ERASMUS'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

IN his *Renaissance Types* W. S. Lilly asserts "that since the origin of Christianity there are perhaps only two other men—St. Augustine and Voltaire—whose influence can be paralleled with that of Erasmus." These two men lived, like Erasmus, in periods of transition. Another interesting coincidence is that their writings, and especially their correspondence, give us the most vivid image of their times. They not only exerted considerable influence upon their contemporaries, but they have been effective instruments in moulding the mode of thought of later generations. Their influence is still a potent factor in more than one respect.

Neither Augustine nor Erasmus was conscious of the fact that his labor would affect almost every thinking representative of the human race for centuries. Erasmus was, indeed, no professed or systematic philosopher, but the history of philosophy cannot neglect to take serious account of his lifework. One of his biographers, Nisard, in *Renaissance and Reform* has declared that the whole Renaissance of western Europe in the sixteenth century converged towards him. What is of especial interest to the modern reader, is the decidedly modern ring of his *Lebensanschauung*.

Erasmus is *par excellence* the man of letters of the Renaissance. His works fill ten folio volumes, two of

which contain his personal correspondence with almost every prominent scholar, ecclesiastic, and statesman of his time. These two volumes belong to the most interesting literature of a very interesting period. Letter-writing in the days of the Renaissance was considered an art and practiced as such; any topic of interest, whether theological, philosophical, grammatical, literary or esthetic, was treated at length in those *epistolae*, and some attain to the bulk of a pamphlet. It is by no means an easy matter to form a personal acquaintance with each of his correspondents, whose number is almost legion. It is apparent that these letters constitute an abundant source from whence to ascertain Erasmus's opinions in matters of philosophy and theology; on the other hand, we may concede that our witness is not above impeachment in regard to details. These letters were as a rule intended for publication and not so much addressed to the recipient as to the "Republic of Letters" which to a certain extent was realized in the days of the Renaissance "when Homer sang again his Iliad and Cicero and Demosthenes thundered forth their grand orations to an enraptured audience," who considered themselves the rightful descendents and heirs of classical antiquity.

In vain do we search Erasmus's letters and other works for a connected system of philosophy. More than once he expresses contempt for systematic philosophy, claiming that such endeavor leads to pride and arrogance, as St. Paul tells us, "Knowledge puffeth up." He had no affinity with the heroic struggle of the scholastics for one great principle of knowledge. His almost stereotyped expression is "Sophistize." His correspondents follow in his steps. His implacable hatred against the Scotist philosophy was one of the ruling passions of his life. He describes the Scotists as men of rotten brains, black hearts, who forgetting all about the virtues practiced by Christ, try to

save the world by the discussion of such profound questions as "how many angels could dance on the point of a needle?"; "could Christ have entered into hypostatical union with a gourd, an ass, a woman, etc.?" This quotation is taken from the *Encomium Moriae*, and we may feel induced to make allowances on account of the humorous vein of the booklet. In an epistle addressed to Thomas Grey (No. 59 of Nichols's Edition) he asserts that Epimenides has an improved incarnation in Scotus. He tells us that the Cretan prophet during his protracted sleep dreamed of nothing but those subtleties of which the Scotists now may boast. In his younger years he showed a certain respect for Thomas Aquinas, whom Leo XIII styled "the Bulwark of the Romish Church," but under the influence of Colet, as Seebohm in his *Oxford Reformers* proves, he changed his position radically and came to see in the Doctor Angelicus "the most arrogant creature that ever lived—the man who had defined all things in heaven and on earth with such boldness and haughtiness, and had so thoroughly corrupted the teaching of Christ with his profane philosophy." The defining and dogmatizing fury of the schoolmen was as disgusting and repugnant to his skeptical temper in his younger years as Luther's tendency in the same direction was later on. This is not surprising, since Erasmus was conscious of a strong affinity between his conception of Christianity and that of the early fathers, such as Justin, Origen, Jerome and Tertullian, who had no tinge of the dogmatizing mania of the schoolmen and their expounders.

