

Oi4 The base on which mans greatnesse firmest stands

Notes. This is one of a pair of surviving poems focusing on the fall of Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex and Lord Treasurer, who, having opposed Buckingham and Charles's war policies, was impeached by the 1624 Parliament on charges of bribery and corruption.

“On Sir Lyonell Cranfield Earle of Middlesex & Lord Treasurer of England his fall. 1624”

The base on which mans greatnesse firmest stands

Is Goodnes, els its built on sands

Princes have power to make men great wee see

But Goodnes is involv'd by the Dyetic¹

Soe that to make a good greate Man's a thing

5

Wrought joynt together both by God & King

For where the King makes great & God not good

There greatnes dyes, whilst it doth scarcely budd.

Witnes this Great one mounted to the ayre

But (wanting goodnes) his Honors vapours are,

10

Hee being not good, his greatnes was but small

For meane men good are pittied when they fall

So is not hee, hee loved himselfe alone

And nowe noe good man doth his fall bemoane

I pray observe from whence hee came, the city²

15

That hee rose so soone and fell noe sooner; Pitty.

Source. Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 27

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Ashmole 781, p. 136; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c.50, fol. 23r; Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 1100, fol. 89v; BL Add. MS 28640, fol. 148r; BL Add. MS 29492, fol. 27r; BL Add. MS 72479, fol. 8r; BL MS Stowe 962, fol. 146r; Brotherton MS Lt. q. 9, fol. 61r; CUL MS Gg.4.13, p. 47; Folger MS V.a.275, p. 135

¹ *Dyetic*: i.e. deity.

² *the city*: Cranfield had been a successful London merchant before turning courtier and taking royal office.
