

Thomas Lupset *A compendious and a very fruteful treatyse, teachynge the waye of dyenge well written to a frende, by the flowre of lerned men of his tyme, Thomas Lupsete Londoner, late deceased, on whose soule Iesu haue mercy*

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Whan the daye came of execution, the kinges geyler and hangman wente abowte the towne with a greatte companye of them that shoulde suffer death, the whipassing by this Canius house, they called hym to be broughte also forth amongst the other, at the whiche tyme Canius was playinge atte the chestes with one of his companions, and hearynge theym make haaste, he rose and telled his men, sayinge to his companion: Loke nowe that after my deathe you lye not, nor make no false crakes, that you haue wonne this game. There with also he bekenid to the gailer and sayde; I pray you bere witnes, that I haue one man in this game more than my felowe hath.

In this wyse this philosopher playde with deathe, and shortely his quiete harte gaue a foule checke mate to the tyrantes crueltie; he shewed hym selfe to be in spirite as farre aboute all kynges violente power, as these myghtye princes thynke to haue a stronge dominon ouer all theyr subiectes. The frendis and familiars of this philosopher were very sorowfull, bewaylynge the losse of suche a man, to whome; what meane you quod he? Why be you sadde?

Why mourne you for me? Is hit not your study to knowe, whether the soule of man be mortall or immortalle? The trouthe of this harde question I nowe shal lerne; and nowe shall I see the trouthe of all our dowtes of heuen and of God.

Thus talkynge with his frendes he came to the place of execution, and there a lyttell, whylest other were hedded, he stode styll in a musynge dumpte. What thinke you now good Canius, quod one of his frendes? Wherupon nowe muse you so earnestly? Mary (quod he) I haue determined with myselfe to marke wel, whether in this short pange of death my soule shal perceyue and feele, that he goeth oute of my body. This poynte I fully entende to take hede of; and if I can, I wyll surely brynge you and the reste of my felowes word, what I felte, and what is the state of our soules.

Here was a wonderful caulme stomake in ye myddest of so stormy a tempest, this mans mynde was worthye of an euer lastynge lyfe, that was not onely to the deathe studious of knowlege, but also in the selfe death founde occasion of lernynge. It was not possyble for any mannes mynde to contynue his studye longer, or to a ferther poynte than this noble philosopher dyd.

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I call a worldly man him that giueth al his care to vse his wittes in this worlde, that creapeth vpon suche thynges as be sene, harde, felte, tasted, and smelte, that clymeth not in no consideration aboute the myste of this valeye. The mooste parte of men euer haue bene of this weake sorte and yet styll the mooste parte of men is the same. This worlde euer hathe his multitude, that honoreth, worshippeth, and magnifieth nothyng besyde this shorte lyfe, and those thynges that pertayne to this lyfe. Yet ageyn euer hath there benne some and styll there be some, that playe the philosophers, the whiche studied to knowe the dignities and worthynesses of euery thyng, howe moche it shoulde be esteemed, valurid, or regarded of vs, the whiche labourith to pycke oute in euerye thyng what is good and what is noughte. Men of this sorte be called spirituall menne. For you muste knowe, that a tayllour, a shomaker, a carpenter, a boote man, withoute bothe learnynge and orders, maye be spirituall, whenne a mayster of arte, a doctour of diuinitie, a deane, a bishop bothe with his cunninge and dignities may be temporall, seing the trewe diffinition of a spiritual man is to be one, in whome the mynde and spirite chefelye ruleth. Lyke wyse the temporall man is he, in whome this present tyme of this traunsitorye lyfe hath mooste rome. Thus I saye spirituall men haue euer sene the trouthe, to ponder and valure euery-thing in this worlde accordyngely. And as to the temporalle mynde nothyng semeth sweter than to lyue here, so the spiritual mynd fyndeth swetenes in deathe, by the whiche this lyfe endeth. For lyke as the prince of this worlde neuer agreeeth with God, nor yet the bodye with the soule, nor the erthe with heuyn; so he that studieth for this tyme, hath clene contrary opinions to hym that foloweth the spiryte. And as the temporalle man saythe, hit is a pleasante thyng to lyue here, and a bytter thyng it is to dye; so the spirituall man thynketh it a bytter time to indure the space of this life, and moch ioy he conceyueth by the ryddance of the soule from the heauye burden of this body.

Of these contrarye opinyons yo ushall lesse maruayle, when we haue a lyttell considered the thyng it selfe, what shoulde be death, the whiche one parte of vs so moche feareth, and an other sorte setteth so lyttell by the same; and so by a shorte processe you shall see, whether the sayde Canius be more worthy of prayse for his lyttell regardyng the deedly punyshment than is Frances Philippe, that within fewe yeres passed was put to execution with vs for treason, the whiche dyed so cowardelye, in soo greatte panges of feare, that he semed extracte from his wittes, scante for quaking and trymbling the wreche coulde speke one word. The fewe wordes that he coulde with moche stuttrynge sownde, were only in the declaration of his dispayre, nor nothyng was sene nor harde of hym, but wepyng, lamentyng, wryngyng of his handes, with bannyng the houre and day of his byrthe, contynually sighinge, as thoughe his harte shulde haue burste for sorowe.

