreknowledge of these merits but on God's inscrutable decree of salvation which, in itself, prescind from any idea of merit or demerit on man's part. If God predestine's a soul to salvation he will see to it that this soul freely and effectively merits his salvation, but this free coopera-

tion will ultimately be dependent upon God's eternal decree. Such all scholars agree is Augustine's doctrine, such too is Prosper's doctrine admit most authorities.¹

Nearly all Patristic theologians, however, see a dichotomy between Prosper and Augustine on the question of non-predestination. All agree that for Augustine the ultimate reason why man is not saved lies in the mysterious judgment of God. True, the sinner will commit evil, and freely damn himself; true, he will be punished justly. But truer still is the fact that God could have saved him and did not; he could have granted him those graces by which he would in fact have accomplished God's will. God could have predestined him to salvation but he did not; therefore, the ultimate answer why man is not saved lies not in his actions, his merits or demerits, but in God's inscrutable ways. This does not mean that God positively willed man's damnation; he simply did not elect him from the "massa peccatorum."² Many authorities deny, however, that such is Prosper's doctrine. They believe that, at least in some of his works, this Father declares that non-predestination is dependent upon God's foreknowledge of man's evil doings. Reprobation is regarded as a consequence of the personal

¹Two scholars disagree. O. Rottmanner and G. de Plinval interpret Prosper as founding predestination, at least in certain of his works, on God's foreknowledge of their meritorious acts. cf. Plinval, "Prosper d'Aquitaine interprète," Recherches Augustiniennes I, p. 355; Rottmanner, "Augustinisme," Mél. de Sci. Rel.p.38.

²This theory is referred to among Augustinian scholars as non-predestination post praevisa demerita.

sins of men as foreknown by God.³ Among the scholars who declare this opposition between Augustine and Prosper are L. Valentin,⁴ Fulgence Cayré,⁵ J. Tixeront,⁶ and M. Jacquin,⁷ who, together with Garrigou-Lagrange,⁸ present this point as the only one in which Prosper deviates from Augustine. E. Portalie admits that Prosper preaches a theory of non-predestination dependent on the foreknowledge of demerits, but does not admit that this is necessarily a deviation from Augustine. He suggests rather that scholars re-examine the position of the doctor of grace.⁹ L. S. Pelland

³This theory is called non-predestination post praevisa demerita.

⁴L. Valentin writes: "A la prédestination absolue, à celle qui sauve et perd sans considération des mérites ou des fautes humaines, il substitue la réprobation post praevisa demerita. Saint Augustin répète sans cesse que ceux qui se perdent se perdent non parce qu'ils ont repusé le salut, mais parce que le salut ne leur a pas été accordé. Pour saint Prosper, si l'homme n'est point sauvé, c'est parce qu'il n'a point mérité le salut; il ne pêche pas parce qu'il a été prédestiné à pécher, mais il n'a pas été prédestiné parce que Dieu avait prévu qu'il pécherait." cf. Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine p. 296.

⁵"Like Augustine he considers that the predestination of the elect is gratuitous, but he thinks that reprobation is a consequence of personal sins foreseen by God." Cayré, Patrology II, p. 190.

⁶Tixeront, Histoire des Dogmes p. 285.

⁷Jacquin, "Question de la prédestination" Rev. D'His. Eccl., VII, p. 293.

⁸Garrigou-Lagrange, "La Prédestination," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XIII:2, col. 2898.

⁹"Prosper décrit la prédestination comme postérieure à la prescience...Au lieu de conclure...que Prosper abandonne l'augustinisme, n'aurait on pas du examiner de plus près les textes augustinien et corriger l'interprétation exagérée

is the only Augustinian scholar who denies that Prosper preaches non-predestination post praevisa demerita. This scholar sees no opposition between the two men on any key issue.¹⁰

The question therefore is this: does there exist any real opposition between Augustine and Prosper on the problem of non-predestination.

In the works of Prosper there are five apparently clear passages upon which most scholars argue their case in favor of the Prosperian doctrine of non-predestination post praevisa demerita. Four of the five are found in the Answers to the Gauls,¹¹ and the other in the Answers to the Vincentian Articles.¹² The gist of all five statements is that God does not predestine to eternal life certain individual souls because he infallibly foresees what sins they will freely commit.

qu'on avait acceptée?" cf. Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I:2, col. 2526.

¹⁰Lorenz, "Der Augustinismus Prospers Aquitanien," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, LXXIIX (1962), pp. 217-252.

¹¹"...Ideo praedestinati non sunt, quia tales futuri ex voluntaria praevaricatione praesciti sunt." Resp. ad Cap. Gal., III, 207, col. 158; "...quia illos ruitoros propria ipsorum voluntate praescivit, et ob hoc a filiis perditionis nulla praedestinatione discrevit." Ibid., VII, 210, 161; "Vires itaque obedientiae non idea cuiquam subtraxit, quia eum praedestinavit; sed ideo eum non praedestinavit, quia recessuram ab ipsa obedientia esse praevitit." Ibid., XII, 216, col. 167; "Et quia hoc ipsos voluntaria facturos defectione praevitit, ideo in praedestinationis electione illos non habuit." Sententia super VII, 220, col. 171.

¹²"Et quia praesciti sunt casuri, non sunt praedestinati." Responsiones ad Capitula Objectionum Vincentianarum, XVII, 236, col. 184.

As has been indicated, this does not seem to be Augustine's doctrine. Although Augustine does not develop or state succinctly and clearly a theory of non-predestination ante praevisa demerita, he is constantly implying it,¹³ so regularly in fact that all scholars agree that such is Augustine's view. Therefore, it would seem that the Master and his disciple are at odds on this issue.

Curiously enough, however, in his preface to the Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, where the four excerpts of post praevisa leanings are found, Prosper declares his fidelity to the Doctor of grace. "I shall faithfully keep to the points of doctrine which the saintly man has expounded in his tracts."¹⁴ Valentin, who is the first to see opposition between Prosper and Augustine, observes this statement by Prosper and comments that he lost his objective when meeting the enemy on the battle field. Instead of defending Augustine's doctrine, he contorts it, and merits repudiation from the doctor of grace rather than praise.¹⁵ It may well be that Valentin can decipher Augustine more accurately

¹³De Correctione et Gratia, VIII-IX, 927-928, p. 310.

¹⁴"In nullo recedens a tramite earum definitiorum quae in sancti viri disputationibus continenter..." Praefatio, Resp. ad Cap. Obj. Gal., 204, col. 1.

¹⁵"...Il a changé d'objectif en arrivant sur le champ de bataille. Le nom de saint Augustin n'est plus prononcé... Mais cette controverse nous réserve une surprise plus piquante encore. Je crois que si saint Augustin avait vécu, il aurait désavoué son défenseur. Sans doute, les adversaires dénatureraient sa doctrine en l'aggravant; mais, lui, l'altérerait en l'adoucissant." Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine p. 296.

than can the disciple regarded as his most faithful and competent interpreter. Still, if Prosper insists that he will be faithful to the thought of the master, it can be assumed that he is at least attempting to do so. It can be assumed that it is not his intention to abandon his teacher at the first sign of an enemy as Valentin suggests. Consequently, unless it can be proved otherwise, it must be affirmed that the two Fathers have an identity of doctrine on the points under discussion.

Now, since Augustine ascribes reprobation to man's sins as a true cause of this malediction, but does not find in sin the absolute answer as to why an individual soul is lost, he appears to be postulating two solutions: one immediate and secondary, the other mediate and primary. It is, therefore, on these two levels that the thought of Prosper and Augustine must be investigated.