That Erasmus had no inclination toward systematic philosophy we may infer from the fact that he is not at home in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The philosophy of his heart is the philosophy of Christ, the Apostles and the early Fathers. Erasmus, a thoroughly practical man had no leaning toward metaphysical speculation and

as for his simple theology, the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind interested him a thousand times more than the mysterious *processio a patre filioque*. The discussion of this dogma had filled a century with strife and nausea. Erasmus, the ardent lover of peace cherished a righteous grudge against this food of the *rabies theologorum* which he abhorred much more than Melanchthon. *Promovere bonas literas atque reducere ecclesiam ad pristinam puritatem* ("to promote good letters and lead the Church back to its original purity"); this was the work of his life, which he had set himself in early youth. His conception of the work of the Holy Spirit tallies with that of Justin Martyr who recognized the *logos spermatikos* in the writings of heathen philosophers. Erasmus admits (in one of his *Colloquia*) that he feels often enough tempted to pray "*Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.*" In the writings of Cicero he recognizes an atmosphere of holiness and virtue; he, the keen "anti-Ciceronian," as Scaliger and Bembo called him, is, I believe, the man who of all scholars had the highest admiration for Cicero and entered deepest into his feelings. I quote only one short paragraph from his *Colloquia*:

"Fateor affectum meum apud amicos: non possum legere librum Ciceronis De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Officiis, De Tusculanis Quaestionibus, quin aliquoties exosculer codicem ac venerer sanctum illud pectus afflatum caelesti numine." Nay, even in Horace he detects traces of the *Sanctus Spiritus*. This discovery alone was enough to throw upon him a suspicion of heresy.

While Dante of all the pagans saved only Cato of Utica, who sacrificed life for liberty, and Emperor Trajan from the dread Inferno, Erasmus believes that the Creator and Redeemer will apply a more liberal standard to those souls whose ignorance of God's true nature was due only to

their surroundings. This interpretation is not very far from Goethe's idea:*

"Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunkeln Drange
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst."

Erasmus was in his days the only champion of broadest tolerance, and in this respect he believed he followed in the wake of Christ, the mildest of men, and of the early Fathers. Christianity in his conception ought to be peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, not strife and struggle. *In necessariis unitas, in caeteris libertas, in omnibus caritas*, was the motto of St. Augustine. Erasmus without urging the first postulate to undue length, emphasized liberty of conscience and world-embracing charity. And nothing convinced him so thoroughly that the Church of his time had been corrupted to the core and needed regeneration and rejuvenation in the fountain head of Christianity, as the spirit of intolerance and persecution prevailing in the *Ec-clesia militans* of his days, as represented by Scotists, Thomists, etc.

In a letter to Volzius, written in 1518 and afterwards published as preface to a new edition of the *Enchiridion* he makes this recommendation in order to effect a thorough reformation of the Church:

"A Commission of pious and learned men should bring together into a compendium from the purest sources of the Gospels and the apostles and their most approved commentators, the whole *philosophy of Christ* with as much simplicity as learning; as much brevity as clearness. What pertains to the faith should be treated in as few articles as possible; what belongs to life, also in but few words and so put that men may know that the yoke of Christ is easy and pleasant, not cruel; that they have been

*"A good man, through obscurest aspirations
Has still an instinct of the one true way."
—Translated by Bayard Taylor.

given fathers, not tyrants; pastors, not robbers; called to salvation, not betrayed into slavery." In the early Christian Church, he asserts, bishops and other authorities used to admonish heretics, not burn them. Even in his own days, he thinks, a certain amount of courtesy and discretion in handling of antagonists would do no harm and would contribute considerably towards an amicable settlement of discussions. Even the arch-heretic Arius, he would have tried at least to convince by arguments and not by threatening him with hell-fires—of which theologians should make parsimonious use. In a letter addressed to the archbishop of Mayence he insists that he would exclude nobody from his company on account of their being followers of Luther. "I am," he says, "neither Luther's accuser, nor advocate nor judge. I would not presume to judge, for that is always a matter of extreme difficulty; still less would I condemn. . . . I find that many in our days are only for compulsion, for destroying and extinguishing, though Augustine did not approve of compulsion, unless teaching was combined with it; even against the Donatists who were not merely heretics, but bloodthirsty robbers."

From no other ecclesiastic of that turbulent epoch which Adolph Honorath in his *Leben Luthers* styles *das grobianische Zeitalter*, do we hear the evangel of Christian tolerance in such crystal clearness.

Peace, concord, harmony is the principal tenet of what he considers his "Christian philosophy." If peace could be maintained, he argues, the diffusion of knowledge and the overthrow of superstition will work out a real and lasting reformation. No other state of the Church is in accordance with the spirit or purpose of Christ. The abuses prevalent in the Church should be cleared away, liberty of conscience strenuously asserted; so, he believed, would it be possible to maintain the unity of the Church under its visible head, the Bishop of Rome.