The difference of these affectes wyll hereafter be (I thynke) playner to you, whan we haue a lyttell more spoken in this matter. For nowe good Iohnn, I wyll crepe a lyttell nygher to your desyre, the whiche you haue, of lernynge the way to dye well.

This deyng well is in effecte to dye gladlye. For who so euer dyeth gladlye, he departeth frome this lyfe in a sure hope to lyue ageyne, beyng nowe wery of this worlde; but nother this hope of

the lyfe to come, nor this werynes of the lyfe presente, can make in any man a glad harte to dye. Onles he be one that hath liued well here. For in death there can be no gladnes, excepte therbe a full truste of opteynyng the rewarde of vertue, partelye by the truste and fayth of a good mynde, partely by the mercye of God, that fulfilleth euer our insufficiency, yf we bring ought with vs worthy of his fauour. For Goddes grace suplieth, where our power lacketh, if hit so be that our soules appere before him in an apparell mete for his presence, the whiche apparelle requireth a perfecte faith, and an earnest wyl of doing wel, al though we haue not alwaye done well.

The mercye of God neuer faileth hym, that fully trusteth in it. But a full truste, can not be withoute the strength of charite, the whiche euer burneth in the loue of doinge good; and faithe can not be perfect, onles there be good workes, the whiche maye stur up and quycken in vs faythe to take a beleue, that by Christes actes our final demerites may growe to be perfecte. Thus a chereful harte, beset with fayth, hope, and charitie, taketh no pensifulnes in the remembraunce of deathe, but rather it reioysethe to remembre, that by deathe it shall passe to lyfe, neuer more to dye.

Wherfore to dye well euer, is to dye gladly, eyther to be ridde from the bondes of this prison, or to opteyne the lybertye of heuen; bothe wayes commeth from a good lyfe passed; so that surely no man can dye well, that lyueth not well, for euer deth is a sorowfull thyng to the yuell lyuer, by cause he hathe nothyng to laye before the mercy of God, wheruppon he maye take hope and truste to be made worthy of the sure lyfe, in the whiche deathe medleth not. Nowe than yf we can gether, what maye lette vs to be gladde of deathe, and what wyll bryng vs to a desire of dyenge gladlye, we shalle by the same pycke oute the waye to dye well. For in my mynde these .ii. be allwayes one, to dye well, and to dye gladly.

The gladde desyre of dyinge is letted chefely by two thynges; one by the feare of deathe, the tother by the loue of this lyfe. The tone of these foloweth the tother. For he that loueth this lyfe, feareth to dye, and he that feareth to dye, loueth this lyfe. Yet we may speke of eche parte by him selfe, and first lette vs assaye the greateste, the whiche is the feare of death; than nexte after we will come to the tother, the which is the loue of this lyfe. If these two blockes be taken out of our stomakes, we shall fynde an easye and a playne waye to the ende of our pourpose. For who someuer nother fereth to die, nor loueth to tary in this lyfe, he is redye alwaye to dye gladdely. But to performe my promis, lette me say somewhat of the sayde feare and loue.

Fyrste and chefely the feare of death takethe awaye all gladnesse of dyinge, and therby after myne opinyon, no man that dyeth ferefully can dye well, so that to lerne the waye of dyenge well we muste lerne the way to die without feare. And yet howe I shulde proue, that death is not to be feared, I canne not well telle, seinge the hole power of nature sheweth, that of all thynges death is moost fearefull; and to reason ageynste nature, it were parauenture not soo harde as vaine. For what canne reason preuayle, if nature resiste? It is a thyng to farre aboute mans power to stryue or to wrastelle with nature, her strengthe passeth the myghte of our wyll, what helpe someuer we take of reason or of auctoritie; nother counsaile nor commandement hath place, where nature dothe her uttermost. It is none excuse to saye, that menne feare deathe bycause they be lothe to leaue the commodities of this lyfe, or by cause they feare the threninges of purgatorie and of hel, or els bycause they thynke upon the sore paineful panges, the which be in

the tyme of deathe. Nay these thinges make not chefely the feare of dying, it may well be that of suche thynges the feare is increased and made more fulle, but there is a feare byfore and bysyde all these thynges, the whiche feare nature (I say) gyueth, as it is well sene in yonge chyldern, that haue no remembraunce nother of this lyfe, nor of the deadely panges, nor of heuen, purgatorye, or helle. Whan we in sport threten to caste them heedlynge out at some hye wyndowe, they quake, tremble, and ware pale, shewyng playn and euident tokens of a naturall feare towarde dethe

