

whether for corrupt and impure doctrine ioynd w lyke abhominable exerce of life, or for what some other cause, it is not precisely expressed. Whely by thoy the cause thereof may be gesse, to rise by william wickam bishop of winchester. The matter is thys.

The Bishop of Winchester (as the saying went then) was reported to affirme, that the foresaid Jhon of Saint duke of Lancaster, was not the sonne of king Edward, nor of the Quene. who being in trauel at Bat, had no sonne (as he sayd) but a daughter: whelch the same time by lying wyppon of the mother in the bedde, was there smothered. wherupon, the Quene fearing the kings displeasure, caused a certaine manchild of a woman of flauders (borne the very same time) to be coneyed and brought vnto her in stead of her daughter asofsayde. And so brought by the child whom the bare nor, who now is called duke of Lancaster. And this (said the Bishop) did the Quene tell him, lying in extremes on her death-bed vnder seale of confession: charging hym if the sayde Duke should euer aspire to get the crowne, or if the kingdome by any meanes should fall vnto hym, he then should manifest the same, & declare it to the worlde, that the sayde Duke of Lancaster was no part of the kings blood, but a false heire of the king. This flauderous report of the wicked Byshop, as it sauoureth of a contumelious lie; so seemeth it to procede of a subtile zeale toward the popes religion, meaning falshoode. For that the foresayd Duke by sauouring of wickliff, declared hymselfe to be a professed enemy against the popes profession. whych thing was then not vnknewen, neyther vnmaked of the Prelates and Byshops then in Englande. But the sequelle of the story thus followed.

Thys slanderous vilany of the Byshops report being blased abroad, and coming to the Dukes eare: he therw being not a litle discontented (as no maruell was) sought againe by what meanes he coude, to be reuenged of thys fozenamed Bishop. In conclusion, the Duke hauing now al the government of the reahm vnder the king his father, in hys own hand: so purchasd y byshop of winchester, that by acte of parliament he was condemned and deprived of al his temporal goods, which goods wer assigned to prince Arich, of Burdeur, the next inheritor of the crowne after the king, and furthermore inhibited the said bishop not to appoach nere to y court by 20. miles. Further as touching thys bishop, the story thus procedeth. Not lgg after in the yeare of our Lord. 1377. a Parliament was called by the meanes of the Duke of Lancaster, vpon certayne causes & respects: in which parliament great request, and sute was made by the cleergy for the deliuerance of the B. of Winchester. At length whē a subsidie was asked in the kings name of the cleergy, and request also made in the kings behalf for speedy expedition to be made for the dissolving of parliament, the Archb. therfore accordingly conuenied the bishops for the tractation thereof. To who the B. w great lamentation complained for lack of their fellow and brother B. of wint. whose iniury said they, did derogate to the liberties of the whole church: And therfore demed to ioyne themselfes in tractation of any such matters, before al the members together were vnitid in the head: And (leing the matter touchid them altogeth in common, as well him as thē) would not otherwise do. And seemed mozeouer to be moued against y Archb. for that he was not moze stout in the cause, but suffered him sa to be cited of the duke.

The Archb. although hauing sufficient cause to excuse hymselfe, wherfore not to lend for him (as also he dyd) because of the perils which might ensue therof: yet being enforced & perswaded therunto, by the importunitie of the bishops, directed downe his letters to the foresaid bishop of wintch, willing hym to resort vnto the conuocation of the cleergy, who being glad to obey the same, was reseyued w great ioy of the other bishops. And at length by y meanes of Alice Derris, the kings paramour, aboue mentioned, (geuing to her a good quantite of mony) the sayd winchester was restored to his temporalities againe.

As the Bishops had thus sent for wintch, the Duke in the meane time had sent for Iohn wickliffe: who as is laide, was then the diuinity reader in Oxfozd, and had commened in sondy actes and disputations, contrary to the forme and teaching of the popes church in many things: who also for the same had bene deprived of his benefice, as hath bene asof touched. He opinions whych he began in Oxfozd, first in his lectures, and sermons to entreat of, and wherfore he was deprived were these. That the pope had no more power to excommunicate any man, than hath any other. That if it be geue by any persō to the pope to excommunicate: yet to absolve the same is as much in the power of another priest, as in hys. He affirmed mozeouer, y neyther y king nor any temporal Lord could geue any perpe-

tuity to the church, or to any ecclesiastical person: for that when such ecclesiastical do inme, habitualiter, continuing in the same still, the temporal powers ought and may meritoziouly, take away from them, that before hath bene bestowed vpon thē. And that he proued, to haue bene practised before here in England by william Rufus, whych thing (sayd he) if he did lawfully, why may not the same also be practised now? if he did it vnlawfully, then doth the church erre (sayd he) & doth vnlawfully in praying for him. But of his assertions moze shall follow (Christ willing) hereafter. The story whych ascribeth to him these assertions being taken out (as I take it) of y monastery of S. Albons addeth withall: that in his teaching and preaching he was very eloquent, but a dissembler (saith he) and an hypocrite. why he surmisseth him to be an hypocrite, the cause was this:

