



Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace: The Life and Thought of Prosper of Aquitaine

Alexander Hwang

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Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace provides students and scholars with the first biography of Prosper of Aquitaine (388-455) and the first book-length study in English of this important figure in the history of Christianity. With the death of Augustine in 430, Prosper of Aquitaine quickly emerged as Augustine's defender as the Church debated his teaching on grace. Prosper's significance in the controversy that ensued, his role as Pope Leo's adviser, and his continuation of Jerome's chronicle have long been recognized by historians and theologians. Scholarship exclusively devoted to Prosper, however, has not reflected his importance. While certain aspects of Prosper's life, his individual writings, and connections to Pope Leo and Augustine have been treated at length, a book-length biography until now has eluded the saint.

In this valuable contribution to patristics and church history, Alexander Y. Hwang convincingly argues that Prosper's theological development is marked by his understanding of the Church--and his desire to serve and defend it--rather than his relationship to Augustine's doctrines. It was the Church primarily that Prosper sought to serve and defend, not Augustine. Prosper's life and writings are organized chronologically and situated in the dynamic historical, social, religious, and political contexts of fifth-century Gaul and Rome. Hwang considers all of Prosper's writings and the writings of others directly related to him.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Alexander Y. Hwang is assistant professor of historical theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"Alexander Hwang's fine book admirably succeeds in presenting a sympathetic study of the deeply unsympathetic Prosper of Aquitaine and makes important advances in the study of Prosper's writings and influence. Hwang accomplishes this by integrating careful historical analysis with incisive theological evaluation, while drawing on the finest scholarship about Prosper from several centuries. Hwang's findings secure Prosper his rightful place as a key figure, not only in the evolution of the Augustinian heritage, but also in the articulation of Christian authority in late antiquity."--Augustine Casiday, Lecturer in Historical Theology, University of Wales, Lampeter

"Alexander Hwang has redrawn the picture of Prosper. Hwang's book will help scholars recast their accounts of how St. Augustine's teaching was received--or not received--in the century after his death."--Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., Professor of Theology, Fordham University

"In spite of his extensive literary legacy, Prosper of Aquitaine has been curiously neglected both as an author

and person. Alexander Hwang's meticulous study teases out from recalcitrant sources the development of Prosper's career and thought. This book will restore Prosper in the pantheon of independently minded Gallic ecclesiastical writers of the fifth century."--Ralph W. Mathisen, Professor of History, Classics, and Medieval Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"Of all those among Augustine's contemporaries who struggled with his view of grace, Prosper of Aquitaine was surely the most influential. Hwang's book recounts as much as can be told of Prosper's theological journey and is essential to understanding the heated atmosphere in which the various Western Christian perspectives on grace were worked out."--Boniface Ramsey

"The *Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace* is well structured and of a high scholarly level by virtue of its clear biographical-chronological and content oriented structure of four stages and through its frequent and informative observations and conclusions. Hwang not only pulls Prosper out of anonymity, he does this in a way that elucidates what was at stake in the Semipelagian controversy and illustrates the beginning of the Roman primacy under pope Leo I. . . .

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Dolores Schreiber:

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