This conception of practical Christian philosophy is always in Erasmus's mind. In a letter to Louis Berus, dated Louvain, May 14, 1521, he uses the same term in connection with Luther's teaching: Luther might have taught "the philosophy of the Gospel" with great advantage to the Christian flock and benefited the world by writing books, if he had abstained from what could not but end in disturbance.

Practical Christianity is Erasmus's ideal, not idle disputations.

"Is it not possible," he asks in the preface to his edition of St. Hilary, "to have fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, without being able to explain philosophically the distinction between the Father and the Son, or between the Holy Spirit and both the other persons; or the difference between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit? If I believe the tradition of the Church that there are three of one substance, what need of laborious disputation? . . . In olden times faith consisted in the life rather than in the profession of a multitude of articles. . . At last, faith ceased to be a matter of the heart and was wholly transferred to written documents."

Erasmus's attitude is perfectly clear; he wants the spirit that quickeneth, not the letter that killeth. Critics complaining of the equivocality of his language he could have silenced in Goethe's style: "Wer mich nicht verstehen kann, der lerne besser lesen." He is not against ceremonies, provided they are enlivened with faith and charity. In his *Enchiridion* he wrestles valiantly with the same difficult problem which excited the Hebrew prophets of yore to a white heat enthusiasm,—the wedding of the spirit of simple heartfelt piety to an elaborate ceremonial system. The solution he offers is the same which the seers of Jehovah emphasized: Do everything connected with the ritual in the right intention; then your offerings and

holocausts will be acceptable to the Most High, then even insignificant observances will mean something. In a letter to Colet he explains the motive that induced him to write this tractate: "Enchiridon conscripsi ad hoc solum ut mederer errori vulgo religionem constituentium in caeremoniis et observantiis paene plus quam Judaicis rerum corporalium, ea quae ad pietatem pertinent, mire negligantur." Peculiar to this book is a distinction which he draws between spirit and soul, of which he is so fond that he battledores and shuttlecocks it beyond limits.

"The body is the purely material, the spirit the purely divine, but the soul living between the two belongs permanently to neither, but is tossed back and forth from one to the other according as it resists or gives way to the temptations of the flesh. The spirit makes us gods, the flesh makes us beasts, the soul makes us men." The type of piety which Erasmus emphasizes seems to be largely influenced by Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*. This is the more remarkable, as Erasmus never mentions Thomas whose name must have been a household-word in the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life. Like the author of the *Imitatio* he wants the doctrine of Christ pure and simple, and he attributes the corruption of Christianity to its amalgamation with pagan philosophy. What Erasmus conceives this philosophy of Christ, this essence of primitive Christianity to be, we learn from his *Novum Instrumentum*, his most complete work. The message he delivers is almost the same as in the *Enchiridion*: piety of the heart, not pharisaical observances, genuine love of God and man, is the substance of Christ's teaching. The mildness and humility of Christ shall penetrate and permeate our lives and make us, as it were, true reproductions of Christ, according to Tertullian's *Christianus alter Christus*.

He indulges his reformatory vein in his annotations;

he criticizes the well-known abuses of monasticism, the dogmatizing mania of the theologians with the same freedom he had used in the *Encomium Moriae* even with greater vigor—of course without raillery.

In a letter to Leo X referring to his second edition, he rightfully boasts:

“Qui hactenus e putribus lacunis pertubatum quandam et frigidam theologiam hauriebant, nunc ex purissimis fontibus Christi et Apostolorum haurire malunt.”

In the boldness of his criticism he follows in the wake of his idolized Laurentius Valla. Valla and Erasmus may be considered the venerable inceptors of Scripture criticism. Of St. Luke's style he remarks, that it is purer than that of the rest of the Evangelists, owing to his acquaintance with Greek literature. The Epistle to the Hebrews, he tells us, breathes the spirit of St. Paul but is not at all in his style. He doubts whether the Apocalypse be the work of John the Apostle. In a note to the famous verse Matt. xviii. 18, “Upon this rock I will build my church,” he expresses surprise that anyone should have so perverted the meaning as to refer the words exclusively to the Roman pontiff. On Matt. xvii. 5, “Hear ye him!” he remarks: “Christ is the only teacher who has been appointed by God himself. Such authority has been committed to no theologian, to no bishop, to no pope or prince.” The statement in Acts ix. 43, that Peter lodged with Simon the tanner inspired the following passionate exclamation: “Oh, how great a guest, the very chief of Apostles to lodge with so humble an entertainer! In our days three royal palaces scarce suffice Peter's successor.” He expresses a timid doubt, as to whether matrimony was known as a sacrament to Augustine or Jerome. We cannot fail to see that the principle of interpretation he applies is that of common sense. He wants to establish the meaning of the text grammatically and bids farewell to the allegorical method

of Origen, of which he had made use in the *Enchiridion*. He urges individual liberty of interpretation provided the established dogmas of the Church are not attacked.