The first question is therefore: does there exist opposition between the two Fathers on the immediate level. In one passage of the Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum regarded as a statement of the doctrine of non-predestination consequent upon the foreknowledge of demerits, Prosper declares that man first abandons God. "God's omnipotence could, it is true, have given the strength to stay faithful to those who were to sin; yet, His grace did not forsake them before they themselves forsook Him. It is because God foresaw that they would do so through their own fault that He did not include them among the elect that were

predestined."¹⁶ But, surprisingly enough, Augustine says the same thing in a similar text in the De Correptione et Gratia. Speaking about the non-elect he writes: "Either they receive the grace of God, but are inconsistent and do not persevere; they abandon God and are abandoned: because of a just and secret judgment of God they have been abandoned to their free choice, without having received the gift of perseverance."¹⁷

Both authors are admitting substantially the same thing, namely, that if man is abandoned, God is not to blame because he abandons only after he has first been rejected. Yet, both Fathers suggest a deeper, more ultimate solution. Prosper explains that if God had so wished he could have provided the strength whereby the sinner would not have sinned. Augustine, on the other hand, speaks of the sinner as having been abandoned by God to his free will when he could have received the gift of perseverance in its stead.

An unbiased reading of these two passages renders the impression that both authors are attempting to communi-

¹⁶"Quamvis enim omnipotentia Dei potuerit vires standi praebere lapsuris, gratia tamen ejus non prius eos deseruit quam ab eis desereretur. Et quia hoc ipsos voluntaria facturos defectione praevidit, ideo in praedestinationis electione illos non habuit." Obj. ad Cap. Gal., sententia super VII, 220, col. 171. Translation by De Letter, Defense of Augustine, pp. 158-159.

¹⁷"Aut gratiam Dei suscipiunt, sed temporales sunt, nec perseverant; deserunt et deseruntur. Dimissi enim sunt libero arbitrio, non accepto perseverantiae dono, iudicio Dei isto et occulto." Augustine, De Correptione et Gratia, XIII, 942, p. 366.

cate essentially the same doctrine. The only difference is that Prosper seems to focus his sights more specifically upon the immediate solution to the problem of non-predestination, and Augustine to have his sights geared to a more ultimate solution. In other words, Prosper seems more interested in the fact that men cause their own damnation through their sinning; Augustine, on the contrary, seems more interested in God's role, or lack of it.

Some authors, of course, will object that though Augustine and Prosper both regard the sins of man to be causative of damnation on an immediate level, only Prosper seems to regard the foreknowledge of this evil to be the basis of non-predestination. This might be true and it might not. Most probably Prosper's statements to this effect are simply an attempt at expressing Augustine's difficult doctrine. Fifteen centuries later, J. Chéné, in an effort to make clear Augustine's doctrine of reprobation, seems to run into the same difficulty. He writes: "Those only are destined from all eternity to be condemned that God has foreseen to become sinners; and it is upon the foreknowledge of these demerits for which on the sinners are responsible, that is founded (his emphasis) the reprobation that God pronounces upon them."¹⁸

¹⁸"Seuls sont voués de toute éternité à la condamnation ceux dont Dieu a prévu qu'ils seraient pécheurs et c'est sur la prévision de ce démerité, dont ils sont seuls responsables, qu'est fondée la réprobation que Dieu prononce sur eux." J. Chéné, La Théologie de Saint Augustin - Grâce et Prédestination (Lyon 1961), p. 80.

Hence, it seems probable that Prosper is not trying, despite the wording of his statement to the contrary, to place non-predestination on conditional grounds—the grounds of the foreknowledge of demerits—but rather simply to affirm with Augustine that demerits, that sins do cause in a true but secondary way man's damnation. L. S. Pelland agrees with this interpretation. He sees the quia of Prosper's statement: "It is because (quia) God foresaw that they would do so through their own fault that He did not include them among the elect that were predestined," to mean not the basis upon which God would not-elect a soul, but the basis upon which an observer can gain insight as to whether or not a soul is among the elect. "They fall off, thus they are not predestined."¹⁹

That Prosper does not regard the foreknowledge of man's sins as the ultimate reason why some men are not predestined is obvious from those passages where Prosper insists that man's will cannot be a true obstacle to God's intent. It is true declares Prosper that some people do not respond to the gospel because of their evil and fierce ways. But this answer is only a partial solution for it is obvious that God has transformed the most corrupt of hearts and so could transform these hearts as well.²⁰ To prove

¹⁹"Sie fallen ab, also sind sie nicht prädestiniert," cf. Lorenz, "Der Augustinismus" Zeits. für Kirchen., LXXIII, p. 245; cf. also Pelland S. Prosperi Aquitani pp. 88-91; for the Latin text cf. footnote number 11.

²⁰Epistola ad Rufinum, XV, 96, col. 86.

that in the last analysis it is not the will of man that determines whether he is to be saved or not, Prosper argues from the case of young infants. Some infants are baptized, he says, and these are saved. Others never receive this blessing and so never attain eternal glory. Obviously it cannot be said that in the case of infants, God foresaw their crimes, for the poor infants never had the opportunity to commit any sins.²¹

In the Answers to the Gauls, Prosper insists that to regard the wills and actions of men as the basis for the decrees and judgments of God is to declare that predestination is not a mystery, is to affirm that God is not God but a being whose ways are comprehensible. One who would say that predestination is dependent on the foreknowledge of merits or demerits of men attempts a solution to the problem before which St. Paul humbly acknowledged insufficiency. He means to say that grace is rendered for merit, or held back because of demerit.²² All this is contrary to fact.

²¹"Et si majoribus natu (quod non recte dicitur) mala opera quae libero arbitrio commiserant obfuerant, quasi boni, non mali gratia liberentur, inter salvatos parvulos et non salvatos parvulos, quae meritorum potuit esse discretio? quid istos introduxit in regnum Dei? quid istos exclusit a Dei regno? Equidem si meritum consideres, non una pars salvati meruit..." Epis. ad Ruf., XIII, 95, col. 85.

²²"Causas vero operum et judiciorum Dei, qui^{ex}toto ad humanas voluntates et actiones refert...et dispensationes Dei ex liberi arbitrii vult mutabilitate variari, profiteatur sibi scrutabilia iudicia Dei et vestigabiles vias ejus (Rom. XI, 33): et quod doctor gentium Paulus non audebat attingere, hic se existimat reseratum posse vulgare: quodque non minoris impietatis est, ipsam gratiam, qua salvamur, aut bonis meritis docet rependi, aut malis affirmat arceri," Resp. ad Cap. Gal., VIII, 211-212, cols. 162-163.

In the face of this affirmation by Prosper, Valentin is troubled. He cannot see how Prosper can oppose himself to Augustine by establishing the foreknowledge of the demerits of men to be the why of their non-election and still refuse to see in the desires and actions of men a cause of God's eternal judgments. He writes:

How to reconcile that highly categorical passage of Prosper where he forbids one to present the wills and actions of men as causes of the actions and judgments of God..with that affirmation which fills the Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, that those who are not predestined have not been excluded from predestination for any other reason than because God had foreseen that they would live. ²³

The answer to Valentin's confusion seems to lie in this that Prosper is not speaking on an ultimate level when he credits reprobation to the evil of men. He is offering only an immediate solution. To affirm otherwise is to necessitate an open contradiction in Prosper's thought.

