

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

the principal dogmatical symbol of our Church, under a belief that it expresses his opinions; but hardly so to abridge the liberty of others who, in other formularies of the same church, may profess to find what better suits their spiritual taste. In short, the further we remove ourselves from the invidious question, What constitutes a loyal member or minister of our Church? to the open ground of scientific controversy, the better for the interests of truth, though the more difficult for zealots on either side. For nothing is easier than mutual recriminations of this kind, while a properly conducted controversial discussion is the fruit of research and patient thought. There are limits, of course, to this mutual toleration, and there is no more difficult problem than to draw the line between what is compatible and what is not with honest subscription to the formularies of our Church. Happily the present writer, as will be seen, is in no way called upon to entertain this problem. His aim is nothing but to expound *genuine* Protestantism on the basis of that particular Anglican formulary which is called the Thirty-Nine Articles.

As regards the particular subject of the following Papers (and the same may be said of some others) there is the less need of the disclaimer just mentioned, inasmuch, as on the question of the Rule of Faith, the Articles (those that are concerned with it are the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Twentieth, and Twenty-first) are in complete accordance with the other symbolical statements of our Church; on this point, at any rate, she is unmistakably Protestant, and speaks with no uncertain voice. And a church which is Protestant on the Rule of Faith possesses in herself, by virtue of that one decisive principle, both the right and the means of further reformation, should a deeper knowledge of Scripture, or the lessons of experience, suggest such a step; an inestimable advantage which none but a Protestant church can enjoy, and which the Romish Church, in her rejection of Scripture as the sole Rule of Faith, has precluded herself from sharing.

E. A. LITTON.

ART. III.—MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE RÉMUSAT.

Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat, 1802-1808. Trois tomes. Paris. 1880.

THESE memoirs, the third volume of which, though untranslated, has now appeared, throw a light upon the character and Court life of the First Empire, which leaves little to be divulged or imagined. Madame de Rémusat was one of the ladies-in-waiting to the consort of the great Napoleon, and thus had ample opportunities for the exercise of her observant

powers. The central figure at the Court, whether as First Consul or afterwards as Emperor, absorbed all her attention. Napoleon is the one man which this keen lady-in-waiting is never wearied of examining, criticizing, and sounding. She has eyes for little else ; she is incessantly watching his conduct, listening to his remarks, and weighing him in the balance. What Hamlet is to Shakspeare's play so the first Emperor is to these memoirs—remove him and the centre of interest vanishes. In the pages of Madame de Rémusat we have Napoleon brought before us as vividly as is Louis XIV. in the chapters of St. Simon ; as is Charles II. in the diaries of Pepys and Reresby ; as is George II. in the works of Hervey and Horace Walpole, and as is George III. in the letters of Madame d'Arblay.

Within the limits of a review it is impossible to do aught but briefly sketch the nature of the remarks which our authoress in these goodly volumes brings before us. Those who wish to become more accurately acquainted with their contents must peruse them for themselves. Napoleon Buonaparte was First Consul when Madame de Rémusat was appointed lady-in-waiting to the unfortunate Josephine. The young woman soon attached herself to her mistress, and from constantly seeing the husband was enabled to form an estimate of his character worthy of Balzac or Bruyère. Womanlike, she takes stock first of the externals of Napoleon. Short, ill-made, the upper part of his body being too long in proportion to his legs, the despot owed his beauty to his face not to his figure. His forehead, the setting of his eye, the shape of his nose, were all exceedingly handsome, and reminded one of an antique medallion ; his mouth was thin-lipped, but owned a pleasant smile ; his chin was short, and the jaw heavy and square. He was as proud as Cardinal Mazarin of his hands and feet, which were small and aristocratically moulded. So far for the physical, now for the moral. Although remarkable for certain intellectual qualities, no man was less lofty of soul than Napoleon. In him there was no true greatness, no generosity ; he always regarded every indication of good feeling with suspicion and openly scorned sincerity ; nor did he hesitate to say that the superior man was he who practised with more or less dexterity the art of lying. "Metternich," he said one day, "approaches to being a statesman—he lies very well." On another occasion he avowed that if it would be useful to him he would commit even a cowardly act. "In reality," he sneered, "there is nothing really noble or base in this world. Frankly, I am base, essentially base. I give you my word that I should feel no repugnance to commit what would be called by the world a dishonourable action ; my secret tendencies, which are, after all, those of nature, apart from certain affectations of greatness which I have to assume, give me infinite resources

