

to these your forsaide wyrters, as witnesles produced agaynst these men : there be 2. things (as I take it) in these chronicle wyrters to be considered : First the grounds which they followe : secondly in what place they serue.

As touching the order and ground of wyrtyn among these Chronickiers, ye must consider, and canot be ignorant that as none of all these by you forsworne, was present at the dedde, nor witnesse of the fact, so haue they nothing of theseles herein certainly to affirme, but either must followe publike rumor and heare say for their autor, or els one of them must borrowe of another, whereof neither seemeth to me sufficient. For as publike rumor is neuer certain: so one author may some deceiue an other.

By reason whereof it commeth oft to passe, that as these story wyrters hit many times the truth, so againe al is not the gospel that they doe wyrite. wherefore great respect is heere to be had, either not to credite rashly euery one that wyrteth stories, or els to see what groundes they haue whome we doe followe.

Now to demaund (M. Cope) of you, what authoritie or foundation hath your Robert Fabian, haue Polydore Virgil, Edward Hall, and other of your authors to proue these men to be traitors? what authoritie do they aunouch? what actes, what registers, what recordes, or out of what court do they shewe? or what demonstration do they make? And do you thinke it sufficient, because these men doe only affirme it, without any further probation, with your *solos eon*, therefore we are bold to beleue it? Take me not so (M. Cope) that I do here diminish any thing or derogate from the credit of those wyrters you alledge, whose labors haue deserued well, and serue to great vtilitie: but coming now to triall of a matter lying in controuersie betwene vs, we are now forced to seeke out the fountaine and bottom of the truth, where it is not enough to say, so it is, but the cause is to be shewed, why it is so affirmed. And what though Robert Fabian, Polydore Virgil, and Edward Hall, should all together (as they do not) agree in the treason of sir John Oldcastle and of the rest, yet neither is this any sufficient surety to proue them traitors. Considering that wyrters of stories for most part folowing either blind report: or els one taking of an other, vse commonly all to sound together after one tune, tanquam Dodonzi lebetes, so that as one sayth, all say, and if one erre, all do erre. wherefore you see M. Cope, howe it is not sufficient nor sure to sticke onely to the names and authorities of Chronographers, vntill the ground be found substantiall wherupon they stand themselves. which yet in none of these whome you haue produced, doth appeare.

Secondly, in alleaging and wyrtyn of Chronicles is to be considered to what place and effect they serue. If yee would shew out of them the order & course of times, what yeres were of dearch and of plenty, where kings kept their Christenmasse, what condites were made, what Maiors and Sherrifes were in London, what battails were fought, what triumphs and great feasts were holden, when kings began their reigne, and when they ended, &c. In such vniuersall and popular affaires, the narration of the Chronickier serueth to good purpose, & may haue his credite, wherein the matter forceth not much, whether it be true or false, or whether any listeth to beleue them. But where as a thing is denied, and in cases of iudgement, and in controuersies doubtfull, which are to be decided and boulted out by euidence of iust demonstration: I take them neither for Iudges of y bench, nor for arbiters of the cause, nor as witnesles of themselves sufficient necessarily to be sticked vnto. Albeit I deny not but hystories are take many times, and so termed for witnesles of times, and glasse of antiquitie, &c. yet not such witnesles, as whose testimony beareth alwaies a necessary truth and bindeth beliefe.

The twoo witnesles whych came agaynst Susanna, beinge senioris both of ancient yeres, haue a great countenance of a most euident testimony, wherby they almost both deceiued the people, & oppressed the innocent: had not yos Daniel by the holy spirit of God, haue take the aside, and severally examininge them one from the other, found them to be fall lies both, leauing to vs thereby a lesson of wholesome circumspection, not rashly to beleue euery one that commeth, and also teaching vs, how to try the out. wherefore (M. Cope) followinge here the like example of Daniel in tryng these your records whom ye inserte agaynst these men we will in like maner examine them, severally one fro another, and see how their testimonie agreeth: first beginninge with your Robert Fabian. which Robert Fabian beinge neither in the same age, nor at the dedde doing, can of himselfe geue no credite herein, without due prooff, and euidence conuenient.

Howe the doct. Rob. Fabian proue this matter of trea-

son true? what probation doeth he bringe? what authoritie doth he alleage? And doth Rob. Fabian thinke, if he were not disposed to conceiue of the L. Cobham, and those men a better opinion but to be traitors, that men are bounde to beleue him only at his word, without any ground or cause declared, why they should do so, but only because he so saith and pleased him so to write? And if yee thinke (M. Cope) the word only of this witness sufficient to make authority speakinge agaynst the Lord Cobham, and prouing nothing which followed so many yeres after him: why may not I as well and much rather take the word and testimonie of Richard Belward a Northfolke man, and of the towne of Crisam, who liuing both in his time, & possible knowinge the party, & punished also for the like truth, is not reported, but recorded also in the registers of the church of Northwich, to geue this testimonie among other his articles, for the forsaide L. Cobham, that is, y sir John Oldcastle was a true Catholike man and falsely condemned, and put to death without a reasonable cause, &c. Ex Regist. Norwic.