An analysis of the contexts in which the five post praevisa demerita texts are found renders the same conclusion. In chapter 12 of the Answers to the Gauls, Prosper concludes that God does not withdraw the grace of obedience because of non-predestination. He insists rather that non-predestination is the result of God's having foreseen man's

²³"...Comment accorder le passage si catégorique où il défend de donner les volontés et les actions des hommes pour cause des oeuvres et des jugements de Dieu... avec cette affirmation, qui remplit les Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum, que ceux qui ne sont point prédestinés n'ont été exclus de la prédestination que parce que Dieu avait prévu qu'ils pêcheraient." Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine p. 298..

swerving from obedience.²⁴ But the context suggests that Prosper is simply trying to shake the unfair accusation of the semi-Pelagians that, among those converted to faith, there will be some that God will suddenly starve of grace in order to drive them to disobedience.²⁵ Prosper retorts that this is untrue. God foreknows evil but does not commit it, does not inspire it or drive men to it.²⁶ This is the only message Prosper is attempting to communicate. If he makes use of a post praevisa language this is simply his way of making a point clear. The proof of this lies in Prosper's summary of this article (article twelve) which is found in the second half of his tract against the Gauls. Here Prosper insists that God in no way causes evil, and that men alone are responsible for their evil ways. Yet, not once, does he suggest that non-predestination is consequent upon the foreknowledge of demerits.²⁷

²⁴ Resp. ad Cap. Gal., XII, 216, col. 167.

²⁵ "quod quibusdam vocatis, et pie justeque viventibus, obedientia subtrahatur, ut obedire desistant." Ibid.

²⁶ "Sed in talem sensum trahuntur qui putant in omnibus hoc esse praescientiam Dei quod et voluntatem: cum voluntates ejus numquam velit nisi bona, praescientia autem et bona noverit et mala: sed bona quae aut ipse faciat, aut etiam ut nos faciamus impertit: mala autem quae omnino ipse non fecit, neque fieri suasit, aut impolit." Ibid.

²⁷ "Item qui dicit quod quibusdam vocatis, et pie justeque viventibus, obedientia subtrahatur, ut obedire desistant, male opinatur de bonitate Dei atque justitia, ut videatur ad impietatem pios cogere, et innocentiam bonis adimere, cum ipse sit pictatis atque innocentiae et largitor et custos. Qui ergo Deo adhaeret, Spiritu Dei agitur: qui autem a Deo recedit, propria voluntate obedire disistit." Ibid. Sententia super XII (contains the entire text) 222, col. 173.

In the same work, in chapter three, Prosper states that the reason certain souls are not predestined is that God foresaw their freely willed impenitence.²⁸ But to show that such is the immediate solution and not the ultimate, he adds that God could have called them from this world at a time when they were faithful but did not due to a reason which remains veiled to men, a reason which remains hidden in the mystery of God's justice.²⁹ Similarly in chapter seven he seems to be ascribing non-predestination to God's foreknowledge of demerits.³⁰ But, here again he suggests that this is not the ultimate answer for he points out that in his justice God chose not to grant to these souls that gift of perseverance which he decided to bestow upon others. Obviously he could have granted them this gift but he did not. He exercised his privilege to give to whom-ever he pleases what he pleases.³¹ The same thing holds true in Prosper's summary to this chapter. Here Prosper points out clearly that God's omnipotence could have provided

²⁸Ibid., III, 207, col. 158.

²⁹"Quod autem illos non eo tempore quo in fide recta et bonis moribus erant, ab hac vita deUS obstulit, ad occulta ejus judicia, quae tamen numquam sunt injusta, referendum est." Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., VII, 210, col. 161.

³¹"Cum autem dubium non sit donum Dei esse perseverantiam in bono usque ad finem, quam istos, ex eo ipso quod non perseveraverunt; non habuisse manifestum est; non est calumniandum Deo, quare istis non dederit quod aliis dedit; sed confitendum est et misericorditer eum dedisse quod dedit, et juste non dedisse quod non dedit..." Ibid., 210-211, cols. 161-162.

the strength to stay faithful even to those sinners that he did not elect.³² Finally, in the one passage which suggests non-predestination post praevisa demerita appearing in the Responsiones ad Capitula Vincentianarum,³³ the obvious intent of Prosper is to explain that God's predestination is never to evil;³⁴ if men are damned it is through their own fault.³⁵ His intention is not to present the sins of men as the ultimate answer why they are non-predestined.

If it is true that God refrains from predestining certain souls to heaven because he foresees their refusal to cooperate with his grace this is not the final, not the ultimate answer why they are not saved. For the ultimate reason why they refuse to cooperate with his grace is because He has not granted them a grace by which they would in fact cooperate.³⁶ And the reason he has not granted

³²"Quamvis enim omnipotentia Dei potuerit vires standi praebere lapsoris..." Ibid., sententia super VII^a, 220, col. 171.

³³Resp. ad Cap. Obi. Vinc., XII, 236, col. 183.

³⁴Vincent was saying that according to the doctrine on predestination espoused by Augustine and Prosper, God was the author of the worst evils. The objection of Vincent reads: "Quod quando incestant patres filios et matres filios, vel quando servi dominos occidunt, ideo fiat, quia ita Deus praedestinavit ut fieret." Ibid., XI, 235, col. 183.

³⁵"Si diabolo objiceretur quod talium facinorum ipse auctor, ipse esset incentor; puto quod aliqua ratione exonerare se hac posset invidia, et talium scelerum patratore de ipsorum voluntate convinceret..." Ibid., 236, col. 183.

³⁶If Adam before the fall had need of a grace "sine quo non" to perform good acts and to attain Beatitude, he

them such a grace lies solely within the mystery of God.³⁷ Consequently, though God is in nowise positively responsible for the sins of man, in him lies the ultimate answer why man is not predestined to salvation; in him lies the ultimate answer why the sinner was not made freely to become just. Such a doctrine is identical to the teachings of the Bishop of Hippo.

If, therefore, Prosper has remained faithful to his word and has not deviated from the doctrine of his master, despite Valentin's statement to the contrary, a question still remains. Why does Prosper make use of a post praevisa demerita terminology.

This is a difficult question. But a clue to the answer might be found in this fact that all five excerpts of Prosper under discussion occur either in the Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum or in the Responsiones ad Capitula Objectionum Vincentianarum. Now, these two works constitute the heart of Prosper's attack against the semi-Pelagians.³⁸ Prosper is under fire. He is trying to present

did not need an "auxilium quo"— a grace by which he would be infallibly drawn to his salvation. But, man after the fall, wounded in his nature, cannot perform even the meagerest task worthy of merit without God's help. God must grant him even the very will to do good. cf. Augustine, De Correptione et Gratia, XII, 936-937, p. 344.

³⁷"Cur autem illum retineat, illum non retineat; nec possibile est comprehendere, nec licitum vestigare; cum scire sufficiat, et ab illo esse quod statur, et non ab illo esse quod ruitur." Ibid., XIV, 238, col. 185.

³⁸Actually the Contra Collatorem must be included also but it does not concern itself so directly with the problem of predestination.

Augustine's doctrine in the best light possible. Before the heat of the controversy, when Prosper wrote the Epistola ad Rufinum, and the Responsiones ad Excerpta Genuensium, he never made use of a language that suggested a theory of non-predestination consequent upon the foreknowledge of demerits. Again, when the controversy has calmed and Prosper composes the De Vocatione Omnium Gentium there will be no question of post praevisa terminology. But, during the heat of the controversy the situation is perilous for the doctrine of Augustine. And so Prosper finds it necessary to use any normal means available to present the doctrine of the Master in a favorable light. The use of post praevisa language appears to him to be such a valid means.