with which to baffle every one." Like most men whose moral qualities are defective he detested the society of ladies. He both despised and had a contempt for women; he regarded their weakness as an unanswerable proof of their inferiority, and the power they had acquired in society as an intolerable usurpation. Hence Buonaparte was under restraint in the society of ladies, and as every kind of restraint put him out of humour he was awkward in their presence and never knew how to talk to them. Vain in most things he was not vain in dress. Whilst his colleagues were adorning themselves in lace, ruffles and gorgeous coats, Buonaparte contented himself with his simple uniform, breeches, silk stockings and boots. When he became Emperor he developed into somewhat more of a dandy, wearing a richly-laced coat, with a short cloak and plumed hat, and a magnificent collar of the Order of the Legion of Honour in diamonds. But he was indifferent to such adornment except that it might impose upon the vulgar. He was eaten up by one ambition—self-advancement; wherever he was, he said, he wanted to be in front. Outside the region of military matters and mathematics he was uneducated; he did not care for music, or letters, or science, unless connected with geometry or engineering. With the instincts of the true despot, Napoleon, as he rapidly developed in power, determined to carve out a line for himself and to be indebted to no one for assistance. "Talleyrand," said he, when he was raised to the throne, "wanted me to make myself King—that is *the* word of his dictionary; but I will have no *grands seigneurs* except those I make myself. Besides which the title of king is worn out; certain preconceived ideas are attached to it; it would make me a kind of heir and I will be the heir of no one. The title that I bear is a grander one, it is still somewhat vague and leaves room for the imagination." He surrounded himself by a new Court, with a new aristocracy that made the Faubourg St. Germain shudder, and new marshals, but all moved on the principles of the old etiquette. It was the Court of a *parvenu* affecting the airs and graces of an ancient and established dynasty. Madame de Rémusat gives us an amusing account of the jealousies that ensued in the family circle of the Buonapartes, on Napoleon having installed himself as Emperor. The brothers of the Emperor were styled princes, and consequently their wives were also called princesses. The sisters of Napoleon, Madame Baccocchi and Madame Murat were not ennobled; *hinc illæ lachrymæ*. These ladies were thunderstruck at the distinction of rank between them and their sisters-in-law. They could scarcely conceal their ill-humour before the world, but sulked, snubbed the Court dames right and left and were very sarcastic. As for Madame Murat, who was younger than her

sister, she appeared to be in the depths of despair, and could scarcely keep back her tears when she heard her brother address the princesses by the titles he had conferred upon them. Frequent were the storms that broke out between the Emperor and his two sisters upon this point; they assailed him with tears, complaints, and reproaches. "Why," they asked, "are we to be condemned to obscurity and contempt when strangers are covered with honours and dignities?" Napoleon, however, declined to be softened into a more generous mood; he was able to distribute dignities according to his will, and he would have no interference. "In truth, ladies," said he, after one of these stormy requests, "to see your airs one would imagine that we hold the crown from the hands of the late King, our father." At this sarcastic answer we hear that Madame Murat fell on the floor and fainted away.