First, because he resorted much to the orders of the begging Friers, frequenting and extolling the perfection of their pouerty.

Secondly, because he and his fellows vsually accustomed in their preaching to go barefoote, and in simple rustled gownes.

By this I suppose, may sufficiently appeare to the indifferent, the nature and condition of wickliffe, how far it was fro the ambitio & pride, which in the flauderous pen of Polydore Virgil, reporting in his 19. booke of him, that because he was not preferred to higher honors and dignities of the church (concerning therfore indignation agaynst the cleergy) became their mortall enemy. Do w true this was, he surely knoweth best, that rightly shall iudge both y one and the other.

In the meane time, by other circumstances & partes of his life, we may also partly coicure what is to be thought of y ma. But howsoeuer it was in him either true or false: yet it had bene Polydors part, either not so intemperately to haue abused his pen, or at least to haue shewed some greater authority and ground of that his report. For to follow nothing els but saying same, so rashly to defame a man whose life he knoweth not, is not the part of a saythful story writer.

But to retorne from whēce we digressed. Beside these his opinions and assertions aboue recited, with other mo, which are hereafter to be brought in order: He began also then something nere to touch the matter of the Sacrament, prouing that in the sayd Sacrament, the accidentes of bread remayned not without the subiect, or substance: both by the holy Scriptures, and also by the authority of the doctors, but specially by such as were most ancient. As for the latter writers, that is to say such as haue written vpon that argumēt vnder the thousand yeres since Christes tyme, he utterly refused: saying, that after these yeares Sathan was losed & set at liberty. And that since that time the life of man hath bene most subiect and in danger of errors: the simple and playne truth to appeare and consist in the Scriptures, wherunto all human traditions whatsoever they be, must be referred; and specially such as are set forth & published now of late yeares. This was the cause why he refused the latter writers of decretals, leaning ony to the Scriptures & ancient doctors: most stoutly affirming out of them, that in the Sacramēt of the body which is celebrat, with bread the accidēce not to be present with out the substance. What is to say, that the body of Christ is not present without the bread, as the common sorte of popettes in those daies did dreame. As for his arguments wher they were: we wyll shortly at moze oportunitie by Gods grace, declare them in another place. But herein the truth (as the poet speaketh very truly) had gotten Iohn wickliffe great displeasure and hatred, as many mens handes: and specially of the Monkes and richest sort of Priestes.

Albeit though the fauor and supportation of the duke of Lancaster, and Lord Henry Dery, he persifed hitherto in some meane quiet against their wainish violence & enuely: Still at last about the yeare of our Lord. 1376. the Byshops still beging and inciting their Archbishop Symon Sudberye, who before had deprived him, and afterward prohibited him also not to stierre any moze in those sortes of matters: had obtained by proccesse and order of citation to haue him byought before them. wherunto both place and time for him to appeare after they, vsuall forme was to him assigned.

The Duke hauing intelligence that wickliffe his client should come before the Bishops, fearing that he being but one, was to weake agaynst such a multitude: callid to him out of the orders of Friers, squire Bachelers of Diuinity, out of euery order one, to ioyne them with wickliffe also for moze surty. When the day was come assigned to the

Example of W. Rufus.

Ex bispo. Monastery. D. Albans.

The flauderous pen of Polydore.

Wickliffe falsly charged with ambition by Polydore.

Wickliffe beginneth to touch the matter of the sacramēt.

The latter writers of the Church to be mitted.

The accidēces not to be in the sacrament without the substance.

Ex Chron. Monastery Albani.

A practise of the prelates against the Duke of Lancaster.

W. Wickham B. of Wint. deprived.

Bishops holde together. Liberties of the Church a great matter.

B of Wint. sent for to the conuocation.

I. Wickliffe sent for by the Duke of Lancaster.