On this point, it is important to note that before the heat of the controversy had arisen, and Prosper was writing a letter to two of his friends in the Answer to the Extracts of the Genoise, Prosper points out that Augustine himself toned down his own doctrine of predestination in order to make it acceptable. He explains that when instructing the faithful on the problem of predestination, the Doctor of grace avoids difficult language. He does all in his power to make his doctrine palatable.³⁹ He avoids, for instance, a statement such as: "And you who presently obey, if you have been predestined to be among the number of the rejected, the strength which renders you obedient

³⁹"Quam corrigens et mundans atque emedans, tolerabiliorem audientibus facit; quae vera sunt temperans..."
Resp. ad Exc. Gen., IX, 254, col. 199.

will be someday withdrawn from you, and you will then cease to obey."⁴⁰ He does so not because it is inaccurate, for it is not inaccurate says Augustine, but because it is too difficult to accept.⁴¹

Augustine, then, deemed it correct to tone down his teachings so as to gear them more appropriately to the feebleness of man. Cannot his disciple do likewise without becoming unfaithful to his master! If Prosper does have the right to imitate his Master in normal circumstances, then it would seem that he has an even greater right in a situation of hostility. But the context in which Prosper composes his Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum and his Responsiones ad Capitula Objectionum Vincentianarum is one of greatest hostility. Consequently, should Prosper be accused of deviating from the doctrine of Augustine because he tones down his doctrine in difficult times, then clearly Augustine too must be accused of infidelity to himself especially since his toning down of his doctrine occurred in rather normal circumstances.

Of course it might be objected that the toning down of Augustine's doctrine by Prosper is a matter of opinion. But such an objection does not stand up. First of all it

⁴⁰Augustine, De Dono Perseverantiae, XXII, 1030, p. 744.

⁴¹"Nempe hoc verissimum est: ita sane, sed improbissimum est: ita sane, sed improbissimum, importunissimum, incongruentissimum; non falso eloquio, sed non salubriter valetudine humanae infirmitates apposito." Ibid., pp. 746 and 748.

has already been shown that Prosper presents Augustine's doctrine of predestination in less harsh a manner than his master. In addition, there is a very clear, very specific example to this effect in Prosper's Contra Collatorem. Augustine often insisted that only those who were called to salvation, only those guided by the power of predestination could be saved. This method of commenting upon the words of Christ as related by St. John: "No one can come to me if he has not been drawn by my Father," (VI: 44) produces a negative impression in the reader. Prosper presents the same doctrine in more positive terms. He explains that if no one comes to Christ save those so guided by the Father, then all those who approach Our Lord have enjoyed Paternal guidance. This guidance, he explains, can come by means of contemplation upon the beauty of the universe; it can come from a reading of historical novels written on Christ and his miracles; it can even come from fear and joy and desire.⁴² Prosper is thus faithful to Augustine's doctrine.

One reason, therefore, why Prosper may have used post praevisa terminology is that he intended to present Augustine's doctrine in as favorable a light as possible, even at the expense of altering momentarily the emphasis of Augustine, and so toning down, to some extent, the doctrine of the Master. In addition to this explanation there

⁴²Contra Collatorem, VII, 323, cols. 230-231. For a brilliant translation of Prosper's paraphrase of St. John VI, 44 cf. Plinval, "Prosepr d'Aquitaine Interprète," Recherches Augustiniennes, I, p. 350.

is an other possible reason why Prosper might have used the language he chose to use. Valentin has found evidence which might seem to indicate that Prosper is not especially interested in priorities. He speaks, for example, of Pope Innocent as having condemned the Pelagian heresy before the Bishops of the Orient and those of Africa. In fact, however, the Bishops of Africa were the first to pronounce condemnations; these were followed by several other conciliar condemnations; and only after all of these condemnations did Pope Innocent intervene to condemn the heresy himself.⁴³ Consequently, Prosper's statement, from an historical point of view, is false. Does this mean that Prosper is a poor historian? Not necessarily, even though Père Langueval thinks so.⁴⁴ Valentin presents several arguments that might explain this apparent historical deficiency in Prosper. One of the explanations he gives as possible although not necessarily probable is the following. Since the official authority of a council (or many councils together) is obtained only after Papal confirmation of the council's decrees, the council itself might be regarded as made up of two distinct parts. On the one hand there is all the discussion of the bishops and the conclusions they arrive at. On the other hand there is Papal recognition of their efforts

⁴³"Cinq conciles avaient déjà eu lieu quand elle [Papacy] intervint dans la personne d'Innocent Ier, qui réunit un concile à Rome en 417...Le premier concile contre les pélagiens fut tenu à Carthage (412) sous la présidence d'Aurèle..." cf. Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine p. 231.

⁴⁴Ibid.

and especially of their conclusions. Consequently, since a council is incomplete until the Pope intervenes to approve of the conclusions reached, in a sense, the Papacy can be regarded as having first intervened.⁴⁵ In this case Pope Innocent can be regarded as having condemned the Pelagian heresy before the councils of Africa, since his condemning of the heresy made complete the action of the councils that preceded his action.

This explanation is obviously quite subtle. Valentin presents others in an effort to justify Prosper's confusion of historical dates, facts etc. But the explanations he renders appear hardly less subtle. They appear to contort an obvious truth, namely, that Prosper is indifferent about historical priorities.

The question is: can the indifference which Prosper manifests toward historical priorities be transferred to the realm of theology. In other words, is Prosper just as indifferent to theological priorities as he is to historical ones. If so, might this be an answer as to why Prosper seems to give priority to God's foreknowledge of man's demerits over his decree of predestination, when in fact he agrees with Augustine that God's decree of predestination has ultimate priority. There is a passage in the Answers to the Extracts of the Genoese which suggests that foreknowledge is not the basis of predestination but its accompaniment;

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 235

in fact, it constitutes part of it.⁴⁶ This seems to suggest a lack of concern for the whole problem; either that, or it points to a mild contradiction. The probability is that Prosper holds the view that the whole problem revolves around a "precision of little worth to piety,"⁴⁷ as Bossuet would later phrase it. Consequently, if the question of technical priority becomes a stumbling block to Christians then it would give way to an acceptable formulation.

A final possibility for explaining Prosper's post praevisa terminology is suggested by Pickman. He argues that the variations that exist between the doctrines of Prosper and Augustine are but deceptive baits set up by Prosper to lure the Gauls away from their delusions.⁴⁸ This position is supported by the fact that Prosper wrote in verse as well as in prose. Poetry for him served as a

⁴⁶"Agnoscamus itaque sapienter, pieque fateamur, praescisse incommutabiliter Deum quibus esset daturus ut crederent, aut quos daturus esset Filio suo, ut ex eis non perderet quemquam; et si si haec praescivit, beneficia sua illum quibus nos dignatur liberare praescisse; et hanc esse praedestinationem sanctorum, praescientiam scilicet et praeparationem gratiae Dei, qua certissime liberantur." Resp. ad Exc. Gen., VIII, 251, col. 197; Valentin writes about this passage: "...La prescience ne précède pas; n'inspire pas la prédestination; elle l'accompagne..." Valentin, Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, p. 305.

⁴⁷"...Ce qu'on dispute dans l'Ecole, c'est à savoir si le décret de donner la gloire à un élu précède ou suit d'un instant, qu'on appelle de nature ou de raison, la connaissance de leurs bonnes oeuvres futures et des grâces qui les leur font operer; ce qui n'est qu'une précision peu nécessaire à la piété..." Bossuet, Defense de la Tradition p. 445. By his manner of exposing the problem, Bossuet indicates that he misses the point, however.

⁴⁸Pickman, Latin Christendom, p. 424.

snare in which the average, or indifferent reader could be captured.⁴⁹

Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that Prosper did seem to render the foreknowledge of demerits as the basis for non-predestination. But, in so doing he did not regard himself as dealing with the ultimate solution as to why one man is saved and the other is not. He was operating on an immediate level. And on this level he agrees with Augustine. The ultimate solution he regarded as lying only within the mystery of God. Here again he is in accord with the Bishop of Hippo.

⁴⁹cf. Raby, A History of Poetry, p. 85.