Another and a more important object of the jealousies of the Buonapartes was now to be attacked. Since the Emperor had attained to power the whole of his family made a dead set against Josephine. She was childless, a *parvenu* compared with the throne, and not wealthy. It was necessary for a man like Napoleon to consolidate his position by an illustrious alliance which should command the homage of Europe. He knew—none better—how to tickle the vanity of Frenchmen with stars and crosses and frothy speeches, to represent them as the bravest of the brave and the head of civilization; but the proud Courts of the Continent, though they feared him, yet sneered at him as a usurper, a Corsican, and the soldier of fortune. The brothers and sisters of the Emperor were ever harping to him upon his barren consort, and the necessity that now arose for him to seek the hand of the daughter of some monarch of long descent. At times their poisonous advice half succeeded making him, as he said, "wretched, oh! so wretched," and creating the most terrible agony in the mind of her who was his wife. Shortly after the Emperor's usurpation of the throne—"he saw the crown of France," he said, "on the floor and he picked it up on the point of his sword"—the question of the coronation was discussed. From the first the Buonapartes were most anxious that Josephine should be excluded from the ceremony. The sisters were jealous of the Empress, whilst the brothers deemed it more politic that she should remain only as a spectator of the ceremony. For a time it appeared as if Napoleon was about to give way to the intrigues of his family, when he accidentally heard that his brothers had boasted that they had complete authority over him. To a man of the Emperor's arrogance and love of command this accusation was sufficient; he told the Empress that the Pope was coming, that he would crown them both, and that she might now begin to occupy herself with the preparations for the cere-

mony. She was crowned by Pius the Seventh, but her amiable sisters-in-law did their best to revenge themselves upon her by holding her train so that she could scarcely move her limbs. Napoleon crammed the crown down upon his brow as if, now that he had gained it, nothing should part him from it.

The life of the Emperor was one of such intense military activity that he knew not what leisure was. It has been stated that out of a reign of ten years Napoleon spent only 955 days in Paris. Holiday and relaxation were strangers to him, and on the few occasions when he indulged in pleasures his great delight was to imitate the *fourberies* of a lawyer's clerk. He was a bad whip, rode indifferently to hounds, and gave dinners which bored him—for his habits were abstemious and simple—but which he considered it like royalty to be careful about. Writing, dictating, reading, and issuing rapid and constant orders were his chief occupations when not at the head of his troops. He exacted from all the most implicit obedience, and conscious that he was deficient in those social charms which go to swell the name of gentleman, he preferred to be the autocrat of the *salon* and mistook brutality for power. "Kings," writes Madame de Rémusat, "are very apt to show their good or bad humour before every one; and Buonaparte, more king than any other ever was, scolded harshly, often when there was no occasion for it, and humiliated all who belonged to him, as he hectored them for some worthless trifle." But at this time—to serve an excuse for what Talleyrand called his 'wretched ill-bred' manners—the Emperor was worried both with himself and with the political condition of Europe. The idea of a divorce from Josephine now began to assume a definite shape. He felt more and more the necessity of having an heir to succeed to his dynasty. Madame de Rémusat gives an interesting account of a conversation that ensued between husband and wife upon this painful topic. One day he spoke to the Empress of the need that he might have to experience of finding a wife who could give him children. He was much moved, but added, "If such a thing were to happen, Josephine, then it would be for you to help me to such a sacrifice. I shall count on your friendship to save me from the odium of an enforced rupture. You would take the initiative, would you not, and, aware of my position, would have the courage to determine on your own withdrawal?" A strange request, truly, from a husband to a wife—to bid her come to his aid for his own culpably selfish ends, and help him to cast her forth into shame and degradation! It was not she who had sinned against her vow, as her base and vicious husband well knew. In the words of Katherine of Arragon, Josephine could have said:—

"Have I lived thus long (let me speak myself,
Since virtue finds no friends) a wife, a true one?"

A woman (I dare say without vain-glory)
Never yet branded with suspicion?
Have I, with all my full affections
Still met the King? Loved him next Heaven? Obey'd him?
Been, out of fondness, superstitious to him?
Almost forgot my prayers to content him?
And am I thus rewarded?"