Agaynst this man if you take exception & say, that one hereticke will hold with an other: why may not I with y like exception reply to you agayne, & say as well, one Baptist hold with an other, and both come together, to make and say the worst agaynst a true Protestant.

Further, yet to examine this forsaide Fabian, witness agaynst Sir John Oldcastle, as Danicil examined y witnesles agaynst Susanna. I will not here aske vnder what tree these adherentes of sir J. Oldcastle conspired agaynst the king, & subuersion of y land, but in what time, in what yere and moneth this conspiracie was wrought? Fabian witnesseth that it was in the moneth of January. Contrary Edward Hall & other our Abridgementers followinge him, doe affirme that they were condemned in the Guild hall the xij. of December, and that their executiõ vpon the same was in January followinge, so that by their sentence the fact was done either in the moneth of Decēber, or els before, & so Fabianus mentitus est in caput suum, vt cõ Daniele dicam, or if it were in the moneth of January as Fabian sayth, then is Hall and his followers deceiued, testifying the fact to be done in the moneth of December.

And yet to object mozeouer agaynst the sayd Fabian, for so much as he is such a rash witness agaynst these burned persons whom he calleth traitors: it would be demaunded further of him, or in his absence of M. Cope, in what yere this treason was conspired? If it were in the same yere (as he cõfesseth himselfe) in which yere John Cleidon the Skinner, & Richard Turnine Baker were burned, then was it neither in the moneth of January, nor in the first yere of kyng Henry the first. For in the register of Catterbury it appeareth playne, that John Claydon was condemned neither in the tyme of Thom. Arundell Archbishop nor yet in the first nor second yere of kyng Henry the v. but was condemned in the second yere of the translation of Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, the 17. day of August, which was the yere of our Lord. 14.15. So that if this conspiracie was in the same yere (after the witness of Fabian) in which yere J. Cleidon was burned, then doth the testimonie of Fabian neither accord with other witnessles, nor to him selfe, nor yet with truth. And thus much concerning the witness of Rob. Fabian.

Let vs next proceede to Holidore Virgill, whose partiall and vntrue handling of our history in other places of his booke, doth offer vnto vs sufficient exception not to admit his credite in this. And yet because we will rather examine him, then exclude him, let vs heare a little what he sayth, & how he sayleth, & in how many pointes, numbringe the same vpon mye fingers.

First ending with the life of kyng Henry 4. hee sayeth, that hee reigned 14. yeres and 6. moneths and 2. dayes. Angl. hist. lib. 21. whych is an vntruth, woorth to be punished vnto a whole yeres banishment (to speake after the maner of Apuleius) when as truth is, he reigned by the testimony of the story of S. Albanes, of Fabian, of Hall, of our old English Chronick: and of Scala mundi, but 13. & 6. moneths, lacking as some say 5. dayes, Hal saith he reigned but 12. yeres.

The second vntruth of Polydore is this, where as hee speakinge of this sedition of sir John Oldcastle and his adherents, affirmeth the same to be done after the burninge of John Hus, and of Hierome of Prague, whych was sayth he An. 14.15. in which yere (sayth he) Thomas Arundell died. Hys wordes be these: In eodem concilio damnata est Ioh. Wicliffi heresis, ac Ioan. Hus, & Hieronymus Pragensis in ea vrbe combusti sunt. Quod vbi reliquis confocijs, qui etiam tunc in Anglia erant, presertim, tanquam furis apertati primum conuentiones in omnes sacerdotes, deinde in regē &c. In which wordes hee not onely erreth, falsly assigninge the cause and occasion

The testimony of Rich. Belward for the L. Cobham:

Ex Regist. Epist. Norwic.

Witnesses as gainst the L. Cobham agreed not together.

Fabian counte of a manifest vnto truth in his story of the L. Cobham Fabian. part. 7. in Vita Henr. 4. pag. 390.

Ex regist. Archiep. Cant.

The testimony of Polydore examined.

5. Vntruthes of Polydore noted in one story.

1. Vntruth

2. Vntruth

Two things to be obserued in story writers.

The ground of histories to be considered.

All things not true, that be found in stories.

Words without probation are not sufficient in story matters.

Chronickers how farre, and to what effect they serue.

Histories not rashely to be beleued.

The testimony of Fabian agaynst the L. Cobham examined.