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Besyde this feare of deathe, the loue (I say) of this lyfe soore hyndereth the gladnes of dyinge, no man dyeth gladly, that estemethe moche this lyfe. He that rekeneth in this worlde hym selfe happye, when he hath gotten ryches, possessions, auctoritie, promotion, a ryall state, a princelyke courte, abundaunce of welthy fare, a rule and power bothe to auauce his frende, and to vndo his foo; this man I say that glorieth in his fantasye for these and such other thinges, can not but with moch sorow depart hence. To this man's hart the remembrance of deth is a euer greuous thoughte, his mynde canne not but lament whan he seeth the necessite to be pluckid and drawn frome these commodities, in the whiche resteth the ioye, pleasure, and gladnes of his mynd, he hath so stedfastly accustomed hym selfe to take this worlde for heuen, that it wyll not synke in his brayne, to hope of an other heuen; he hath so corrupted his taste with thinkyng this lyfe to be swete, that nedes it must be a bytter thyng to make an ende of all his pleasures, and in this case be not onely they that haue this worlde at their wyll, but also they be in the same case that haue naught, and be gredy of hauynge. As moche loueth he this worlde that wolde fayne be ryche, as he that is ryche. It is nat the hauynge nor the lackyng of abundance in goodes, that maketh a sorowfull hart in the remembraunce of dethe, but it is the mynd that valureth and pondreth these present goodes to be of a great price, and worthy to be tarid for. This mind I say, as wel in a communer, as in a kynge, as well in a yoman as in a lord, as well in an hermite, monke, or frier, as in a marchant plowman or vacabunde, as wel in beggers, as in ryche men, is the thinge that causeth sorow in dying. And gladly no manne dyeth, that loueth the welthe of this lyfe. Wherefore the lerning to die wel requireth necessary a lesson, howe moche the goodes of this worlde be worthy to be regarded. And let the truthe haue in your stomacke his place, so that if it be tru, that the thinges of this life be worthy to be loued and to be cared for; than loue you them and care for them. If the truth be other wise, change your mynd, and nother loue these saide thynges, nor care for them. Of the truth in this matter no man can dout, that beleueth Christe, whom if you thynke to be God, you muste also thinke it all trouth that he saith. It can not be otherwise then Christe testifieth, whose preching euer exhorteth vs to wylful pouertie, the which is nother to loue the goods of this world though we haue thē, nor to care for them, though we haue them not; only by Christ's teching we shulde care for the kingdom of heuen, the whiche standeth in the clenness of conscience, where euer is a place and a seete for the hie maiestie of the holy trinitie. All other thinges necessary for this lyfe be not to be cared for, nor yet to be valured more then their dignities requirith; that is to say, no more than is conuenient for instrumentes and toles to the pilgremage and passage of this strange country. For in this world we haue no home, our father

dwelleth not in his region, we be in this lyfe out of our countrey, we shulde hast home ward to the ioyful presence of our owne father, that abydeth vs in heuen, the whiche hath a greater charge ouer vs his chyldern here, than he hathe ouer the beastes or byrdes, the whiche by his only prouision without their care, lacketh nothinge for their necessitie, moche more (sayth our master Christ) if we tourned all our care to Godwarde, we shulde not be destitute of such thinges as necessarily this present lyfe nedeth. And where Christe so streytly commaundeth almes dedes, sayinge, that who so euer helpeth not a pore man in his nede, he wil not helpe him nor yet knowe him at the fearefull day of dome, in so moche that it pleaseth Christ to say, that euery pore man representeth the person of God's son, so that he that regardeth not a pore man, despiseth the son of God. In this doctryne what thynke you? Whether dothe Christe commaunde almes dedes for the poore mans sake, that shulde take almes, or for the ryche mans sake, that shoulde gyue almes? In takynge almes I fynde no vertue, and nedes it is a thyng parteynyng to vertue, that Christ wolde haue done. Therefore surely it is for the ryche mans sake. For it is Christes lesson, that techeth vs to haue no inwarde loue to these casual goodes, the whiche we must put from us, where we see theym that wante suche thynges. And a profe of a perfecte stomake is taken in him, that utterly leauyth and forsakethe all this worlde to folowe Christe; the whiche beddeth the ryche man, that wyll be perfecte, to go and sell all that he hath, and deale all to poore men. For as harde a thyng it is to plucke through the small needles eie a greatte caboull rope, as to bryng a ryche man in at heuens wicket, not that it is impossible for a riche man to be saued, but by cause it is harde for a man in a whelthy state to kepe his minde in a due order to Godward, without beyng drowned or infected by the contagious lustes and corrupted plesures, the which foloweth the fortunate lyfe of this worlde. And nothyng is more in a rich man to be feared, than lest he sette his mynde to loue his ryches, the whiche loue can neuer stande with the pleasure of God.

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