As for criticism of style, he is the most enlightened man of the Renaissance. We would cite his admirable tractate, *Ciceronianus sive de optimo genere dicendi*. The first necessity, he holds, is the adequate expression of the idea, no matter whether Cicero would have used the same words or not. The apish imitation even of the best stylist Latium (and he might have said "the world") has produced, he ridicules with subtle irony and an amount of vehemence rarely found in his writings. There was, after all, no perfect Ciceronian in his time. He introduces a quasi-Ciceronian who works six long and dreary nights to turn out six sentences of doubtful Ciceronian Latinity. So he advises those "Ciceronianissimi" to desist from a chase after will-o'-the-wisps and rainbows. The main thing is to have ideas; words will follow naturally.

In the preface to the second edition of Jerome's works he gives us his idea of "the critical sense" which he proclaims the sole and supreme judge in matters of contested authority. He does not care a whit for the stupid objections of some people, that the same author has not always the same style. The style of old age is different from that of youth as a comparative study of Cicero's orations will prove. Sometimes, he admits, we vary our style intentionally to adapt it to different subjects. Nevertheless, the style remains the reliable touchstone and it is easy for the experienced critic to recognize in the old man the features of the boy. As for Jerome, to adduce a concrete example, his splendid gifts, his power of combination, of pleasantry, would defy the rarest skill of imitation.

Erasmus, however, speaks often of philosophy without an epithet, but he means by the word what the later and more distinctly ethical schools of antiquity meant—not a

speculative theory about reality, but the art of living according to reason. His philosophers are not Plato or Aristotle, but the "moralists" Seneca, Plutarch, Cicero. His admiration for Plutarch's ethical writings is indeed excessive. Plutarch touches an harmonious chord of his soul. Like the great biographer he pays a good deal of attention to the smallest details of conduct. Let us listen for a moment to the valuable practical advice he administers to his young friend Peter Gillis (Nichols, p. 462):

"Lay down for yourself a definite scheme of life, determining what you want to do and at what hours, and do not crowd one thing upon another, without finishing what you begin first. In this way you will lengthen your day, which is now almost totally lost. And whereas you find fault with your memory, you will do well in my opinion to make a diary from each year (it is no great trouble to do so) and note down daily in a word or two if anything has taken place that you wish not to forget. I beg and entreat you to accustom yourself in the conduct of life to be guided by judgment and not by impulse. If you have made any mistake, consider at once whether you can set it right in any way or diminish the evil; that you will do better, if you do it quietly than in an excited state. If there is any remedy, apply it; if not, what good can come of anger or sorrow except that you double the evil by your own fault?"

In the *Adagia* he gives us many quotations from the Stoics. Their *sustine et abstine* he has always on his lips; he is inexhaustible in the praise of the four cardinal virtues. The imperturbability of mind, of which the genuine Stoics boasted, Erasmus prized very highly. Their *secundum naturam vivere* he emphasizes with great energy. Here, I believe, it is not amiss to remark that Justin Martyr defined the Christian life as *secundum naturam vivere*.

His Stoic maxim Erasmus applies as a corrective of one of the great ethical aberrations of the Church. Because

it is against nature he abhors an enforced celibacy. Nothing to him is more against the laws of nature than an old maid. Matrimony is the natural state for adults. He believes that it affords a thousand times more opportunity to practice all the virtues of Christian life than celibacy. About matrimony nobody has written with more reverence and more elevated sentiment. Without doubt this celibate priest has given the matter a good deal of tender interest. I fancy he loved children dearly and his soul was filled with bitterness on account of his being excluded from the earthly paradise of matrimony. He expresses his opinion that nobody should be allowed to take permanent vows before the completion of the fortieth year.

