

EDITORIAL NOTE

ON

SMECTYMNUUS REDIVIVUS.

ACCORDING to the advertisement which has been long before the public, this volume should have contained the treatise called *Smectymnuus Redivivus*. That advertisement was prepared by the late Mr Nichol under the impression that that was a treatise by Dr Manton, different from the work of the five divines whose initials formed the name *Smectymnuus*. But it was not so. It was simply that work re-issued, with a very short preface by Dr Manton. It is not surprising that Mr Nichol should have been misled by the title; for certainly it is not usual to designate a reprint of a book by the name of its author with the adjunct *Redivivus*, while it is not unusual for an author, professing to write in the same spirit in which one of his predecessors had written, to adopt his name with that adjunct appended to it. If we saw an announcement of the publication of a book with the title *Junius Redivivus*, we should not expect it to be a new edition of the famous 'Letters,' but a new work by one who proposed to treat the political topics of the present day in a similar way to that in which Junius treated those of his day. Such an expectation would be reasonable; but in the present case it would be erroneous.

It may be noticed that the same mistake was made long ago by Anthony à Wood; and, indeed, it is probable that it was he who misled Mr Nichol.

Being aware, then, that the treatise was not Dr Manton's, the Editor has not thought himself entitled to include it among his *works*. It is enough to subjoin the preface, which was all that Manton contributed to the treatise as reprinted. The work was originally published in 1641, in answer to Bishop Hall's advocacy of the divine right of Episcopacy. Its authors were Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow, whose initials were combined to form the pseudonym *Smectymnuus*. In 1653 it was reprinted, as we have stated, with the following preface by Dr Manton:—

TO THE READER.

GOOD READER,—Solomon told us long since, that there is no end of many books, Eccles. xii. 12. Scripturiency (it seemeth) is no novel humour, but abounded then, even when the means of transmitting knowledge was more difficult. If there were cause for the complaint then, there is much more now, since the press hath helped the pen; every one will be scribbling, and so better books are neglected, and lie like a few grains of corn under a heap of chaff and dust. Usually books are received as fashions; the newest, not the best and most profitable, are most in esteem; insomuch that really learned and sober men have been afraid to publish their labours, lest they should divert the world from reading the useful works of others that wrote before them. I remember Dr Altingius,¹ a terse and neat spirit, stood out the battle of twenty years' importunity, and would not yield to divulge anything upon this fear. Certainly, reader, it is for thy profit sometimes to look back and consult with them that first laboured in the mines of knowledge, and not always to take up what cometh next to hand. In this controversy of discipline many have written, but not all with a like judgment and strength, which I believe hath been no small rock of offence, and stone of stumbling to the adversaries, who are hardened with nothing so much as a weak defence of the truth; as Austin complaineth,² that when he was a Manichee, he had had too too often the victory put into his hands by the defences of weak and unskilful Christians. This work, which the stationer hath now revived (that it may not be forgotten, and, like a jewel, after once showing, shut in the cabinet of private studies only), was penned by several worthy divines of great note and fame in the churches of Christ, under the borrowed and covered name of Smectymnuus,³ which was some matter of scorn and exception to the adversaries; as the Papists objected to Calvin, his printing his Institutions under the name of Alcanius, and to Bucer his naming himself Aretius Felinus, though all this without ground and reason, the affixion of the name to any work being a thing indifferent, for there we must not consider so much the author as the matter, and not who said it, but what; and the assumption of another name not being infamous, but where it is done out of deceit, and to another's prejudice, or out of shame because of guilt, or fear to own the truths which they should establish. I suppose the reverend authors were willing to lie hid under this onomastic, partly that their work might not be received with prejudice, the faction against which they dealt arrogating to themselves a monopoly of learning, and condemning all others as ignorants and novices not worthy to be heard; and partly that they might not bur-

¹ 'Videbat enim passim laborari mole et copia variorum in hoc genere commentariorum, novis editionibus ancipitem reddi eorum delectum; sed meliores etiam, id est, veteres illos et probatos, auctores e studiosorum manibus extrudi,' &c.—*Prefat. Scriptorum Theolog. Henric. Alting.*

² 'Quædam noxia victoria pæne mihi semper in disputationibus proveniebat cum Christianis imperitis,'—*August. contra Manich.*, cap. 19.

³ Mr Steven Marshall, Mr Edmund Calany, Dr Thomas Young, Mr Matthew Newcomen, Dr William Spurstow.

then their frontispiece with a voluminous nomenclature, it not being usual to affix so many names at length to one treatise.

For the work itself speaketh its own praise, and is now once more subjected to thy censure and judgment. This second publication of it was occasioned by another book for vindication of the ministry by the Provincial Assembly of London, wherein there are frequent appeals to Smectymnuus. Though otherwise I should have judged the reprinting seasonable; for the Lord hath now returned us to such a juncture of time wherein there is greater freedom of debate, without noise and vulgar prejudice; and certainly if the quarrel of Episcopacy were once cleared and brought to an issue, we should not be so much in the dark in other parts of discipline, the conviction of an error by solid grounds being the best way to find out the truth. Reformations carried on with popular tumults, rather than rational conviction, seldom end well; though the judgment of God be to be observed in pouring contempt upon those which are partial in His law, yet the improvident leaps which a people are wont to make upon such occasions lay the foundation of a lasting mischief. I hope, that by the review of these matters we shall come to know more of the Lord's counsel for the ordering of his house; or at least that, by weighing what may be said on all sides, we shall learn more¹ to truth-it in love, which is the unfeigned desire of him who is thine in the Lord,

THO. MANTON.

NEWINGTON, *June* 23, 1653.

¹ 'Ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ.'—*Eph.* iv. 14.

THE END OF VOL. V.