CHAPTER 6

THE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN GOD'S
UNIVERSAL SAVING INTENT AND
PREDESTINATION

According to Prosper of Aquitaine, the ultimate answer why some men are saved and others are not, lies within the mystery of God. It is God who gratuitously selects certain souls and guides them freely step by step toward salvation. Through an unmerited grace which brings them to cooperate freely in the struggle for sanctification these souls are guided to an eternal reward which itself must be regarded as a gratuitous gift. This infallible guidance toward salvation, known as predestination, is not granted all men. Nonetheless, Prosper affirms that God wills in a very true sense the salvation of all men even the non-predestined, who will freely damn themselves. How can this be. If God truly wills the salvation of all men, then God must surely provide at least adequate means for even the non-predestined to reach their reward. The question therefore is: Does God provide all men with the adequate or sufficient means for them to attain eternal beatitude, according to St. Prosper. What the problem amounts to is this: is the doctrine of predestination as espoused by Prosper logically

compatible with his view that God intends to save every man.

In the investigation of this problem it would be unfair to focus one's sights simply on those passages where Prosper speaks of grace by name, for example, in the expression "generalis gratia." It is necessary also to investigate those passages where he speaks of generalia dona, generalis bonitas, auxilium doctrina, etc. And the reason is this. For Prosper as well as for Augustine and even the semi-Pelagians grace signified efficacious grace. The only concept of grace that they had was one that infallibly or necessarily yet contingently and freely produced assent, produced success.¹ Consequently, in speaking of a grace that modern theology would regard as authentic, even though only adequate, "sufficient" and not efficacious, Prosper could not regard such as grace in the strict sense without deviating from the accepted concept of grace in the fifth century.

In the light of this clarification, there appear to be many texts in the De Vocatione where Prosper suggests a universal grace. He declares in one passage that as far as he is concerned mankind as a whole never lacked the

¹De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 18.

care of Divine Providence.² In another context he speaks of gifts from Divine Providence that are bestowed on all men without discrimination.³ Again, he points out that if at present all men receive general help, such is not different from the situation that has always prevailed.⁴ Even the Gentiles of the past have enjoyed God's loving care. If they might validly be regarded to some extent as castaways this is so only when they are compared to the chosen people. For always have the Gentiles benefited from both the obvious as well as the hidden mercies of the Lord.⁵ The fact is God manifests his mercies in varying degrees to different nations and to different individuals. But, he manifests them to all men.⁶ If, after the Resurrection of Christ, the grace of God is spread out more abundantly, even in past ages did the world benefit from

²"Quamvis ergo haec et multa similia veritatis Scriptura pronuntiet, secundum ipsam tamen credimus, et piissime confitemur, quod numquam universati hominum divinae providentiae cura defuerit..." De Vocatione Liber I, VI, 851 col. 652.

³"Beneficiis quae providentia Dei universis impendit." Ibid., Liber II, XXV, 93 col. 711.

⁴"Quibus tamen illa mensura generalis auxiliū, quae de super omnibus semper hominibus est praebita, non negatur..." Ibid., XVII, 906, col. 704.

⁵"Qui quidem in comparisonem electorum videntur abjecti, sed numquam sunt a manifestis occultis beneficiis abdicati." Ibid., IV, 891, col. 690.

⁶"Et...misericordiam suam universis hominibus declaravit..." Ibid., IX, 895, col. 694

its help.⁷

In addition to these texts that suggest a universal grace, there are others that state this truth quite explicitly. In Chapter 25, book II, Prosper writes: "With his general grace given to all, God always wills and has willed all men to be saved; but his special grace is not granted to all."⁸ And in the same chapter after distinguishing between special grace and general grace, St. Prosper says:

And just as there can be no doubt about His general kindness to all men, so also there would be nothing astounding concerning His special mercies. Consequently, the former would appear to be a grace, while the latter would not. But God was pleased to grant this latter grace to many and to withhold the former from no one.⁹

Hence, it cannot be doubted that, according to Prosper, God grants grace to all men, to every man taken individually with no exceptions. "God was pleased...to withhold the former from no one."

But the vital question remains: what kind of grace

⁷"Sed ne in praeteritis quidem saeculis haec eadem gratia (quae post Domini nostri Jesu Christi resurrectionem ubique diffusa est, et de qua scriptum est, 'Illuxerunt coruscationes tuae orbi terrae' [Psal. LXXVI, 19]) defuit mundo." Ibid., IV, 890, col. 689.

⁸Ibid., XXV, 912, col. 710. Translation by De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 133. "Deum ab generalem gratiam omni tempore velle omnes salvos fieri; at particulari gratia quosdam tantum."

⁹Ibid., XXV, 913, col. 711. Trans. by De Letter, Ibid., p. 134. "Et quam nulla est ambiguitas de benignitate generali, tam de speciali misericordia nihil quod stupendum esset existeret; ac proinde illa esset gratia, ista non esset. Deo autem placuit et hanc multis tribuere, et illam a nemine submovere..."

is Prosper referring to. Is he referring to a purely external grace as had done the Pelagians.¹⁰ Or, is he referring to a true internal grace — a grace as the term is understood today — which, though not productive of salvation in itself, still renders the individual soul an adequate assistance to overcome evil and to work toward beatitude. Although it might seem hardly likely that Prosper would assume terminology so vehemently condemned by Augustine,¹¹ some authors insist that the references to universal grace in Prosper's De Vocatione are simply references to external aids, in no wise comparable to what modern theology refers to as "sufficient" grace. Capéran says that the universal grace of the De Vocatione is at least exterior, but nothing indicates it is more. Curiously, however, he adds in the same breath, that sinners and idolaters are alone responsible for their sins and resulting reprobation.¹² It does not seem to dawn on him that true guilt presupposes the means to do other than what one has done worthy of guilt. Is this sufficient means other than, different from adequate or "sufficient"

¹⁰"...L'on pourrait se demander si le spectacle de la création est un secours purement naturel et extérieur, tel que le concevaient les pélagiens." Amann, "Semi-Pélagiens," Dict. de Theo. Cat., XIV. 2, col. 1831.

¹¹Cf. Augustine, De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio, pp. 90-207.

¹²Capéran, Problème du Salut des Infidèles, p. 143. "Du moins voyons-nous que des grâces générales, consistant en des secours providentiels extérieurs, n'ont été refusées à personne, et que les idolâtres et les pécheurs sont les seuls responsables de leur damnation."

grace. It does not seem probable. In any case Father De Letter seems to share C aperan's opinion. He writes:

"Hardly more than Augustine does he [Prosper] consider sufficient grace offered to all, and without this there can be no universal salvific will..."¹³ This statement is nebulous. It presupposes that Augustine did not consider the idea of sufficient grace, or if he did, did so sparingly. The fact is that Augustine did not make a study of sufficient grace as such, nor did he regard it as particularly important. But he was aware of it and always presupposed it in his writings. At least this is the opinion of Charles Boyer,¹⁴ J. Besse,¹⁵ and Karl Rahner,¹⁶ to name but a few authorities. Consequently, to affirm that Prosper does not consider sufficient grace any more than did his master can easily mean that he at least presupposes it in his writings. Clearer than either of these two authors, Ellies du Pin states that the universal grace of Prosper is but external. He writes: "It is true that for him [Prosper] this grace is nothing but natural assistance..."¹⁷

¹³De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 17.

¹⁴Boyer, "Le Syst eme de S. Augustin," Rech. de Sci. Rel., XX p. 500.

¹⁵Besse, "Augustin," Dict. de Th eo. Cat., I. 2, col. 2407.

¹⁶Rahner, "Augustin und semipelagianismus," Zeitschr. Kath. Theol. pp. 181 and 185. On page 185 Rahner quotes several passages from Augustine to prove this point.

¹⁷Du Pin, "Saint Prosper," Nouv. Bibl. Des Aut. Eccl., III, 2 p. 192. "Il est vrai que par cette gr ace il n'entend que les secours naturels..."

