

ings. A dispute having arisen between some ministers of Delft, on the subject of Divine Predestination, he was requested by the Presbytery of Amsterdam, to refute the tract of Coorhnetus, who had written on the subject of conditional election. To this work he was also commended by Martin Lydius, as a defence of his former tutor Beza, whose theory, as well as Calvin's, had been assailed. Although the influence of Calvin was very extensive, and his system of theology almost everywhere received by the "Reformed churches," without questioning, yet, no one was compelled not to teach differently for this same system of Calvin, respecting predestination, and the doctrinal consequences flowing from it, were unknown in the early church, for many hundred years.

The Bishop of Hippo, in the seventy-third year of his age, was the first to avow the doctrine of absolute unconditional election. Great as had been the service he rendered to the church, in developing the scriptural doctrine of the moral ruin of man, in opposition to Pelagius, it is to be regretted that, in his senility he should have left a blot upon his fame, in the absurdity, that "God wills because he wills to will." For more than four hundred years, the teachings of the church might be summed up in the statement given by Neander, when describing the system of Hilary, of Poitiers. "Hilary considered it very important to set forth distinctly, that all the operations of divine grace are conditional upon man's free will, to repel everything which might favor the notion of natural necessity, or of unconditional Divine predestination." Previous to the days of St. Augustine, no one had advocated the doctrine of a "Motiveless divine violation respecting the immortal destinies of man." Four hundred years more, rolled by, before another man was found bold enough to advocate the natural concomitant of Augustine's dogma, absolute and unconditional reprobation. That man was Godechall or Gortschalk, a monk of Orbais. Yet so far were his doctrines from being received, that in a council held in Mentz, in 848, they were denounced as heretical, and in the next year he was arraigned before a council held in Quievey, as a corrupter of religion, and his doctrine was again condemned. The unmerciful treatment he received, by being imprisoned, created a sympathy in his favour, and caused some contention concerning his doctrine, yet it was far from being favorably received in the church, nor had it assumed that logical shape and compactness necessary to secure its perpetuity. It not been as yet woven into a theological system, nor could any great names be gathered from the rolls of the church, to give it character, save only, Augustine.

The Reformation introduced the era of free thought in reference to doctrine, though there can be no doubt that the early reformers embraced the sentiments of Augustine. An examination of his writings led Luther to embrace the doctrine of justification by faith; and it is most likely, that, being a monk of the Augustine order, he embraced the error of that "Father," respecting predestination, which doctrine he is said to have defended in some remarks made to Erasmus. Melancthon, in 1621, did not scruple to say, "Since all things which happen necessarily, happen according to Divine predestination, there is no liberty of our will." Yet, we infer that great changes took place in the minds of both of these great men. Although we have no