To the question of her husband's the Empress replied in that calm, grave tone which she often employed, and which was not without effect upon Napoleon. "Sire," she said, "you are the master and you will decide on my lot. When you order me to quit the Tuileries I will obey on the spot, but for that your positive order will be required. I am your wife. You have crowned me in the presence of the Pope; such honours deserve that one should not voluntarily lay them down. If you divorce me, all France shall know that it is you who drive me away, and she will be ignorant neither of my obedience nor of my profound grief." Though she had answered Napoleon calmly and with dignity, the blow was a terrible one. At times she wept bitterly, and at others sharply railed at his ingratitude. When she had married Buonaparte she now remembered that he had thought himself much honoured—he, a plain soldier, she the daughter of a Count, and the widow of a Vicomte—by the alliance; and now that he had risen to be one of the mightiest of the land, she who had been willing to share his bad fortune, was not to be permitted to enjoy his successes! It was cowardly, mean, and infamously selfish. Sometimes her imagination was so excited that she even expressed fears for her life. "I will never yield to him," she once cried; "I will certainly behave like his victim; but if I come to be too much in his way, who knows of what he may be capable, and if he will resist the need of getting rid of me?" The comments of her companion upon this charge are very grave. "When the Empress said such words as these," adds Madame de Rémusat, "I made a thousand efforts to calm her shattered imagination, which had, without doubt, carried her much too far. Whatever opinion I might have had on the facility with which Buonaparte lent himself to political necessities, I in no wise believed that he was capable of conceiving or of executing the black designs of which she then suspected him. But he had so acted on different occasions, and, above all, often so spoken, that a profound grief had a right, in its excitement, to conceive such a suspicion of him; and though I attest solemnly that in my utmost conscience I do not think that his thoughts ever recurred to such a method of getting out of his difficulty, nevertheless my answer to the dreadful anxieties of the Empress could not be more than this. Madame, be sure that he is not capable of going so far." From the man who had

murdered, on a trumped-up charge, the young Duc d'Enghien, all crimes were possible.

The intrigues for the Crown of Spain and the hostility of England for a moment laid aside all domestic questions. Napoleon had his hand full and could not busy himself with details which were, compared with his political ambition, purely secondary. With this agitation the third volume of these Memoirs ends; the period embraced by them is so important, the authoress is so keen an observer of all that surrounds her, and she is so felicitous a writer, that her work is among the most interesting of all that have served to elucidate the history of the First Empire. No man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*, and we suppose no monarch is a hero to the *dame du Palais* of his consort. Madame de Rémusat does, certainly, not spare Napoleon, nor for the matter of that, his family. By the light of her pages we see the Emperor rude, coarse, unfaithful, fond of a brutal display of authority. Shy, yet offensive in woman's society; unscrupulous; a great man, so far as the intellectual gifts are counted, but unredeemably bad so far as his moral qualities are concerned. "It must be said of him," remarks our authoress, "because it is true that there is in Buonaparte a certain innate wickedness of nature which has a particular taste for evil, and that shows itself in him in great things as well as in smaller matters." He whipped his little boy before Talma, the actor, because, he said, it amused him to "spank" a future king. At the Court balls his delight was to wander about the rooms and make remarks to such ladies as he was not shy of, that would make them blush. He often cruelly ill-treated his wife. One of his favourite tricks was to inform some unfortunate husband, who dared not reply, that his name was being dishonoured by the conduct of his wife. Truth he openly admitted should be disregarded by all who wish to succeed in the world. Religion, honour, good faith were not in his vocabulary. Yet such was the man who, during the first years of this century, was the tyrant of Europe; who made and deposed kings; who kept every country in a state of anxiety, and whose ambition, if it had not been, under the Divine blessing, for the stern opposition of England, would not have been satisfied until the world was at his feet.



ART. IV.—LOCAL OPTION AND LOCAL CONTROL.

TO any one unacquainted with the Temperance question the phrases "local option" and "local control" convey of themselves no definite ideas. As to what is to be controlled, and in reference to what option may be exercised, the terms