Of the same principle *secundum naturam*, he avails himself to inculcate his ideas of civil government. He shares the standpoint of Thomas More in his *Utopia*. To him it is the consent of the people that gives and takes away the purple. He does not hedge but speaks out his mind plainly in books dedicated to crowned heads and candidates for a crown. He anticipates the famous motto of Frederick the Great, "The king is or ought to be the first servant of the State." It goes without saying that with most of the princes of his time he has reason to be dissatisfied. "Christian princes and especially the bishops and the pope should set an example of Christian humility and forbearance." Discussing the horrors of war, he reminds us of the twentieth century movement for disarmament. In a letter to Anthony of Bergen, Abbot of St. Bentin, he exclaims:

"For us who glory in the name of Christ, of a master who taught and exhibited nothing but gentleness, who are members of one body and are one flesh quickened by the same spirit, fed by the same sacraments, attached to the same head, called to the same immortality, hoping for that highest communion, that as Christ and the Father are one,

so we may be one with him—can anything in the world be of so great concern as to provoke us to war, a thing so calamitous and so hateful, that even when it is most righteous, no truly good man can approve of it? Think, I beseech you, who are those employed in it? Cutthroats, gamblers, libertines, the meanest hireling soldiers, to whom a little gain is dearer than life—these are your best warriors.”

Of such reckless adventurers he has given us a graphic character sketch in his colloquy between the soldier and the Carthusian monk. He is an ardent advocate of very moderate taxation. Articles necessary to the poor man ought to be exempt from taxes. Let it be the rich to support the state by liberal contributions, not the poor people who have to toil for a scanty living. Occasionally we find in his discussion of economical questions a leaning towards the single tax. On nearly all questions of State policy he is in perfect harmony with his friend More.

In truth, Erasmus in his ethical temper and opinions, is as much a reviver of Stoicism, as he is of early Christianity; the Christian and the Stoic influences curiously merge in him; and where they seem to conflict, it is not quite invariably the traditionally Christian tendency that prevails.

But Erasmus was by no means a Stoic in the strictest sense of the term; their division of mankind into two classes of complete sages and complete fools was abhorrent to his gentle character. He has no particle of that extravagant idolatry of fame which characterized the Italian Renaissance and which infected even men of the moral grandeur of Ambrogio Traversari. He never forgets that Christ has taught us gentleness and humility. But his conception of Christian humility differs very much from that of Bernard of Clairvaux. With Erasmus, common sense did not allow him to fall a victim to the subtle allurements of

asceticism. For Simon Stylites and St. Hilary he would have entertained a feeling of mingled pity and contempt. His ethical doctrines are thoroughly humane, but the humanity he stands for, is that of Christ whom the prophets called the Son of Man.

A pagan sage whose reputation among Scotists and Thomists was very poor,—I am speaking of Epicurus,—Erasmus defends very skilfully in his dialogue *Epicurus*. Epicureanism in the best sense of the word is the sure path leading to virtue and happiness. He is bold enough to claim the “adorable author of Christian philosophy” for the school of Epicurus. No wonder he was put down as a blasphemer like Lucian, as a “perverter of morality” like Epicurus.

Another ancient school of thought with which Erasmus's practical nature made him feel some sympathy was that of the Skeptics. His mind, as Drummond observes, was essentially of the skeptical and inquiring, by no means of the affirmative and constructive order. We may believe Erasmus when he states in the introduction to his *De libero arbitrio*, the one of all his works which comes nearest to dealing systematically with a definite philosophical problem:

“I have such a horror of dogmatism that I would easily declare myself a member of the Skeptic school wherever I am not met by the authority of Holy Scripture and of the Church to which I willingly submit my reason in all things, whether I understand what it prescribes or do not understand.” The work from which these words are quoted is a tractate of small size. Erasmus defends the doctrine of the Church in its mildest form and maintains a moderate freedom of the will. Luther, he explains, in order to magnify God's mercy, abridges his justice. Palpably erroneous and unreasonable, he says, is the Reformer's dogma, that even those who are justified can do

nothing but sin. Luther, as is well known, asserted that the best works of the justified are venial sins according to the mercy of God and mortal sins with reference to his justice. Erasmus attacks Luther's dogma of justification through faith alone, wherein he sees the most dangerous snare to human weakness, many following the Gospel defending all kinds of vice and extravagance, pleading that they are safe, as long as they have faith.

