

CHAPTER XI.

ERASMUS AT ENMITY WITH THE REFORMERS.—HIS LOVE OF FAME.—CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF THE MONKS.—HIS “CICERONIANUS.”—DEPARTURE FROM BASLE TO FRIBURG.—LOUIS DE BERQUIN.—(A.D. 1526-1530.)

WE are delighted when we see Erasmus, at the beginning of the Reformation, laying bare the secret chambers of iniquity, unfolding abominations which shunned the face of day, lashing with his wit and satire, that thrice-knotted scourge, a debauched, indolent, and avaricious clergy, and sharpening that sword of the Spirit with which others have vanquished the confederated legions of darkness. Judging from these antecedents, we might naturally suppose that he would have made common cause with the Lutheran Reformers in their terrible struggle with their foes. But a gulf separated him from them. He could not join them in making their own interpretations of Scripture the rule of faith, instead of the authority of the Church. He could not accept Luther's view of justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ, which the latter considered an essential and fundamental doctrine. I have shown that this was the case when I spoke of the “Enchiridion,” and I shall adduce additional evidence of the truth of this assertion in the next chapter. He understood by faith in Christ, as we have already seen,