If du Pin's statement were accurate then the universal grace of which Prosper speaks would not be akin to what modern theologians call sufficient grace for it would have no value in drawing men to their beatitude. Prosper insinuates as much in his Letter to Rufinus when he points out that if natural gifts had been sufficient for salvation, then in modern times where there is considerably more efficient use of such divine blessings the number of the elect should have certainly increased immeasurably more than it has.¹⁸

Such, however, is the opinion of only a few theologians. Many others hold an opposite view. To them the general grace of which Prosper speaks is not only external, but internal, and as such, can have a true value in one's advance toward God, in much the same way as can "sufficient" grace. Among the older scholars the Ballerini brothers and Quesnel held this opinion.¹⁹ More recently Bossuet wrote of Prosper's universal grace: "It is therefore not simply an external sign; it is more; it is the interior grace and the inspiration of the Holy-spirit that is rendered to all men."²⁰ Cappuyns, in an effort to prove that

¹⁸"Cum utique si eis vel naturalis intelligentia, vel usus beneficiorum Dei ad capessendam vitam aeternam sufficere potuisset, nostro etiam tempore rationalis nos contemplatio, et temperies aeris, et fructum copia, ciborumque salvaret: quia scilicet melius natura utentes, creatorem nostrum propter quotidiana ipsius dona coleremus." Epistola ad Rufinum, XI, 94, col. 84.

¹⁹De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 209.

²⁰Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition, p. 524. "Ce n'est donc pas seulement l'avertissement extérieur, c'est encore la grâce intérieure et l'inspiration du St. Esprit qui s'étend à tous les hommes."

Prosper is the author of the De Vocatione, argues that the references to universal grace in those works of Prosper generally regarded as authentic contain more than simply a natural invitation to serve God. The external blessings are just so many vehicles for the transmission of supernatural grace as in the De Vocatione.²¹ Amann suggests that all evidence points to the conclusion that Prosper wished to make of general grace a true internal, supernatural grace.²² L. Capéran seems to suggest the same when he writes: "There is no one who does not receive either by means of the Gospel, or the Law, or of nature, an appropriate assistance."²³ At least Portalié interprets him in this manner.²⁴ But as has already been shown, it is more likely that Capéran holds an opposite view.²⁵

In the De Vocatione Prosper seems to distinguish two forms of grace: the one given all men which is adequate for salvation, will not in fact make it to pass that the soul benefitting from it actually attains his eternal glory; the other, which is given only to some men, will in fact

²¹Cappuyns, "L'auteur du 'De Vocatione,' Revue Bénédictine, XXXIX, pp. 208-209.

²²"... Il paraît bien que l'auteur en veuille faire une vraie grâce intérieure..." Amann, "Semi-Pélagiens," Dict. de Théo. Cat., XII. 2, col. 1831.

²³Capéran, Problème du Salut p. 136. Personal translation.

²⁴Portalié, "Augustinisme," Dict. de Théo. Cat., I: 1, col. 2525. "L. Capéran voit dans le natura conveniat un secours approprié (C'est à dire suffisant) au salut, accordé à tous par l'intermédiaire de la nature."

²⁵Cf. footnote no. 12.

lead the possessor to salvation. A prelude to this distinction of graces is found in the Letter to the Gauls. Prosper tells us that he who hears the sound of the gospel message, that is, the physical words, receives a blessing. But this blessing is minute compared to the blessing of the man who not only hears the words but is transformed by them, who benefits from the good news and is enkindled with faith and charity.²⁶ The distinction reappears in the De Vocatione where St. Prosper speaks of grace as varying in measure. He speaks of it as uniform in itself, multiform in the effects it produces, and always the same when considered objectively.²⁷ And in the texts in the same work where this Father speaks of grace as being dispersed differently to different ages and individuals, this idea is reaffirmed. He says for example that it would be foolish to seek the reasons for God's unequal distribution of graces to various ages; it would be foolish for Scripture is silent on the question.²⁸ Further, he points out

²⁶"Si autem ad effectum plantationis et rigationis a plicitur, aliud actum est cum eis quorum exteriores aures corporali voce pulsatae sunt; aliud in eis quorum interiorem sensum Deus aperuit, et in quorum corde posuit fidei fundamentum dilectionisque fervorem." Resp. ad Cap. Gal., V, 209, col. 160.

²⁷"Quae etsi parciore ante atque occultior fuit, nullis tamen saeculis se negavit, virtute una, quantitate diversa, consilio incommutabili, opere multiformi." De Vocatione Liber II, V, 892, col. 691.

²⁸"Variatae per diversa tempora gratiae causa a nobis non est investiganda... Quae itaque causae sint harum subeadem gratia dissimilitudinem, quaeve rationes, sanctis Scripturis non loquentibus, quis loquetur?" Ibid., IX, 896 col. 694.

that even if the same ministers of the Lord preach an identical truth to many men, these ministers will not all be equally successful in their efforts, for it is God who determines what graces will be granted whom.²⁹ But, in chapter thirty-one of the second book of the De Vocatione Prosper is lucid on this point. He writes: "In all ages God's general goodness gave his grace to all men, but to the elect He gave His special grace."³⁰ General grace, therefore, is given all men but only the elect receive the special grace that effects salvation.

The temptation here might be to identify the special grace with a real interior supernatural help of God and to relegate gratia generalis to the level of an external help. Some of the authors pointed out might seem to have done precisely this.³¹ But a closer examination of special grace in Prosper forces one to do otherwise. In

²⁹Quamvis enim per ministros verbi et gratiae Dei eadem cunctis veritas praedicetur, eadem cohortatio adhibeatur, Dei tamen agricultura est, Dei aedificatio, cuius virtus invisibiliter agit, ut incremento proficiat quod aedificatur aut colitur. Ibid., VI, 892, col. 691.

³⁰Ibid., XXXI, 918, col. 716 Trans. De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 143.

³¹Those who deny that general grace in Prosper is true grace comparable to the modern concept of "sufficient" grace. They include Capéran, De Lettre, and Du Pin. The last author mentioned points this out the most clearly. Speaking of Prosper he writes: "Il distingue aussi deux sortes de grâces; des grâces générales qui ne sont autre chose que des secours extérieurs comme les éléments, la nature, la loi, la prédication de l'Évangile; et une grâce particulière. Les premiers sont inutiles sans celle-ci, qui ne détruit pas la nature, mais qui la répare." cf. Du Pin, "Saint Prosper," Nouv. Bibl. des Aut. Eccl., III, 2 p. 192.

chapter four of book two, Prosper speaks of the Law and the Prophets as special graces.³² But these special graces are external and as such insufficient to produce salvation. In spite of the help of these special graces many are they who refuse obedience to God's law and prefer to follow their own ambitions and sinful desires.³³ Hence, despite special graces they fall into eternal perdition. In addition to such external aids, Prosper explains that there is need of internal grace if one is to attain eternal glory.³⁴ Consequently, special help in Prosper is neither identified necessarily to the grace of predestination—which of course is an internal grace—nor is it identified with internal grace alone. It is possible, as Father De Letter points out, that Prosper uses gratia specialis in a double meaning in much the same way that the modern term "efficient" grace can be used to refer to the grace of salvation as well as to that grace by which one resists a given individual temptation.³⁵ In any case, there is no evidence of an identification in Prosper between what modern theology regards as grace, and the special aids or graces that this Father speaks of. Hence, from a negative point of view there is

³²"In praeteritis saeculis semper admonuit divina bonitas homines sui cultus per elementa: sicut populum Israel peculiariter per legem et prophetas...sed ne in praeteritis quidem saeculis haec eadem gratia..." De Vocatione, IV, 890, col. 689.

³³Ibid., IV, 891-892, col. 691.

³⁴Ibid., Liber I, VIII, 853-857, col. 654-657.