The tractate makes use only of well-known and well-worn arguments, and contributes very little towards the solution of the problem of will. Erasmus was a man of sound intellect and clear insight rather than of profound speculative talent. He did not like the task assigned to him (probably by Henry VIII) and had no exaggerated opinion of his performance. He was aware that the problem is all but unsolvable. The authorities of the Catholic Church seem to have recognized this instinctively, and have dogmatized only negatively, condemning for instance the doctrine of Luther, Calvin, Jansenius and others. It is worth while to note one feature of Erasmus's method of argumentation. His availing himself almost exclusively of arguments based on Scripture texts, is not as some biographers have supposed, evidence that he slighted the tradition of the Church. His antagonist refused to recognize any other arguments, and Erasmus tried to meet Luther upon his own ground and to use only authorities which Luther would accept.

While in his dogmatic controversy with Luther, he was on dangerous territory, because of his antipathy to dogmatism and controversy; when writing about educational ideas, he was, as it were, at his ease.

Erasmus, the thoroughgoing individualist, proclaims the individualistic principle in education. "Education of their children," he asserts, "is a duty that parents owe to the commonwealth and to God." Fathers who give pesti-

lent citizens to the State are nothing better than professional murderers. Some parents bring heavy responsibilities upon their heads by spoiling their children, treating them as playthings. In individual progress three factors are of vital importance: nature, method, practice. (Here he follows Aristotle.) By practice he understands the free exercise on our own part of the activity which has been implanted by nature and is furthered by training. He is well aware of the interaction of physiological and psychological factors. The chapter on the nursling emphasizes the necessity of prenatal education of the child and reads like a chapter of *Emile*. Parents, he argues, should follow the example set by animals and become themselves instructors of their children. As for the breadth of the educational ideal he anticipates Amos Comenius; in matters of discipline and attractive methods of teaching he is a forerunner of Froebel. His ideas on school discipline are those of the most enlightened pedagogues of the twentieth century. The monastic schools he condemns as seminaries of stupidity and superstition.

Schola sit publica aut nulla! Above all the good teacher ought to have a cordial love and sympathy for his pupils.

Our hero—his superhuman struggle against the *vis inertiae* entitles him to this name—is one of the first educators who comprehended the importance of politeness. It was, of course, the moral, esthetic side of courtesy which attracted him, not the outward etiquette. He has that kind of politeness in mind “which is akin to love.”

Erasmus unswervingly advocated the liberal instruction of women and allowed them full participation in the literary treasures of recovered antiquity. Only one privilege he would not concede them; he claims, they are utterly unfit to lead the education of boys. In this instance he falls back upon his great principle, *secundum naturam*

vivere, maintaining that it is against the law of nature to allow women to rule over men.

Now, we come to a point often misunderstood, viz., Erasmus's attitude concerning modern languages and nationalities. The vernacular tongues, so he advises his contemporaries, should be picked up by practice and take no time in the curriculum. The dialects of his age he considered not worth while studying in school, as they lacked the element of stability so conspicuous in Latin. In the preface to his *Novum Instrumentum* he expresses the ardent wish that the Holy Scriptures should be translated into all languages and dialects, the clergy should cultivate a deeper knowledge of their respective vernaculars in order to work with greater success in the vineyard of the Lord. The Holy Roman tongue seemed to be the only remedy against the Babel confusion of shifting and conflicting dialects. Erasmus addressed himself to all scholars of his age and Latin still held its own as the universal language, the veritable Volapük. Furthermore, the vernacular was then to some extent used as a protest against the unity of the Church and there was nothing to which he was more averse than to splitting up the Church according to nationalities; nothing he detested more than "cæsaropapism." He was convinced of the brotherhood of the human race, following in this point the philosophy of Christ and St. Paul.

Character and usefulness in life, not dry scholarship was his aim.

In his book *De duplici copia rerum ac verborum*, which he wrote for Colet's school, he emphasizes the knowledge of things. Language is to him the vehicle of our knowledge; corruption of language will necessarily lead to corrupt knowledge.

The attainments of the students will to a great extent depend upon the qualification of the teacher.

It is only fair to note Erasmus's limitations. He seems to be destitute of intelligent appreciation of art. The great masters in sculpture and color whom Julius II employed he does not mention at all. He speaks slightly of the choruses of the great Greek dramatists, he considers them artificial and extravagant.

Although, as we have seen, two currents of philosophical thought, those of early Christianity and Stoicism, with a tinge of Epicureanism, meet in Erasmus, he was, I believe, not far removed from the intentions of the Founder, "whose yoke is easy and his burden is light."

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