³⁵De Letter, Call of All Nations, p. 141.

nothing preventing the reader from seeing in Prosper's general grace a true grace—an internal, supernatural aid.

From a positive point of view there are several texts in Prosper which suggest that general grace is truly authentic grace. Even before composing the De Vocatione Prosper insinuated that a true adequate or sufficient grace was given all men. In the Vincentian Articles he argues against Vincent of Lerins, his opponent, that if God does not grant a sinner the grace of repentance this does not mean that he deprives him of the necessary means to raise himself up from his state of sin.³⁶ In the De Vocatione St. Prosper stresses this point more clearly when he argues from the Biblical story of Cain and Abel. God has never withheld his goodness, explains Prosper, not even in the earliest of times, not even from the cruelest of men, from those intoxicated with hate and envy. Referring to Cain as the prince of the wicked race, Prosper points out that, even when he entertained thoughts of jealousy against Abel, his saintly brother, and desired secretly to murder him, the Lord was kind to him. With fatherly advice he tried to soothe his envy. "Calm down," said the Lord, "and do not stir with wrath against thy spotless brother. Instead, admit your guilt and rid yourself of your ugly sins. If you repent I will forgive you

³⁶"Non est ergo consequens, sicut putant qui talia abjiciunt, ut Deus quibus poenitentiam non dederit, resipiscentiam abstulerit..." Resp. ad. Cap. Obj. Vinc., XV, 238, col. 185.

for your past sins and help you not to fall into still more wicked ones." Therefore, says Prosper, it is impossible to interpret these words of God in any other way than one in which we see the Father as truly willing Cain's conversion. God is telling Cain that he will render him whatever aids are necessary for repentance and conversion. Indeed such cannot be denied. God is truly working to bring Cain back to his senses, but Cain is freely refusing to cooperate.³⁷

This text is clear proof that for Prosper God always renders grace to the sinner—a grace sufficient for conversion, a grace, therefore, if cooperated with, that would aid the sinner to advance toward salvation. Another proof that, for Prosper, universal grace is truly internal, supernatural is that this Father apparently refuses to see in grace any differences of kind. He speaks of the grace of God which in modern times openly calls the Gentiles to the Kingdom of Christ, but which in past times remained hidden.³⁸ He argues that anybody who has ever been able to please God, regardless of his race, shared in one grace alone. True, this grace was less abundant with the infidel, but never was it denied any nation. All nations

³⁷De Vocatione Liber II, XIII, 899, col. 697-698.

³⁸Et cur hac manifest^one, qua nunc universis nationibus innotescit, antea revelata non fuerit..." Ibid., XIX, 908, col. 706.

shared in one identical and unchanging grace.³⁹ Now, however, it is the Jewish race that is suffering from a parsimony in grace. Nevertheless, when the waters of grace have flooded all the lands of the gentiles, then a new flood will flow upon the Jewish race. Then all men will share in this one identical grace.⁴⁰ This one grace is the grace of Christ, eternally prepared for the salvation of all nations.⁴¹ Consequently, to share in any grace is to share in that supernatural grace granted all men through the death and resurrection of Christ. General grace, then, as well as special grace has a supernatural element, even though it has also an external counterpart which may serve as a vehicle for its communication.

In addition to this evidence, however, two pas-

39" ...Quis ambigat eos qui de quibuscumque nationibus quibuslibet temporibus Deo placere potuerunt, spiritu gratiae Dei fuisse discretos? Quae etsi parcior ante atque occultior fuit, nullis tamen saeculis se negavit, virtute una, quantitate diversa, consilio incommutabili, opere multiformi." Ibid., V, 892, col. 691. The words "placere potuerunt" cause a problem here. . . Could Prosper be suggesting that some men were not capable of pleasing God! Such would appear to be an inconsistency with the rest of his doctrine.

40" ...Et quanta in praeteritis saeculis super caeteras nationes, tanta nunc esset in gente Judaea parcitas gratiae; cum tamen introducta plenitudine gentium (Rom. XI:25), etiam ipsorum ariditati earundem rigationum inundatio spondeatur. Quae itaque causae sint harum subeadem gratia dissimilitudinem, quaeve rationes, sanctis Scripturis non loquentibus, quis loquetur?" Ibid., IX, 895, col. 694.

41" ... Gratiam Dei quae ex aeterno ejus incommutabilique consilio in salutem omnium gentium disponebatur..." Ibid., XV, 902, col. 701.

sages stand out most clearly as proof that for Prosper the general grace given all men provided a truly adequate source of advance toward God and consequently could be regarded as more or less synonymous with the modern theological concept of sufficient grace. In chapter twenty-five book two of the De Vocatione, Prosper explains that by means of his general grace given all men, God has never ceased and never will to desire the salvation of all men. This can be seen from all the gifts God renders to every man without discrimination.⁴² In these gifts Prosper declares men find sufficient help to seek their Lord. "These gifts are found to be so general in the past and in the present, that men find in their testimony sufficient help to seek the true God."⁴³ The second text, which appears in Chapter fifteen, has been cited both by Bossuet⁴⁴ and Cappuyns⁴⁵ to prove that general grace in St. Prosper is truly supernatural. The word "gratia" itself is missing from the text, although it appears in the pre-

⁴²"Deum ob generalem gratiam omni tempore velle omnes salvos fieri... et hoc non aliunde monstratur quam de iis beneficiis quae providentia Dei universis generationibus communiter atque indifferenter impendit." Ibid., XXV, 912-913, col. 710-711.

⁴³"Fuerunt enim ac sunt hujusmodi dona ita generalia, ut ipsorum testimonio ad quarendum verum Deum possent homines adjuvari." Ibid., Trans. De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 133.

⁴⁴Bossuet, Défense de la Tradition, p. 525.
"Cette grâce 'que Dieu jugeoit, suffisante à la guérison de quelque' uns ne pouvait être qu'intérieure..."

⁴⁵Cappuyns, "L'Auteur," Revue Bénédictine, XXXIX, p. 204.

vious sentence. The word used by Prosper is "superna doctrina." He explains that even when this revelation was hidden it was judged by God to constitute an adequate means of salvation for all, and a means sufficient to actually produce salvation for some. "God's revelation was always imparted to all men in some measure which, even when given more sparingly and hiddenly, was yet judged sufficient by the Lord to be a saving remedy for some and a testimony unto all."⁴⁶ Consequently, it would seem that for Prosper, God truly wills the salvation of every man for he provides every man he creates with graces sufficient for him to work toward and attain salvation. It would seem also that predestination, by which God provides those special graces needed for an infallible drawing of a soul to beatitude is not incompatible with a true desire on God's part to save all of his creatures by means of a universal grace provided for this purpose.

Towards the end of the second book of the De Vocatione Prosper himself makes a valiant effort at such a reconciliation. He tells us that God effectively accomplishes in the elect what he offers to all men and what no man can strictly merit, namely, the gaining of eternal beatitude. It was ever present to God's mind that many who enjoyed his universal grace, many even who benefited from his special graces, would reject his name and choose death in

⁴⁶ De Vocatione Liber II, XV, 901-902 col. 700.
Trans. De Letter, Defense of Augustine, p. 114.

its stead. Similarly, he was aware in his infallible foreknowledge of the number of God-fearing men who would by means of his grace and through the cooperation of their own free will, enter into heavenly bliss. He foresaw that all those to whom he had promised salvation would attain this goal, unless they rejected his help and refused to live virtuously, and he was ever aware of those who were in fact his elect and that he would forever glorify above all men. Consequently, since God provides every man with sufficient grace, not even the reprobate can find a valid excuse to complain. On the other hand the elect must not boast of their own achievements. For if the damned are lost through their own fault, the elect enjoy glory through the grace of God.⁴⁷

⁴⁷"Qui sicut praescivit ante saecula, quanta totius mundi hominum multitudo vel communibus usa donis, vel specialibus adjuta praesidiis, declinans tamen ab itinere veritatis et vitae, ingressura esset latitudinem erraris et mortis: ita semper praecognitum habuit quantus piorum numerus per opem gratiae et per servitutem obedientiae ad aeternam beatitudinem pertineret: ut nullo excidente plenitudine promissorum, qui nec propectu erat fallendus, nec auxilio defuturus, eos glorificaret prae omnibus quos elegit ex omnibus. Universitati quippe hominum, quod abunde probavimus, ita multiplex atque ineffabilis bonitas Dei consulit semper et consulit, ut neque ulli pereuntium excusatio suppetat de abnegato sibi lumine veritatis, neque cuiquam sit liberum de sua justitia gloriari; eam et illos propria nequitia demergat ad poenam, et istos Dei gratia perducatur ad gloriam." Ibid., XXIX, 917, col. 715.

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this thesis to investigate the thought of Prosper Tyro of Aquitaine on predestination in order to see if this Father of the Church presents a doctrine of predestination that is intellectually compatible with a belief in God's universal saving intent, taken in the strictest and most literal sense. In other words, is there room in Prosper's concept of predestination for a belief that God, in his infinite mercy, wills all men to be saved, and in fact provides them with those adequate means by which they could be saved if they so desired. For Augustine it might seem that the concepts of predestination and God's universal will are irreconcilable. What is Prosper's position. The study of this question renders the following conclusions:

Historically it cannot be doubted any longer that Prosper of Aquitaine is the author of the De Vocatione Omnium Gentium, a work most valuable for this study because it represents Prosper's mature thought on predestination. The literary arguments of Quesnel which first created doubt as to the Prosperian authorship of this work have been rendered obsolete by the meticulous study of Joseph Young. After thoroughly analysing the vocabulary of the De Vocatione and that found

in the accepted works of Prosper and after having compared both the vocabulary and clausulae from these two sources, Dr. Young concluded that from a literary point of view at least the evidence was strong in favor of Prosperian authorship. Further, as Valentin has pointed out, the historical arguments against Prosper are feeble; and a comparison of the theological content of the works in question presents infallible evidence, says Cappuyns, that Prosper wrote the two books of the De Vocatione.

Although Prosper admits and proves that there are sufficient grounds in Scripture for validly interpreting I Tim. 2:4 in a restricted way, as had done Augustine, and, although he tends to emulate his master on this point in his earlier works, in the De Vocatione he clearly affirms that there is solid Scriptural proof in favor of a belief in God's universal saving will taken in the most literal sense. Not only is it valid to stress the truth that God wills the salvation of every single human being in a true and unqualified sense but generally it is best, says Prosper, to accentuate this fact rather than to insist upon the truth that all men will not in fact be saved. Hence, Prosper's doctrine of predestination cannot but be studied within the context of a literal universal saving intent on God's part.

Prosper distinguishes between predestination and foreknowledge or prescience. With relation to evil the distinction is obvious and clear-cut. God eternally knows what the sinner

will do but in nowise compels him to commit sin. With relation to good works the two concepts are, for all practical purposes, identical. But, in fact, there is a distinction. Predestination is foreknowledge, but not foreknowledge alone. It is foreknowledge plus the preparation of grace by which the elect will infallibly attain their eternal goal.

Salvation in its totality is a gift of God. The beginnings of salvation, namely one's conversion and the reception of faith are gifts from God. So too is one's advance toward God, and the virtues and perfections one gains. The Christian's perseverance in faith and charity are gifts also. Consequently, heaven itself must be regarded as a pure gift, since every advance in faith toward eternal glory is gratuitously granted by God.

Since predestination by definition is the infallible but contingent drawing of a soul to heaven by means of grace, there can never exist a predestination to evil or to hell. If God does not effectively will the salvation of every single soul, he can never will its damnation. To do so would be to contradict his nature which is goodness itself, which is salvation. On the contrary, if some souls are not saved it is because they do not come under God's predestination.

Further, since God is eternally present, and all things are present to him, as far as he is concerned, men have already

attained their ultimate end — heaven or hell. But God knows how many souls are actually saved, and he knows that this number is limited and cannot change. Consequently, as far as God is concerned, the number of the elect is immutably fixed and unchangeable. Prosper points this out, but generally it is for a positive end. He wishes to encourage Christians by insisting that none of those predestined to heaven can fail to attain their eternal goal.

For Prosper, man is truly free. If he cannot make use of this freedom to advance toward salvation without the help of grace, God is ever willing to grant him the grace that he asks for. If a man is not predestined to heaven his freedom is not thereby destroyed and the proof lies in the fact that the sinner is truly guilty of the evil deeds he commits. So too, the predestined soul retains his freedom for grace cannot injure man's free will. It can only grant it greater liberty. And predestination is simply the operation of grace upon the soul.

Though predestination infallibly draws a man to salvation, since it is not fatalism, it does not do so irrespective of man's cooperation. In fact the very purpose of the grace of predestination is to permit the Christian to cooperate more perfectly with the operation of God in his soul. Consequently, in a true sense, man can be said to merit his heavenly reward. And if he has lived a good life he can have the greatest confidence of receiving salvation from the God who is a just judge.

Conversely, however, since hell too is merited, a sinner can anticipate the just punishment which is awaiting him unless he is converted. The performance of good actions, then, has true causal worth in the advance of a Christian toward God; and the performance of evil deeds a causal value toward one's damnation.

For Prosper as well as for Augustine the immediate cause of damnation is the will of man. But the ultimate reason why a man is not predestined lies in the unfathomable mystery of God. Prosper believes this despite the fact that in his polemic works he sometimes seems to suggest that non-predestination is based on God's infallible knowledge of the sins of men. The proof that Prosper does not regard the foreknowledge of sin to be an ultimate answer lies in the fact that in almost every passage where such a statement is made, he adds that God could have saved the sinner had he so willed, he could have predestined him if this had been his intention.

Finally, and most important, Prosper distinguishes in God two graces. One grace is given all men and provides the adequate aid that they need to avoid evil, perform good actions and so attain eternal glory. The other grace is given only to the elect; it is the grace by which the Christian in fact is brought to salvation. Some authors have objected that the first grace, the universal grace, does not satisfy our modern concept of grace; rather it is simply an external aid through which man can attain a knowledge of God, but which does not

provide him with that true supernatural help he needs. However, several texts in Prosper clearly point to the contrary, especially those texts in which Prosper points out that God provides all men with aids adequate for them to seek out their Lord, and to give testimony unto him.

Consequently, Prosper does succeed in proving that in a view of predestination where man is truly free to cooperate or not to cooperate with God's grace in the working out of his salvation, that the will of God to save each of his creatures is not irreconcilable with a decree on his part to grant the gift of salvation to but a few. For the few who are saved are saved contingently, and those damned are damned despite adequate means to do otherwise. True, God does not choose to predestine certain souls to glory, but his non-predestination even if the ultimate reason why these souls are not saved, is not the cause of their damnation. The sole cause of the damnation of a sinner is the sinner's own free choice by which he freely refuses to cooperate with that grace which God has provided for him through which he might save himself if only he so chose.

Hence, though Prosper does not present a doctrine of predestination which is substantially different from that of his master, Augustine, considered in its totality the doctrine of Prosper is by far more acceptable because it forces into the sunlight certain elements of this great mystery which for Augustine tended to remain hidden in the shadows. Consequently,

he serves as a valuable source of insight into the spirit behind the "difficult" words and expressions of the Doctor of Grace. He serves as a possible avenue to a greater, more profound appreciation of the thought of the Church's most outstanding authority on the problem of predestination.

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